

Couples are no longer laying on a free bar at their weddings according to a new survey. The current economic climate has also lead to wedding guests are finding increasingly creative ways to cut costs... One in five guests have even reported bringing their own alcohol in a hipflask!

New research over the last 12 months suggests that one in four potential wedding guests are turning down wedding invitations because of the soaring costs of attending.

The poll of 1,700 wedding guests, commissioned by Sheilas' Wheels home insurance, revealed that half of wedding functions supply no drinks at all on the table, just half supply free champagne to toast the newlyweds, and just a quarter have open bars.

As a result, 23% of Brits confessed to taking their own alcohol to a wedding, while a crafty one-in-five opted for a hip flask to sneak it in. A quarter even admitted that they drank prior to arriving at a wedding to keep their costs down. The study also found that it is not just alcohol that has been cut - a third of weddings did not supply a three course meal, while 39%t did not supply any finger food.

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ust attending a wedding now sets the average guest back £504.01 each, while attending a hen or stag do will set them back a further £63.72. Of those polled, 29% of Brits have even had to turn down a wedding invitation due to the cost of attending and a further 35% have ducked out of a hen or stag do for the same reason.

Finding the right outfit was the most expensive part of attending a wedding at an average cost of £91.43 per guest. Consequently, more than two-thirds said that they have stopped buying

new outfits for every wedding.

Britons are also finding ways to save money on a gift as one in five donated their time or skills instead of buying a traditional wedding present and 16% made the gift themselves. Almost a fifth confessed to spending less than £10 on a present for the newlyweds.

The research revealed that Brits believe in spending an average of £70.12 on a wedding gift or £100.93 if the bride or groom is a close friend while more than a third (38 per cent) said they would be embarrassed to spend less than £30.

Despite this, the average wedding guest actually spends £66.41 on a gift while a quarter said they resented spending the amount that they do on presents for the bride and groom. Nearly a third buy the cheapest gift possible off the wedding list while 47% rebel by choosing to buy a present not on the list.

A total of 43% of Brides-to-be said that they would only invite close friends to their wedding now due to the tough economic climate while 24% said they would have their wedding abroad to limit the number of guests attending. However, the research found that attending a wedding abroad sets the average Brit back £953 - almost double that of a wedding in the UK.

The study did have some good news for penny-pinching newlyweds as 28% of the wedding guests polled said that they have been turned off flash or expensive weddings by the TV series My Big Fat Gypsy Wedding.