

Culture Bridge ...



... Means Understanding Others And Reflecting Our Own Situation



Hochzeitsbräuche - Wedding Customs

Wedding traditions in Germany differ from region to region.
Here are some of the highlights:



Car Procession

After the wedding a car procession is formed and drives through town honking their horns - others honk back wishing the couple good luck.

Costs

The father of the bride has to pay the wedding. This is an old custom but today normally both parents and the couple itself divide the costs for the wedding.

Dance

The first dance is danced by the bride and the groom, it is traditionally a waltz. The next dance is only for bride with her father and groom with mother, while bride's mother dances with groom's father.

First Night

To make the first night as difficult as possible, friends of the couple do lots of funny or sometimes cruel things. They fill up the rooms with balloons, hide lots of alarm clocks in the bedroom, take apart the bed, and so on.

Flowers

Besides the flowers for the bride and in church, the hood of the wedding car is decorated with lots of flowers.

Jungesellenabschied

A few days before the wedding the groom and his male friends go to a pub or sometimes other places to drink and have fun - for the last time?

Kidnapping of the bride

In some areas (mostly in small villages) friends kidnap the bride and the groom has to find her. Normally, he has to search in a lot of pubs and invite all people in there (or pay the whole bill). Sometimes this ritual ends badly.

Polterabend

This is an informal (informal dress and food) party at the evening before the wedding where plates and dishes are smashed (the broken pieces are thought to bring good luck to the bride). The bride and groom have to clean up everything.

Rice

After the wedding when the bride and groom leave the church, friends throw rice on them and it is said that they will get as many children as rice grains stay in the hair of the bride.

Veil Dance

This is a popular game for a wedding evening. Every woman or man who wants to dance with the groom or bride, has to pay for it.

Wedding Cake

The wedding cake, mostly a large cake with lots of ornaments, has to be cut by the bride and the groom together.

Wedding Evening

On the wedding evening a lot of games are played, speeches are held (the first normally by the father of the bride), sometimes a wedding newspaper is handed out. Songs are sung, and so on.

White Ribbon

The bride carries lengths of white ribbon with her bouquet, and after the church ceremony is over and the guests are leaving the church, she hands each driver a ribbon that they tie to the radio antenna.

Wedding Rings

Germans wear wedding rings on the right hand - the groom and the bride have normally identical rings (wedding "bands" - no diamonds).

Wedding Shoes

Another tradition is to collect pennies for years and buy wedding shoes for the bride with this money.