

WEDDING

TRAVELLING TO A DESTINATION WEDDING?

A few tips for having a great experience

BY ESTHER C. BLEUEL, MA, MFT, MDR

WELCOME TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA! You're here for a wedding and it's a great place to be whether you are a first-time visitor or if you've been here before and want to explore more of the area's fabulous sights.

Going to a wedding is exciting and it will be the main event. However, along with its attendant parties and dinners, you might find time for sightseeing. Planning will be key as it helps to prevent anxious or uncomfortable moments. Tension can be high when family and friends get together for any event, but particularly for a wedding.

Here are some things to think about, as you make your plans.



1

Itinerary of Wedding Events

If your hosts have not sent you an itinerary, be sure to ask for it. This will ensure that you are available for all of the wedding events and will let you know when and if plans can be made for sightseeing, or visiting friends who live in the area.

2

Local Hotels

Hosts usually provide suggested area hotels, but if they don't, you can either ask for them or do some research on your own. Let your hosts know what you found and ask for their thoughts. They may have ideas, and "insider" information is always good.

3

Gifts

It can be costly to attend a wedding out of town—the travel expenses, hotel, special clothing purchases—and the gift. Don't worry if you can't spend a lot of money on a gift. The bride and groom (and their families) will be happy that you made the trip. Check the gift registry. If you don't see anything that seems right, feel free to be creative. I was invited to a wedding and didn't have much money to spend at the time. The bride and groom had a muffin tin on their registry. I bought it, added a muffin cookbook and a couple of muffin mixes. Wrapped in a basket, it made a lovely gift.

4

Family Dynamics

Weddings can be fraught with emotions. Folks are very happy, but are also nervous, tired, on edge and the like. Tension and conflict are often part of the mix. If you are a family member, try not to get caught up in that. Be helpful and of service when and where you can. By keeping calm, staying on an even keel, and remaining upbeat, you will not only enhance the experience of others, your joy will increase as well.

5

Managing Expectations

Since this is a wedding, your options may be somewhat predetermined by your relationship to the bride and groom and whether or not you have a role in the ceremony. No matter what it is—friend, family member, or guest of a guest—you will have expectations that will not always be met. Yes, it is important for you to have a good time, but it is more important to remember that this is about the bride and groom.

6

The Ideal Guest

A few thoughts about being a "good" guest:

- Anticipate what a successful time might look like for you and do your best to create it.
- Be of service to the bride and groom, if and when assistance is needed.
- Be welcoming, warm and helpful to other guests.
- If you sense that tension is escalating, try and calm things down.
- Most important—celebrate this joyous occasion, dance with abandon and spread the good cheer.



Got a tough question or delicate dilemma you want Esther to help you solve? E-mail her at Esther@socallifemag.com and she may address it in her Trending Talk column in an upcoming edition.