



Let Them Eat Cake!

I am a student of history, especially culinary history, and a lover of tradition and symbolism related to food and special occasions. I've adopted food-related traditions and passions from each stage of my life - from friends, boyfriends, husbands and foreign travels - and made them my own.

A wedding is the perfect place to incorporate family traditions from both bride's and groom's heritages. When a couple looks back on their wedding day, they no longer see those elements as "mine" and "yours", but "ours", and as such, the beginning of their transformation to their new life together.



Mary Fabrikant

I have a clear image of my much younger self, sitting at my small dining room table in my Brooklyn apartment with my upstairs neighbor Lisa, placing five Jordan almonds in the centers of layered circles of white and pink tulle, and tying them up with fuchsia satin ribbon into pretty poofs called "koufeta", also known as "bonbonnières", for the guests at my first wedding. My fiancé was from Greece, and although our wedding would not be a traditional Greek wedding, his parents wished us to continue their tradition of having bonbonnières favors at each place setting. Already a fan of all things Greek, I was happy to comply.

My in-laws-to-be explained that fresh almonds have a bittersweet taste, which represents life. The sugarcoating is added with the hope that the newlyweds' life will be more sweet than bitter. Five almonds signify five wishes for the bride and groom: health, wealth, happiness, fertility, and longevity. Odd numbers are indivisible by two, symbolizing how the newlyweds will share everything and remain undivided. Tradition holds that if an unmarried woman puts the almonds under her pillow, she'll dream of her future husband.

That last tradition is a direct link to the similar belief still held today that if you sleep with a piece of wedding cake under your pillow, your dreams will be filled with images

of your future spouse. This tradition, and many others involving wedding cake, dates back to 17th century Europe, and has a history that developed over many years, reaching back as far as the Roman Empire.

The original wedding "cake" was actually bread. The Roman groom would eat part of a loaf of barley bread baked especially for the nuptials and break the rest over his bride's head. Breaking the bread symbolized the breaking of the bride's virginal state and the subsequent dominance of the groom over her. As wedding cakes evolved into the larger, more modern version, it became physically impractical, not to mention shockingly wasteful, to properly break the cake over the bride's head. The tradition disappeared fairly quickly in some places, but there were still reports of breaking an oatcake or other breakable cakes over the bride's head in Scotland, into the 19th century. It's hard to say why some traditions endure and some do not, but the obvious chauvinistic bent of this particular tradition probably led to its early demise!

In Medieval England, wedding "cakes" were described as breads or buns. The wedding custom of the day involved stacking small sweet buns in a large pile in front of the newlyweds. The couple would attempt to kiss over the pile. Success in the process, without knocking over the pile, was a sign that there would be many children in their future.

The French sought to improve upon this English tradition and the pile of buns became the croquembouche or croquenbouche, a French "cake", often served at weddings. It is a high cone of profiteroles (cream puffs), sometimes dipped in chocolate, and usually decorated with threads of caramel, sugared almonds, flowers, or ribbons.



By the late 19th century, the traditional wedding cakes we know today had become popular. In the minds of most people, wedding cakes are "supposed to be" white. The wedding cake was originally referred to as the bride's cake. This not only highlighted the bride as the central figure of the wedding, but the white icing color also created a visual link between the bride and the cake. Today, that link is being further strengthened as more contemporary brides have their wedding cakes coordinated with their wedding gown style and color, even if it's not white!

Prior to Victorian times, most wedding cakes were also white, but not because of the symbolism of purity. Using the color white for icing had a more pragmatic basis. Icing ingredients were expensive and very difficult to come by. White icing required the use of only the finest refined sugar, so the whiter the cake, the more affluent the families appeared. The white wedding cake became an outward symbol of affluence.

Wedding cakes take center stage in the traditional cake cutting ceremony, symbolically the first task that bride and groom perform jointly as husband and wife. The first piece of cake is cut by the bride with the "help" of the groom. This task originally was delegated exclusively to the bride. It was she who cut the cake for sharing with her guests. But, as numbers of wedding guests grew, so did the size of the wedding cake, making the distribution process impossible for the bride to undertake on her own. After the cake cutting ceremony, the couple proceed to feed one other from the first slice. When the temptation for slapstick cake-smashing can be avoided, this provides another lovely piece of symbolism, the mutual commitment of bride and groom to provide for one another.

