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The Knot 2020 Real Weddings Study [COVID-19 Edition]

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2021 to Be One of the Busiest Years for Weddings as a Result of Pent-Up Demand for the Return of In-Person Celebrations; Health & Safety Will Remain the Top Priority, With Some Planning to Require Guests Be Tested or Vaccinated

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Despite Being a Challenging Year for Engaged Couples and Wedding Professionals, 2020 Introduced New Trends That Will Positively Impact the Future of Weddings

****NEW YORK, NY—February 3, 2021—****Following a difficult year for engaged couples and wedding professionals alike, 2021 offers a glimmer of hope for the return of in-person weddings—with a heightened focus on health and safety. Vendors and to-be-weds continue to prioritize health and safety by incorporating face masks, social distancing, hand sanitizer and more. Plus, as vaccinations roll out across the nation and COVID-19 testing becomes more accessible, some are considering additional precautions, such as requiring guests to get tested (36%) or vaccinated (19%) prior to their celebrations.¹ The year 2021 is anticipated to be one of the busiest years for weddings in decades, as [The Knot 2020 Real Weddings Study \[COVID-19 Edition\]](#), released today, reveals 47% of couples who planned to wed in 2020 will now celebrate in 2021 or later. The study, which surveyed more than 7,600 individuals with weddings originally scheduled to take place in 2020, also unveiled silver linings around how necessary trends emerging from COVID-19 have impacted [future wedding celebrations](#) for the better.

According to The Knot 2020 Real Weddings Study [COVID-19 Edition], nearly all couples (96%) who planned to wed in 2020 altered their original wedding plans to accommodate evolving conditions of the pandemic and keep health and safety top of mind. As a result, 88% of couples who moved forward with hosting a ceremony and reception last year adjusted their celebrations after almost everything had been planned or was nearly finalized and about to take place. Millions of small businesses who make up the wedding industry were impacted around the nation as well. However, despite all the hardship brought about by COVID-19, 93% of weddings originally scheduled in 2020 were not canceled but instead adjusted to comply with local event restrictions or rescheduled for a later date—confirming that even in the toughest of times, love will prevail.

"Couples in 2020 refocused their energy on their love for each other and for those closest to them, while reflecting on the values and components of their relationships that matter most," shared Kristen Maxwell Cooper, editor in chief of The Knot. "With that, we'll see more variety with event formats and wedding day details at future weddings, as couples embrace their unique priorities and purposes. Out of a year that posed unforeseen challenges for all—especially for those who planned to wed in 2020 and the vendors who planned to help bring these celebrations to life—comes a time where individuals are yearning to celebrate the milestone of marriage once again surrounded by all of their loved ones when it's safe to do so. As a result, we anticipate seeing more weddings scheduled to take place in the months and years to come than ever before."

The Future of Weddings in 2021 & Beyond

****The Busiest Months & Years for Weddings Are Upon Us—****While just over 4 in 10 couples moved forward with hosting a wedding ceremony and reception in 2020, nearly half of couples moved their reception (32%) or their entire wedding (15%) to 2021 or later. Among those who postponed their reception, just over half plan to have their wedding prior to June 2021, while 43% have set their new wedding date in the second half of the year (5% selected new wedding dates in 2022 and beyond). Additionally, 8 in 10 couples who got engaged during the pandemic have set their upcoming wedding date, the majority (73%) of which will take place in 2021.² With these postponed celebrations in addition to those originally set for 2021, the months and years ahead will be filled with more weddings than ever before. Plus, a third of

couples who wed (with both a reception and ceremony) in 2020 plan to host a larger celebration in the future to commemorate their union with loved ones once large gatherings are permitted again.

