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wedding stationery etiquette

INTRO

From save the date cards to invitations and even the envelopes themselves, your wedding stationery sets the mood for the wedding and helps establish your style right from the start. It can all be a little overwhelming if you don't know where to start! That's why we've compiled this handy Wedding Stationery Etiquette Guide. We hope it helps you to better understand the different stationery pieces you need to plan, what to include on them and when to send each piece.

WHEN TO SEND

Invitations should go out six to eight weeks before the wedding with the exception of destination weddings. For weddings involving travel, they should go out at least three months ahead of time, but up to six months is not uncommon if a save the date was not sent.

Save the dates are becoming more and more critical, especially when planning a summer wedding when weekends book up fast and guests may have several weddings to attend. If you're sending save the date cards, they should go out six to eight months before your big day.

Thank you cards should be hand-written and sent within the two months after your wedding.

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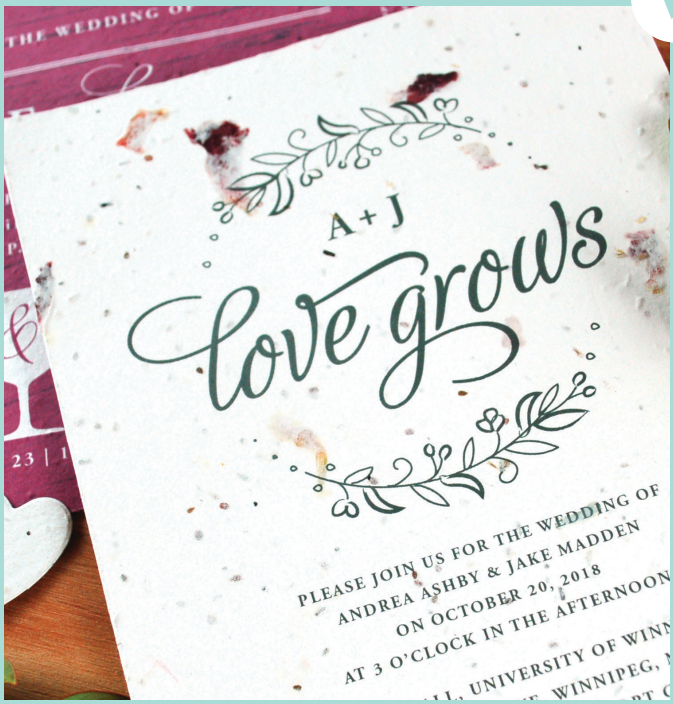
SAVE THE DATES

Save the dates are designed to ensure that as many of your guests as possible can attend the big day and will officially announce your engagement.

Typically, you'll want to keep them simple. You should include your names, the date, the general location (state/province and country) as well as mentioning that the formal invitation will follow. This makes it clear to guests that this is not their invitation and they aren't missing information. They'll know that the invite will come with the fine points. Keep in mind it's also your guests' first glimpse at the style and mood of your wedding so the design is important. Try to choose one that will match your wedding invitations so there is a consistent theme for the event.



THE INVITATIONS

Weddings are never the same, so when it comes to wedding invitations there are no set rules on what you should include but, there are a few standards. Generally, they should include all the details that your guests need to know to attend the big day and how they should RSVP.

- Your names (may include parents names or "Together with family...")
- The date (day, month and year)
- Ceremony time, location and address
- Reception time and location (often just a hotel or hall name is used rather than listing the full address. Use your judgement.)
- Cocktail hour and an indication of the food service. (may be included on RSVP cards)
- Dress code (guests like to know how fancy to dress so it's a good idea to add casual or formal attire.)
- RSVP instructions or reply cards to mail back

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THE REPLY CARD

Your reply cards (RSVPs) should always include a "reply by" date that allows enough time for you to get a final head count to the caterer and to finalize your seating. Two to three weeks is suggested, but you may want to allow some extra time to hunt down responses from any procrastinators who have not replied.

If the invite is addressed to multiple people, like a family of four, you may want to add a line for the number of people attending. If there are menu options, include an RSVP for each invitee or a line to initial who is having what to ensure there are no mix ups.

THE ENVELOPE

Within the envelope should be the main wedding invitation, response card, and any enclosure cards you may have. Written on the outside of the envelope is the formal name and address of your invited guests. Be specific as to who is invited on the envelope. If kids are welcome, be sure to add their names as well or "and family". If the recipient is allowed a plus one, write their name plus "and guest". Your return address should be included on the back flap or upper left corner of the envelope on a label or handwritten.

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ENCLOSURE CARDS

Enclosure cards provide your guests with additional wedding day details such as location, directions and/or a map, website information, accommodation details and more.

Enclosure card designs are generally similar to your RSVP cards to ensure consistency. Ask your stationer for details and suggestions. If you have several enclosure cards or RSVPs, a bellyband, ribbon or string is always a nice feature to hold it all together.

THANK YOU CARDS

Saying thank you to your friends and family who attend your wedding is perhaps one of the most important details. Don't wait to order your thank you cards untill after the occasion as you may end up procrastinating and eventually forgetting all together. If you order them with your invitations, you will have them on hand to tackle as soon as you have some free time.

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