

dress guide

Wedding Style	Formal Daytime	Formal Evening	Semiformal Daytime	Semiformal Evening	Informal
For the Bride	White, ivory or pastel-colored floor length gown with train; long veil.	Same as formal daytime, but can feature more elaborate fabric and trim.	White or pastel-colored floor- or tea-length dress; elbow-length or shorter veil.	Same as semi-formal daytime, except with more elaborate fabric and trim.	White or pastel-colored floor- or tea-length dress or dressy suit. Short veil, hat optional.
For the Groom and The Ushers	Cutaway coats or short jackets in either black or gray. Pants are gray striped.	Black tails or black tuxedos.	Gray or black strollers or formal dark suits.	Dinner jackets; dark or light formal suits (depending on season).	Dark business suits, or in warm climates, white or natural-colored jackets or suits.
For the Bridesmaids	Floor- or tea-length dresses; hats or flower garlands; maid/matron of honor's dress can contrast with maids' dresses.	Long or tea-length dresses.	Same as formal daytime, except with a simpler fabric such as cotton or chintz.	Long or tea-length dresses. Same as semiformal daytime.	Same length as bride wears; maids may wear short dresses regardless of style bride wears.
For the Mothers	Floor- or tea-length dresses; dressy suits; hats optional; dresses should complement each other in color and style.	Floor- or ankle-length dresses in more elaborate fabric than daytime.	Floor-, tea- or street-length dresses or suits, depending on length of wedding-party dresses.	Same as semiformal daytime in dressier fabric.	Street-length dresses or suits.
For the Women Guests	Street-length cocktail dresses or tea-length dresses.	Long or short dresses.	Street- or tea-length dresses.	Street-length cocktail dresses or dressy suits	Short cocktail dresses or suits.
For the Men Guests	Dark suits, white shirts.	Tuxedos if invitation says black tie. Dark suits, white shirts if short dresses are worn.	Dark suits or blazers and dark slacks; white or pastel shirts.	Dark suits, white or pastel shirts.	Dark suits or dark blazers and dress slacks; white or pastel shirts.
Invitations & Announcements	Engraved, traditional.	Same as formal daytime.	Engraved, traditional; printed with designed graphics; thermographics.	Engraved, traditional; conservative printed graphic design; thermographics.	Printed with designed graphics or handwritten invitations; engraved announcements.
Location of Ceremony	Church, synagogue, club, large home, garden, catering hall.	Same as formal daytime.	Church, chapel, synagogue, hotel, club, home, catering hall.	Same as semiformal daytime.	Church, synagogue, chapel, rectory, home, garden or other outdoor location, catering hall.
Church Decorations	Formal flower arrangements, aisle runner, pew ribbons.	Same as formal daytime, plus candles along pews.	Altar flowers, aisle runner if long gowns are worn, pew ribbons.	Same as semiformal daytime.	Flowers for altar.
Ceremony Music	Organ, choir or instrumental; vocal soloist optional.	Same as formal daytime.	Organ, instrumental; vocal soloist optional.	Same as semiformal daytime.	Instrumental.
Location of Reception	Club, hotel, garden, large home, catering hall.	Same as formal daytime.	Club, restaurant, garden, hotel, home, catering hall.	Same as semiformal daytime.	Restaurant, home, garden, church hall, catering hall.
Music for Reception	Live band.	Same as formal daytime.	Small band; pianist; disc jockey.	Same as semiformal daytime.	Recorded music or single musician.
Menu	Seated or semi-buffet meal; appetizer, soup, salad, entrée, dessert. Usually preceded by cocktails and hors d'oeuvres.	Same as formal daytime.	Buffet; brunch menu if early; cold cuts, salads, sandwiches, cheese and vegetable trays, dessert. Champagne punch, wine or cocktails.	Buffet; carved meats, vegetables, salads, dessert. Champagne, wine or cocktails.	Buffet; may be meal or hors d'oeuvre samplings depending on hour, dessert. Champagne, wine or cocktails.