

the wedding — deconstructed

LIKE MOLECULAR GASTRONOMY, THE WEDDING TIMELINE IS BEING PULLED APART BY A TRENDY SET OF COUPLES.

By Esther Lee | Illustration by Jordan Kay

It used to be the engagement followed by the wedding. The bach party and bridal shower were held somewhere along the way, along with the rehearsal dinner for select loved ones. After a sparkler exit and a “Just Married” sign on a getaway car, the couple hopped on a plane for the honeymoon. While much of this still holds true, the traditional wedding timeline is being slowly unraveled or, rather, deconstructed by trendy couples looking to ditch the standard model of events in favor of something more bespoke.

In molecular gastronomy, chefs who specialize in this form of culinary art prepare tasting menus that combine the same ingredients in a typical dish, but reimagined and cobbled together in an unexpected way. That’s the kind of thing we’re seeing with modern wedding timelines. To-be-weds who want the added experience of hyper-personalized weddings may find that reordering the “when” makes for a refreshing twist on tradition. Enter the deconstructed wedding.

Let’s start with the reception: This isn’t going anywhere. In fact, The Knot 2023 Real Weddings Study found that one of the most consistent traditions in weddings deals with the order of the day: a ceremony, followed by cocktail hour and a reception. Eighty-five percent of all respondents (out

of 10,000) said this was their approach. Throwing a big celebration with loved ones is part of the wedding experience. Your love is worth celebrating before the witnesses who’ve made you. Yet some couples are looking to distinguish the wedding events, either by eloping or marrying before a more intimate set of loved ones. Then, they’ll host a crowd-filled rager.

“Often it starts with a tiny gathering in a city hall or church. Right now, I would say about 70 percent of my couples are doing that,” says Tanya Pushkine, officiant and founder of The Vow Whisperer in New York City. “I work with several hundred couples a year officiating, assisting with their vows or coaching their friends to marry them, so I get a nice cross-section of people.

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Wedding planner Annie Lee of Daughter of Design and Plannie says a few of her clients have gone the deconstructed route. (In fact, credit goes to her for popularizing the clever term.) “The deconstructed wedding takes the components of the typical wedding weekend—rehearsal dinner, ceremony, cocktail hour, dinner, dancing, after-party—and mixes and matches them over a few events,” says Lee. “To me, it’s like instead of going to



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