Who knew that 2000 years of history could be imbedded in that gorgeous wedding cupcake?

Planning a Summer Wedding?

Here are some seasonal inspirations that may help you visualize (and *INDIVIDUALize*) your perfect day:

- A white tent on a grassy lawn.
- Flowers of the season: Hydrangeas, daisies, sunflowers, Queen Anne's lace, lilies, lysianthus, delphinium
- Incorporate into table centerpieces: Peaches, cherries, strawberries
- Fabrics: Flowy chiffon, seersucker, cotton gingham, eyelet lace, burlap
- Beverages: Agua fresca, watermelon-mint margaritas, local microbrews, ginger-ale or lemon-lime Shandies
- Dessert: Strawberry shortcake, waiter-passed ice cream cones
- Guest entertainment: Lawn croquet à la The Great Gatsby
- Your getaway vehicle: Tandem bicycle



To Freeze or Not to Freeze?

There is hardly a bride today who can resist the tradition of **freezing the top layer of her multi-tiered cake**, with the intention of thawing and eating it on her first wedding anniversary. This tradition originated in days gone by when a christening was likely to occur within a year of the wedding. The top tier of the cake was then consumed to celebrate the christening. **Let us convince you to alter this tradition!**

Why spoil a lovely first anniversary by eating freezer-burned, year-old wedding cake? When you have [La Vie Catering](#), Canteen's special occasion division, create your wedding cake, our service includes a freshly-baked "top tier" replica on your first anniversary. When you share this delicious top tier on your anniversary, it will truly be a sweet reminder of your very special day.



Recipe of the Month

I can't let a newsletter go by without a recipe. This one's for the DIY brides-to-be who are tired, **TIRE!**, of making reservations for tastings, appointments to see venues and preview DJs, printing escort cards, and beribboning favors!

A Pisco Sour Recipe Worth Shaking

Note: The egg white may sound off-putting, but you'll never notice it once the cocktail

is shaken. It emulsifies when shaken and helps give the finished cocktail a certain je ne c'est quoi that is entirely enjoyable. Invest in the cocktail shaker and muddler...you'll be glad you did!

Pisco is a brandy distilled from the white muscat grapes grown in two main regions of South America: The area around Pisco, Peru, and the Valle del río Elqui in central Chile. Student of history that I am, I could give you WAY more info than you need about Pisco, but let's cut to the chase and mix the cocktails. It's been a long day.

Ingredients:

- 3 oz. Pisco
- 1 oz. freshly squeezed lime juice
- 4-5 raspberries (optional)
- 1 egg white
- 1 oz. simple syrup
- Ice, crushed preferred, but cubes OK
- Angostura Aromatic Bitters

Preparation:

Combine Pisco, lime juice, raspberries, egg white and simple syrup in a cocktail shaker. Muddle with a muddler to break up the raspberries. Add ice and shake vigorously to emulsify the mixture. Divide between 2 pretty martini glasses. Add 2 drops Angostura Bitters to each glass. Inhale the glorious scent of the bitters first, and take a sip. Then another. Enjoy.

Top Wedding Trends for 2011

With over 2 million weddings projected for 2011 it's no surprise to hear that brides are flocking to wedding websites to discover new trends to set their special day apart.



According to Susan Southerland, who is featured on The Style Network's, *Whose Wedding Is It Anyway?*, "The overall trend for 2011 seems to be 'subtle luxury,' with a heavy emphasis on creativity and personalization." In order to achieve this Susan suggests that each element of the wedding should be tailored to reflect the couple, but not cross the line into lavish or excessive.

Top trend setters suggest that using rich textures and bold colors will lend the feeling of luxury while being conscious of cost. To personalize their events, many brides are choosing to invite fewer guests and spend their budget on creating unique table settings and fun alternatives to wedding favors.

For a list of other unique wedding trends, read from the experts at Stylish Wedding Ideas: [Wedding Trends for 2011](#).

What People are Saying...

"Thanks for being so on top of things and so prompt and for providing great service

and great food! I know your mission is to make kosher food that tastes good and I just want to say that you consistently achieve that goal."

-- Sarah Indyk, Jewish Life Initiatives Manager
Rose Community Foundation, Denver, CO



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