

5 Tips for Planning a Tented Wedding

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- **Have a realistic budget** – Often tented weddings can be more cost effective than inclusive indoor venue events, but they can also require some additional rentals that indoor venue weddings do not. Calculate the cost and need of such additional items as restroom trailers, generators, tables and chairs, flatware, rain-plan equipment and even one or two complete bar set-ups.
- **Like Rain on Your Wedding Day** – Assess your bad weather tolerance and determine if the stress of rainy or windy weather will ruin your wedding day. Outdoor weddings come with the unpredictability of Mother Nature. If you're still in love with an outdoor wedding even if you have a muddy hem or gloomy skies loom, then a tented wedding is for you. But it's best to be honest with yourself. Even though you may love the look and feel of an outdoor tented wedding, if rain will put a damper on the festivities, best to move them indoors.
- **Plan A & Plan B** – If your heart can withstand the unpredictable weather, then the next step is to come up with a back-up bad weather plan. When the heavens open up, you can either move the party to an adjacent indoor space or secure some additional rain-plan ceremony and cocktail tents and continue as planned outdoors. Most tents can withstand the weather, but be sure to invest in side curtains that can roll down and turn the tent into a water-tight outdoor space. Also consider renting fans to cool guests off at dinner and on the dance floor during the muggy months and portable heaters when the temperature starts to dip. Most rental companies offer a rain plan policy requiring a 50% deposit to reserve the equipment. Talk to your tent rental provider about your options.

- **Location, Location, Location** – When choosing the best place to pitch a tent, consider all the factors. How far will guests have to walk? Will they get their shoes dirty? How far will you be away from facilities and power? Where will the caterers cook and prep? How will the rentals be loaded and unloaded? Is there enough space to safely stake the tent? All of these factors will play a major role in the cost of the event, as well as the accessibility for the guests. A walk across potentially muddy meadows can ruin a heel and power supplies diminish the farther away from the source you are. Some rental companies will tack on additional delivery fees for complicated set-ups. Even though the best views are 1 mile into the woods right on a cliff, that may not be the most practical. Weigh the pros and cons of each location and meet with your vendors on-site to get their professional opinions as well.
- **Communication is Key** – Tented weddings are by definition, unique; which is exactly why you probably want a tented wedding. But this often means your vendors don't have a blueprint to work from. Be clear and honest with how much help you will need from your vendors and the expectations. Drop-off and pick-up of rentals is very important as well as who is doing the set-up and break-down. It is always better to have all your bases covered before the wedding instead of springing requests on vendors the night of. Likewise, their needs must be met as well. A site visit is usually the best way to make sure everyone is on the same page. They know what is expected of them and the space they are expected to work within and you will know exactly what they need to be successful