Health & Safety to Remain Top of Mind for Future Weddings—For most engaged couples (76%), health and safety was the top priority when planning a wedding in 2020. As a result, 9 in 10 couples who hosted both a ceremony and reception last year modified their wedding plans in order to ensure their celebrations would be safe for all in attendance, most commonly offering hand sanitizer (90%) and face masks (71%) to guests, and appropriately distancing seats and tables (88%). Some couples took health protocols a step further by eliminating dancing (15%), taking guests' temperatures upon entering the wedding (13%), and requiring guests to take COVID tests prior to the celebrations (4%). On average, The Knot 2020 Real Weddings Study [COVID-19 Edition] found couples spent \$280 on health and safety precautions at their celebrations last year.

Looking ahead, many couples will turn to COVID-19 testing to keep themselves, their guests and their vendors as safe as possible. In fact, more than a third of individuals with upcoming weddings in 2021 (who responded to a poll on [The Knot's Instagram](#)) report they will require their guests to get tested ahead of their celebrations (36%).¹ Additionally, nearly 1 in 5 to-be-weds plan to require their guests to be vaccinated in order to attend their wedding.¹ However, it's important to note that while vaccine distributions have offered to-be-weds hope while planning their upcoming festivities, unless the majority of one's guests and vendors are vaccinated, wearing masks and proper social distancing will be a necessity through much of 2021. Such focus on health and safety will long be a priority for couples and wedding professionals even after the elimination of the threat of COVID-19, as wedding pros will take appropriate measures to ensure future events are as safe as possible.

Focusing on What Matters Most—The global COVID-19 pandemic encouraged couples to reflect on the wedding details most important to them and refocus on the two key elements of their celebration—love and relationships. More than 60% of couples who got married in 2020 said it was important for them to take the next step in their relationship and marry their partner, regardless of the changes they had to make due to the pandemic. Although event restrictions forced many couples in 2020 to downsize their celebrations (average guest count: 66, compared to 131 in 2019), it was important for many couples to incorporate their loved ones, even from afar. In fact, more than 4 in 10 couples who wed in 2020 incorporated a virtual component into their wedding and half of couples with upcoming wedding dates will do the same to include guests who can't attend in person.³ The COVID-19 pandemic encouraged couples to throw away all preconceived notions of what their weddings should entail in 2020, instead prioritizing what is truly important to them, a sentiment we anticipate to continue in a post-COVID world.

With 2020 limiting everyone's ability to partake in large gatherings, couples aren't the only ones craving wedding festivities, as wedding guests are also longing to be surrounded by loved ones once again. With that, future weddings will serve as moments of gratitude, as the pandemic has reminded couples, guests and vendors nationwide of the importance of, and need for, in-person celebrations.

Embracing New Event Formats & Experiences—As a result of COVID-19, many couples altered their original wedding formats and timelines to accommodate evolving pandemic conditions and local event restrictions, whether by downsizing guest lists (80%), adding a virtual component (43%), or moving their wedding ceremony and/or reception outdoors (35%). With that, new types of celebrations were introduced, such as [minimonies](#) (utilized by 42% of couples who had a ceremony in 2020) and [anniversary receptions](#)—a larger celebration following an elopement or minimony on an anniversary of their choosing—while already-existing wedding formats like [micro-](#) and [sequel weddings](#) skyrocketed in popularity. As the pandemic continues to impact celebrations across the nation, minimonies, micro-weddings, sequel weddings and anniversary receptions will remain popular concepts. Furthermore, these concepts will offer to-be-weds added variety post-COVID when planning a wedding that meets their personal needs and embraces their unique wedding visions, especially for those who may want an intimate event followed by a larger celebration.

Additionally, last year opened many couples' eyes to the benefit of weekday weddings, as non-weekend dates increased the likelihood of their vendor teams' availability. In fact, 14% of couples who hosted both a ceremony and reception in 2020 took advantage of weekday weddings, and these formats aren't going anywhere anytime soon. Weekday weddings offer greater flexibility for to-be-weds as they plan their upcoming weddings and serve as an extension to the weekend, while also giving vendors the ability to book additional couples whom they may not have been able to accommodate with a weekend wedding date.

