ROYAL WEDDINGS

marry like a royal

Move over, Buckingham Palace. This side of the pond has some pretty fancy places to have a wedding too. BY AMY EISINGER

hearst castle

SAN SIMEON, CALIFORNIA

Newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst is the man behind this historic castle in the California hillside with 165 rooms and 127 acres of gardens, pools and open courtyards. Weddings are held outdoors on one of the picturesque terraces where guests can look out over the grounds, the famed Neptune Pool and even the Pacific Ocean.

biltmore ⌄

ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

If you're looking for a venue with lots of extras, this is it. Guests can take a river float trip, go horseback riding or even do a wine tasting. As for the wedding, there are several locations throughout the *8,000*-acre grounds, including a courtyard, gardens and a ballroom at the Inn.

falkenstein castle ⌃

BURNET, TEXAS

Falkenstein has 113 acres of land and views for 30 miles in every direction. Everything about the place is old-school—from the solid stone construction to the cast-iron chandeliers. And if you're looking for a grand entrance, this castle has it: The 13-foot-tall arched doors and sweeping 35-foot ceilings to the Gothic-style chapel should do the trick.

rosecliff ⌃

NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

The view of the Atlantic is great, but the real showstopper is inside the grand ballroom. There are floor-to-ceiling windows on two sides and a gorgeous painted ceiling. There's even a heart-shaped staircase—perfect for a couple photo op.

castle farms ⌃

CHARLEVOIX, MICHIGAN

With space for up to 500 guests and five room choices for the reception, Castle Farms can throw a lavish bash. Our fave spot? The King's West Garden Room. It's lined with French doors that open into grand courtyards, and white chandeliers hang from the ceiling. It's perfect for the couple who wants a night of dancing outside.

‹ dunafon castle

IDLEDALE, COLORADO

West of Denver, Dunafon is built on a peninsula that overlooks Bear Creek. With about 100 native evergreen trees lining the entrance, this castle has a secluded, rustic feel.

oheka castle ⌃

HUNTINGTON, NEW YORK

First impressions are everything. Your guests will feel like they've stepped into a time machine as they make their way up the grand driveway and through the gates. Inside doesn't disappoint either. ››

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ROYAL WEDDINGS

etiquette fit for a queen

What to say? When to curtsy? Find out what it's like to attend a royal wedding. BY AMY EISINGER

How does one meet and greet The Queen of England, anyway?

The estimated 2,000-plus guests lucky enough to be at the royal wedding ceremony (not just watching it on TV like the rest of us) will be following formal traditions. Men will give a small neck bow (bowing with your head only), and women will give a curtsy when presented with The Queen. For those she has met before, The Queen may offer her hand after the initial greeting. During the first introduction, guests will refer to her as "Your Majesty," and afterward, as "Ma'am." But what will they actually say after that? If they're in a receiving line, a simple "Your Majesty" with a curtsy will do. If they have a little extra time, they may try to slip in, "It's a pleasure to meet you." But what they won't be doing is asking any questions. That's right: It's considered impolite to be nosy around the royals. Compliments are really the only option.

What should one wear to Kate and William's wedding?

Since Kate and William's wedding is scheduled to take place in the morning, black-tie attire will not be required. However, guests will dress formally and take into consideration the fact that the ceremony will be held in Westminster Abbey (so nothing too risqué will fly!). What that means is a semiformal dress for women and a suit (or formal military attire) for men. And yes, there will be springtime hats and fascinators in bright colors, with feathers and flowers, during the ceremony as well.

What happens at the reception?

