

## HOT

Our experts explore wedding protocol for your big day

## TOPIC:

Etiquette

This issue's experts



Andri Benson  
Wedding planner



Samira Jasrai  
Caterer



Helen Brown  
Bespoke stationer



Kelly Chandler  
Wedding planner



Glen Mayes  
Toastmaster

## Can we have the best of both worlds?

**Q** My fiancé and I are having a black tie wedding and really want a champagne reception with decadent canapés. However, some of our guests are Muslim and I'm not sure if they all drink, or eat meat. Would it be proper to go with this idea anyway? We don't want to offend anyone.

**A** *Samira says:* It is a misunderstanding that Muslims do not eat meat. In fact they eat Halal meat, which is a slaughtering technique – very similar to kosher requirements for the Jewish community. The only meat they do not eat is pork. Not all caterers will be able to accommodate a Halal requirement, so make sure you highlight this as a must before you book.

From a religious perspective, alcohol would be ruled out for Muslims, but this does not necessarily mean that you have to change your theme. Why not provide an assortment of drinks that will also suit any children and non-drinkers on the day? There are so many options, such as non-alcoholic champagne or cocktails. By taking this approach you are less likely to offend anyone and your guests will be truly touched.



## Start of the 'bridesman' trend?

**Q** I have really close male and female friends and I'd like them both to be involved in my wedding, in the role of 'bridesmaids'. Is this possible and how would it work?

**A** *Andri says:* Choosing your bridal party should be based on who your closest friends or relatives are. Nowadays, the fact that one of them is male needn't make any difference. If he is happy to stand by you as a 'bridesman', and you know you can rely on him to help you with your wedding preparations, go for it!

Traditionally, the bride will walk down the aisle first, followed by her attendants. It will be up to you whether your two friends walk together or not. You may like them to go individually as if they walk as a pair he may appear to be an usher. I would also suggest that you give him a different buttonhole, tie or waistcoat to the ushers, one that coordinates specifically with the bridesmaids' flowers or colours.

## IS TIMING EVERYTHING?

**Q** Our registrar has offered us two times for our ceremony, midday or 2pm. We're not sure what is the norm and which we should choose. What do you think?

**A** *Kelly says:* It all depends on what your plans are for the day. Most people envisage dancing and partying the night away in one venue, ending at midnight. If this is your plan then I would opt for the 2pm slot, which is commonplace. That way you will have plenty of time to get ready in the morning, whereas a midday slot may cause you to rush through hair and make-up, especially if you have a number of bridesmaids. A later time will allow the day to flow seamlessly without too many gaps.

Another thing to remember is, the more time you have guests at the venue, the more costly it will be with food, drink and entertainment. Plus, although your day will be simply wonderful it may also be very exhausting!