Similarly, many wedding trends that arose in 2020 will remain popular concepts post-pandemic. Couples will continue to opt for virtual components to include loved ones who may not be able to be with them in person and outdoor celebrations will continue to be popular as many couples have reconnected with nature and fostered their love for their local surroundings in 2020. Furthermore, couples will continue to rely on technology for a seamless and convenient planning experience—from [connecting with vendors](#) virtually and visualizing upcoming celebrations through augmented reality, to managing [registries online](#) and utilizing [wedding websites](#) to streamline communications with guests.

Registries Reflect Future Endeavors & Experiences—While COVID-19 forced many to shift their original wedding plans, couples continued to progress their relationships and plan for their futures together. With so many spending additional time together at home, retail registry products (95%) remained popular among the majority of to-be-weds who created a registry in 2020, as they sought to elevate their at-home essentials. Additionally, many couples (46%) opted for cash registries to help finance future experiences and milestones: Among couples on [The Knot Registry](#) in 2020, the most popular cash fund categories were honeymoon and new home funds, with 'Post-COVID Bucket List Travels,' 'New Family,' and 'Moving/Relocation' cash funds on the rise over the past year.⁴ In the coming months and years, couples will continue to utilize their wedding registries for all their newlywed needs, especially as they plan for their lives together in a post-COVID world.

Ultimately, Love Conquers All—Although 2020 posed many challenges for to-be-wed couples and the entire wedding industry, it also proved love will always prevail. The pandemic ushered in an era of unity as small businesses and couples around the nation rallied together to find solutions and uncover ways to celebrate marriage, even in the most challenging times. Though most couples were forced to adjust their original plans, 93% of weddings were not canceled—and that in itself will be cause for celebration when it's safe to gather in large numbers once again. Additionally, despite feeling stressed (58%) and anxious (46%) while navigating plans for their upcoming weddings, many couples who planned to wed in 2020 said they felt supported by others (44%), fortunate (25%) and optimistic about the future (18%).

For more information on how weddings were impacted by COVID-19 in 2020, please visit [theknot.com/realweddingsstudy](https://www.theknot.com/realweddingsstudy) and check out [The Knot's COVID-19 Resource Hub](#) for advice on how to navigate planning a wedding amid a global pandemic.

Source_1 — Based on Instagram Story Poll hosted by The Knot on February 1, 2021, requesting input from to-be-weds with weddings scheduled to take place in 2021; 10,981 individuals responded to whether they would require guests to get tested prior to the wedding, while 11,388 individuals responded about whether they would require guests to be vaccinated

Source_2 — The Knot 2020 Jewelry & Engagement Study

Source_3 — The Global COVID-19 Weddings Report; conducted in December 2020

Source_4 — Based on user data from The Knot Registry among couples who created a registry between January 1, 2020, through December 31, 2020

******Methodology**

****The Knot 2020 Real Weddings Study [COVID-19 Edition] captured responses from more than 7,600 US couples who originally set their wedding date for between January 1 and December 31, 2020; respondents were recruited via email invitation from The Knot Worldwide. Survey respondents represent a variety of ethnic, education and income levels, and are geographically dispersed.

About The Knot The Knot is the nation's leading multiplatform wedding resource offering a seamless, all-in-one planning experience—from finding inspiration and local vendors to creating and managing all guest experiences, wedding registries and more. The trusted brand reaches a majority of engaged couples in the US through the #1 wedding planning website TheKnot.com and #1 iOS and Android mobile app The Knot Wedding Planner, The Knot national wedding magazine, and The Knot book series. Since its inception, The Knot has inspired approximately 25 million couples to plan a wedding that's uniquely them. Visit The Knot online at [TheKnot.com](https://www.TheKnot.com) and follow on social media: Facebook.com/TheKnot and @TheKnot on [Twitter](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Instagram](#).

[< 2021 WeddingWire Newlywed Report: COVID-19 Edition](#)

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