



Weddings aren't what they used to be...

Goodbye poached salmon and fizz, hello food trucks and tequila shots. **Emma Freud** explores new trends in wedding food

As the wedding rituals of our grandparents get rewritten by new generations, catering for marriage feasts is also changing. It's now more playful, experimental and focused on a great party rather than a grand tradition. This month I've grilled wedding planners, event companies and scoured #wedding Instagrammers to uncover the new trends in wedding food. They're bold...

DRINKS

Wedding cocktails in 2017 are less likely to be Bellinis and more likely to take the form of jelly cubes made from prosecco and peach juice, or exotic floral drinks like the Marriage Mojito, made with vodka, lime juice, dried lavender, raw honey and coconut water, with frozen blueberries instead of ice. Also big are scoops of lemon sorbet in martini glasses with a shot of vodka poured on top, and alcoholic slushy stations, so guests can pour their own frozen margaritas. Canapés are often served with alcohol pairings, so you can [kick the party off with a smoked salmon blini offered alongside a mini malt whisky](#), or shrimp lime tacos served with tequila shots.

EDIBLE DECOR

Table plans for weddings used to involve pieces of paper – so old school. A ceremony last year in Scotland had the place names iced onto doughnuts and menus printed on shortbread biscuits, while the tables were decorated with edible greenery, candy stones and plant-pot cakes. The water jugs had cubes of ice with edible flowers frozen inside them, and the wedding toasts were done with single malt served in dram glasses made of biscuit.

FOOD TRUCKS

The one guarantee at a wedding used to be that you wouldn't witness your meal being made. Chefs were tucked away in the kitchen or in a tent, and the food was carried out by waiters. This too is changing. The Chef Exchange provides 'chefs on show', who cook the feast in full view of the guests, and [all over the UK couples are cutting fuss and costs by using street-food trucks](#) to provide informal food that comes from its own cool mobile kitchen. Particularly popular are wood-fired pizza trucks, Thai food vans, hog roasts, plus any catering vehicle that provides

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a romantic rural look. The Horse Box serves fresh, organic seasonal produce from a beautiful old converted horse trailer. Wholefood Heaven caters vegetarian and vegan weddings from their vintage Citroën H van, and I went to two weddings last year that served brilliant posh fish & chips from a mobile beach hut. The hut belongs to Nick Attfield, who was a finalist at the 2015 British Street Food Awards. For couples going for this kind of catering, side dishes are sorted with an oyster table, a doughnut station, a popcorn cart, or ice creams dispatched from a vintage bike.

NEW CAKES

Traditional wedding cakes are also being replaced by more playful

alternatives. A big thing in the US is to have doughnuts piled high to recreate the shape of a huge wedding cake, and there were multiple sightings of Jaffa Cake towers at UK weddings last year. Cakes made by piling up different-sized whole round cheeses have been having a moment, but it's naked cakes that are grabbing recent wedding headlines. These look like beautiful versions of multi-layer sponge wedding cakes just before the royal icing is added. It means that the guests are party to what's going on inside the cake, rather than only seeing the icing on top. Very fresh, very pretty.

[After the cake cutting, instead of toasting the bride and groom with fizzy wine, Californians are doing it with alcoholic milkshakes](#). LA Creamery supplies weddings with their version of a Manhattan: a pudding-cocktail-shake combo of brown butter toffee, bourbon ice cream and Bing cherries.

BREAKFAST

There's a lot of imagination being put into late-night breakfasts, served from midnight onwards to encourage guests to push on through. Event organiser Atom serves bacon sandwiches with a Bloody Mary, cheese toasties with a goblet of Guinness, and edible bacon bowls filled with scrambled eggs. The times they are a-changin', and I don't think anyone's complaining about it.



Turn to page 57 for our easiest-ever wedding cake.

Good Food contributing editor Emma Freud is a journalist and broadcaster, and director of Red Nose Day. @emmalfreud

Bacon bowls

A clever way to keep your guests there for longer is the promise of breakfast at midnight. These bacon cups are edible bowls, which you then fill with scrambled eggs or baked beans. It's the perfect late-night breakfast, and there's no washing-up. Use mini muffin tins if you're making them for a party, or regular muffin tins if they're for a normal-sized meal.

MAKES 6 PREP 10 mins COOK 20 mins EASY

cooking spray
10-12 rashers smoked streaky bacon, halved

To serve

your favourite breakfast food – scrambled eggs, cooked tomatoes, baked beans, etc

You will need

2 muffin tins that fit inside each other

1 Heat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Turn a six-hole muffin tin upside down and lightly coat the bottom with cooking spray. Overlap three or four short slices of bacon so that they cover the upturned cups, then sandwich another muffin tin on top so that the bacon is nicely compressed.
2 Put the pans on a baking tray to catch the drips and bake for 20 mins or until the bacon cups are brown and crisp. Remove the tins from the oven and leave to cool completely before taking the top tin off. Carefully peel the bacon cups away from the tin and drain upside down on a piece of kitchen paper until you need them.
3 You've just cooked a delicious bowl. Now fill the bowl with a spoonful of your favourite breakfast food – Boston baked beans, a grilled tomato, sautéed potatoes, refried beans or hash browns with a sprinkle of grated cheese on top. Serve with a shot of the perfect Bloody Mary (right).

GOOD TO KNOW gluten free
PER BOWL 139 kcals • fat 11g • saturates 4g • carbs none • sugars none • fibre none • protein 9g • salt 1.6g

The perfect Bloody Mary

This has a lot of ingredients but, trust me, it's worth it.

MAKES 8 PREP 5 mins NO COOK

50ml vodka
50ml tomato juice
25ml lemon juice
pinch of celery salt
splash each of Worcestershire and Tabasco sauces

a few drops of liquid smoke
green olives, halved, to serve

Put all the ingredients in a jug with a pinch of seasoning and lots of ice. Give it a stir, then strain into eight shot glasses with a half green olive on a cocktail stick to garnish.

GOOD TO KNOW gluten free
PER SHOT 17 kcals • fat none • saturates none • carbs none • sugars none • fibre none • protein none • salt 0.2g



Portrait DAVID COTSWORTH | Recipe photograph WILL HEAP
Food styling JENNIFER JOYCE | Styling SARAH BIRKS