



'Don't sweat the small stuff'

THE CEREMONY AND OFFER TOP TIPS



Photograph courtesy Sai Digital by Rohit Gautam

Meena Gorecha from Nottingham married Suneet Chavda from Bradford

What was the inspiration behind your wedding outfit?

My wedding outfit was relatively traditional. I didn't want a lehnga that was too heavy, but with all the excitement, I ended up with something much heavier than I expected.

I knew from the beginning I didn't want to wear red as it doesn't suit my skin tone. Like many girls, my favourite colour is pink, so this was what I was drawn to. As our wedding was in January, we tried to have a winter theme. The mandap was white and I wanted an outfit that would really contrast with that colour. Pink worked perfectly against the white backdrop and our wedding photos look vibrant because of this. Because of the amount of embroidery on my outfit, I opted for a custom-made jewellery set so I could have something to neutralise the outfit.

How did you feel when you actually got married?

For us, the Indian wedding was more for the cultural experience as opposed to being seen as our actual wedding. We had our civil wedding the week before, so we already felt married, and there were no nerves whatsoever when it came to our Indian wedding.

As I was getting ready, I could hear the dhol playing and the groom making his entrance in the lobby – I felt I was missing out on all the fun. When I made my entrance, the only thing I was worried about was tripping over my outfit. Our family and friends put in a lot of effort into the planning and running of the day – the smile could not be wiped off my face.

What was the wedding reception like?

Wild, just wild. What started out as a formal and sophisti-

cated wedding reception soon turned into a night of craziness and we owed this to our amazing fun-loving family and friends and, of course, the free-flowing drinks. A speech by our mutual university friends was funny and engaging; they wrote and sang a hilarious song for us, which was followed by a group dance that also involved us. This nicely opened up the dance floor for the next few hours and boy, did we dance. There were dance-offs, competitions and a *rail gaddi* (as standard). We were having so much fun we forgot to eat our main course.

What is the most memorable moment from the big day?

It was actually the bit of the ceremony every bride dreads, the tearful *vidaai*. We decided to do something different and have a happy one. We played a lively Bollywood song, lined both sides of the walkway and decided to dance down. We high-fived everyone on the way out and there wasn't a tear in sight, just lots of laughter (and a few shocked faces). This was memorable because I can look back at how happy my family were at the wedding and don't have to remember any tears. The dancing got us ready to rock and roll for the evening reception.

What tips would you give girls planning their wedding?

Don't sweat the small stuff. Accept that not everything will go to plan and everything cannot be perfect. I was happy and relaxed during the whole wedding day due to this theory. I had the wrong nail colour, my flower garland broke on stage, I forgot my shoes at home for both the day and evening events and the shower in my hotel room even stopped working. However, we laughed everything off. The things that go wrong add to the memories and craziness of the day.

Sonal Gorecha from Leicester married Manraj Flora from Hinckley

What was the inspiration behind your wedding outfit?

I wanted to be a little traditional, but did not want to wear red or a lehnga. So for the Sikh ceremony, I opted for an orange *anarkhali*. It was comfy and looked lovely when I was sitting on the floor. It was difficult to find anything ready-made I liked, so I designed all my outfits myself.

For the Hindu ceremony, I chose ink blue, white and gold with coral for the lehnga. I preferred A-line skirts for all my outfits as I think they fall nicely and look elegant when walking around the mandap. My jewellery and make-up was also quite simple as I wanted to be comfortable and still feel like myself on my wedding day. I wanted to remain comfy and relaxed for the reception and thought there is nothing more elegant than a sari. I tried using lots of different materials for the outfits such as velvet for the blouses.

Tell us about your wedding?

Actually, getting married was quite surreal. It was a day where friends and family came to celebrate our love and we all had a great time.

We had been together for quite some time and already felt married to each other, but making it 'official' gave our relationship a special status. Even though we were confident that we wanted to be together, walking down the aisle was quite nerve-racking, as you know you are about to make such a huge commitment. This did get easier for me as I had three wedding ceremonies – Hindu, Sikh and civil. As I am Hindu and my husband is Sikh, we felt it was important that we included everyone's traditions and beliefs into the wedding.

What was the wedding reception like?

I think the wedding reception is the best part (apart from the honeymoon). Everyone is relaxed and it's the time to celebrate with everyone you love with lots of cake and champagne. After months of planning the big day, the reception was definitely a time to let my hair down and dance the night away. Listening to all the speeches was so great; hearing funny stories and people talking about our love was also really heart-warming.

What is the most memorable moment from the big day?

We walked into our wedding reception to the live music from a steel band playing Bob Marley's *Is This Love*, which my



husband surprised me with as he knew it was something I loved. This was the best moment, as it was such a perfect surprise.

What tips would you give girls planning their wedding?

Take it all in – after all the planning and stress, it is important not to miss a thing from the day. Make sure you soak up all

the moments, eat the food you spent so much time choosing, dance to all your favourite songs, take as many pictures as possible and just be present in every moment.

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