

# How to Have Grateful Guests

There's a difference between the things you *must* do for your wedding guests—and the things that are *nice* to do if budget and time allow. Here, Wilmington planner Erin Proud of Proud to Plan breaks that difference down. —A.L.

**THE TASK**

Greet or thank each guest individually

**THE TASK**

Have an open bar at the reception

**THE TASK**

Provide directions to the ceremony and/or reception

**THE TASK**

Put together welcome bags for overnight guests

**THE TASK**

Pay for guests' valet parking at the venue

**THE TASK**

Send your guests home with favors



**THE PLANNER SAYS ...**

*Definitely!*

**THE REASON**

Guests are there to share your special day, and you should show your appreciation by visiting each table and thanking your loved ones for being there.

**THE HOW-TO**

Strategize your seating chart and put older guests in the same area—hit that group of tables first, then work your way around. You'll see your friends on the dance floor, but your elders will appreciate the time you took to visit them at their seats.

**THE PLANNER SAYS ...**

*An absolute must*

**THE REASON**

It's considered a faux pas to make your guests pay for food or drinks at a wedding.

**THE HOW-TO**

If it's a budget concern, limit the bar to beer and wine only, then add a signature drink if you'd like. Open bar doesn't have to mean "top of the line" bar.

**THE PLANNER SAYS ...**

*Always!*

**THE REASON**

Some of your guests may not be GPS-savvy and will require written directions; either way, it's helpful to have them available.

**THE HOW-TO**

Include a separate card with your invitation suite; this is also a great place to mention parking logistics or shuttle information.

**THE PLANNER SAYS ...**

*If your budget can swing it*

**THE REASON**

Welcome bags are a great vehicle to get amenities and information to your guests. Plus, they're a wonderful first impression of the fun to come.

**THE HOW-TO**

Buy treats in bulk to save on costs, and toss in a local souvenir for a fun reminder of their trip. Be sure to include a welcome letter outlining the schedule of festivities, suggestions of local attractions and dining recommendations.

**THE PLANNER SAYS ...**

*Nice, but not necessary*

**THE REASON**

Most guests will assume they're responsible for any travel-related charges when they accept your wedding invitation, but it's a lovely gesture if your budget allows.

**THE HOW-TO**

Communicate information about parking in your invitation or on your wedding website. If there's a fee, a discount or special instructions, let your guests know. Communicating effectively is the best way to manage expectations and eliminate surprises.

**THE PLANNER SAYS ...**

*Eh ... go edible or go home.*

**THE REASON**

No one wants a random knickknack that's just going to collect dust.

**THE HOW-TO**

You should offer some token of appreciation to your guests, and the possibilities are endless: custom cookies, candy buffets, Philly soft pretzels. Or have a specialty food truck or ice-cream cart available for late-night snacking.

Turn to page 188 for more information.