

Save-the-date card etiquette

More and more couples planning to walk down the aisle are embracing save-the-date cards to give guests adequate notice that there is a party on the horizon.

Save-the-date cards do more than let guests know when you're getting hitched. The cards are a preliminary way to keep guests informed and let them know they are, in fact, on the guest list. These cards haven't always been so popular, but have risen in popularity due to longer engagement periods, a growing number of destination weddings and the growing number of couples with guests from all over the country, if not the world. Considering people often plan business trips, vacations and other excursions several months in advance, save-the-date cards help secure a greater number of attendees at your wedding.

Save-the-date announcements can vary in many ways. They may be postcards or magnets that can be attached to a refrigerator door. If you desire a cohesive theme to your wedding stationery, select the

save-the-date cards at the same time you choose your wedding invitations. This way you can ensure that either the patterns, fonts, colors, or style of the cards will match. It will also help convey the tone of the wedding. Guests often take their cues regarding the level of formality of the wedding from the type of stationery couples choose.

When to send out the save-the-date announcements is important as well. As a general rule of thumb, it is wise to mail out the cards 6 months in advance for a standard wedding. If the wedding requires travel or extended overnight accommodations, you may want to mail them out 8 months to a year in advance to give guests the time to investigate flight costs and hotel arrangements. A wedding also may necessitate planning a vacation or personal time off from work. Therefore, ample advanced notice is advisable.

Be sure to make your guest list in advance of sending out save-the-date cards. Everyone who receives a card should also be sent an invitation prior to

the wedding. Remember to include any members of your planned wedding party in the list of recipients. Just because a person has verbally confirmed attendance at your wedding doesn't mean they should be excluded from subsequent announcements. Guests may talk to one another and it is best to avoid hurt feelings and any added drama before the wedding by treating everyone equally.

Be sure to include the wedding date, your names and the location of the wedding on the save-the-date cards. You do not need to offer RSVP information or detailed specifics at this time. You may want to include a Web site URL on the card so guests can check it frequently for updates on wedding information. Be sure to also include that a formal



invitation will follow at a later date. You do not want to cause confusion by having guests think that the save-the-date card is the actual invitation. Also, make sure you address the save-the-date cards correctly to show your intentions with respect to guest invites. For example, be clear about whether children will be invited and whether a boyfriend/girlfriend or another guest can tag along.

Although save-the-date cards are not a necessity, they have become a popular part of wedding planning to eliminate confusion about invitations as well as help guests plan time off for your wedding.

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