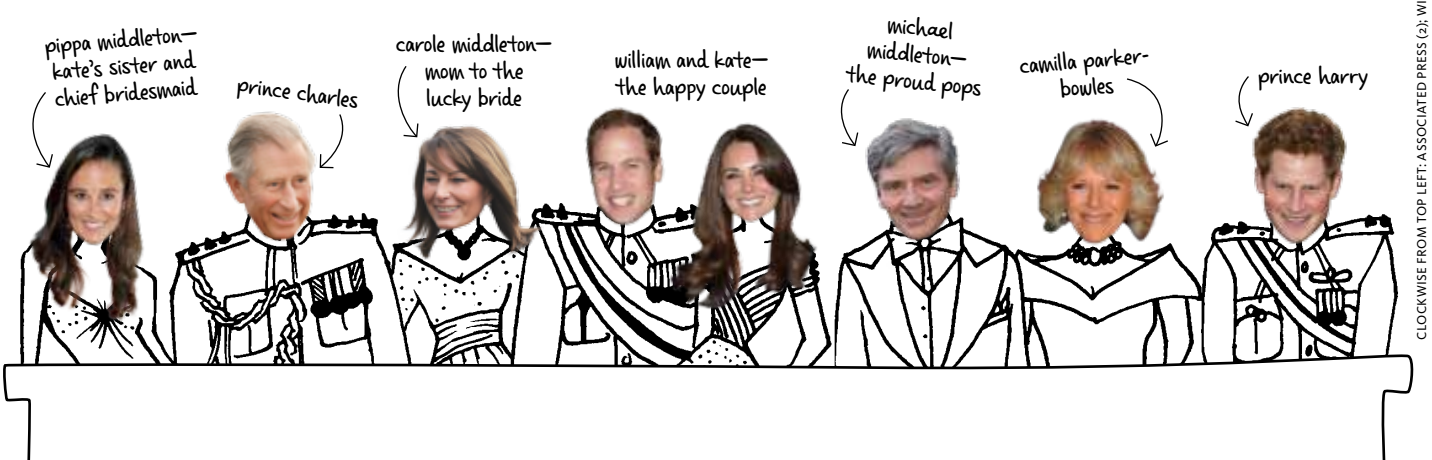
Chances are, Kate and William's evening reception, which is given by Prince Charles at Buckingham Palace, might look pretty normal in terms of the schedule. There will be formal dining and dancing for a small group (rumors put the number at less than 300). Because of the intimate setting, some of the formality will be dropped. The royals will likely greet friends and family with a handshake, or even with a kiss and a hug. But don't expect the evening to be totally casual. Guests will still need to rise when The Queen and the bride, now called Catherine, enter the room, and a dinner of several courses means everyone will need to use their best table manners. (That means there could be five or more forks at the table!)

What about gifts?

Just like for formal weddings in the US, it won't be a good idea to bring a gift to the royal wedding. Some rumors have said that Kate and William are simply requesting donations to some of the charities they're involved with, rather than actual registry gifts. Either way, showing up with a piece of fine china at Buckingham Palace is a bad idea. >>

who's who at the royal high table

Following tradition, here's the seating plan for the newlyweds' table.



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the royal route

After the ceremony, the couple will travel by carriage from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace. BY AMY EISINGER

experts estimate up to **1 million** people could turn out for the wedding

12:20 PM 4

horse guards parade

Horse Guards Parade is the open area that was once used for jousting—it's right in front of Horse Guards (the building shown at right). You'll have a view of the London Eye (the large Ferris wheel now called EDF Energy London Eye), and if you're into politics, this is your spot. The Cabinet Office and 10 Downing Street are super-close-by.

12:15 PM 3

whitehall

Marked by a statue of Charles I, Whitehall runs through the heart of London. If you're into sightseeing, hang out near the northern end of the road, close to historic Trafalgar Square. That means you'll be right next to London's National Gallery—but don't expect it to be open. April 29 has been declared a bank holiday, meaning public offices, schools and other businesses in London will be closed.

William gets ready here!

12:25 PM 5

the mall

With Buckingham Palace at its western end, and Clarence House and St. James Palace (shown at left) located near the road as well, the Mall has all the royal realty. During The Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002, the Mall was packed with over a million people.

Kate gets ready here!

12:05 PM 2

parliament square

It's the first stop along the newlyweds' route, just across the way from the abbey. Stand near the Palace of Westminster (shown at left) to catch a glimpse of Big Ben. Feeling homesick? There's a statue of Abraham Lincoln nearby.

12:30 PM 6

buckingham palace

The newlyweds will celebrate in style with a champagne breakfast hosted by The Queen. Somewhere around 900 guests are expected to attend—but Kate and William will miss some of it, since they'll be taking official royal wedding portraits. That evening, around 7 p.m., Prince Charles will host a more intimate reception for the couple. ››

10:55 AM 1

westminster abbey

Without the Cinderella horse-drawn carriage, Kate's big dress reveal won't happen until she starts walking down the aisle—and greets the up to 2,200 people that can fit inside the abbey (shown at right).

start here!

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