

How Much Do I Give For Wedding Gift



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Your college roommate or long time childhood friend invites you to their wedding. Or better yet, you've got a big family and your second cousin Joe is getting married and last time you saw him was two years ago at the family reunion. Now you have got to spend money to get an airline ticket, block a hotel room, and possibly buy a new dress or suit for the upcoming wedding this summer. It dawns on you that now you've got to figure out how much is the right amount to give for a wedding gift. You are no Miss Manners by any stretch of the imagination, but you don't want to walk away like some cheapskate that the wedding couple laughs at that evening when they open up their gifts. So, how much should you give for a wedding gift?

Everyone has different thoughts on this, but let's talk first if you can't attend the wedding. By no means should you consider a wedding invitation as a personal invoice for you to spend money. If you don't attend the wedding and it's someone close and personal to you, sending some type of gift (not cash) or spending more money off of the couple's engagement registry should suffice. Getting a wedding invitation can certainly play tricks on your mind when it comes to making the right financial decisions if you cannot attend a wedding. Don't feel like the invitation is a measure of extortion for you to turn your wallet upside down if you don't attend. Make a gesture that makes sense if you are close the couple, and if you aren't don't feel bad if you don't do something more than a small gift from their registry.

The real challenge begins weighing out your total financial decision about the money you have to invest getting or going to the wedding. We've always stuck to a very simple rule that you should try to cover your plate. Sometimes, we don't know if our plate costs \$50 or \$250, but you should use your best judgment based upon the location and what you may know about the size of the wedding. There are many articles on etiquette that you don't have to worry about covering your dinner and just do what's affordable in your budget. You don't want to spend money you don't have to make the bride and groom happy, but let's be honest that if you give them a Wok from Wal-Mart they probably won't use it.

If it is a destination wedding or your travel costs take you far away you can consider this in your overall gift especially if it is a close friend that really wants to see you. Destination wedding couples generally don't want gifts as they know the cost of you (and your guest) making it to the wedding.

Most etiquette sites will say the following, "Think of it this way: the cost of the gift does not equal the price of admission into the party. The wedding gift should be thought of as more of a gesture that commemorates and helps the couple start their new life together." (source: fabandfru.com) We're going to tell you that if you want to make a smart money move, do your very best to give cash or a gift card that would cover your plate for the wedding.

The debate around this will probably go on for many years to come about what the 'right thing to do' is when it comes to gift giving at the next wedding you attend. At the end of day, come up with a rule that makes sense to you so you don't have to spend a lot of time internally debating who you are 'supposed to do'.

