



How to have the perfect outdoor wedding

Two women share their experiences and advice to help you plan an unforgettable day

Phoebe Leonard

Outdoor weddings have become more popular in recent years, especially since Covid-19 made indoor weddings more difficult for a while. But although outdoor weddings can be beautiful, they come with a lot of challenges, which may deter couples from choosing to have one.

Georgie Mitchell, 33, is the owner of Georgina Rose Events, a wedding planning and coordinating company. She says: "Outdoor weddings have a lot more set up and steps involved. And people are afraid of the unknown, especially the weather."

But if you do want an outdoor wedding, how can you make sure it goes well? According to Mitchell, as long as your expectations are realistic and you've made weather plans, you can have a great day.

"There will be things you don't know, so work with vendors that have experience in outdoor weddings," she advises. "And remember to think about the boring things like toilets, generators for power, and parking."

Lucy and Alice are two brides who celebrated their love in open-air ceremonies. Here, they share the details of their days and what they learned about holding an outdoor wedding.

Photo: Lucy and Matthew got married in the beautiful Welsh countryside

Lucy and Matthew

Lucy and Matthew Crozier, 38 and 33, didn't intend to have an outdoor wedding, but found themselves drawn to venues that had the option. A recommendation from their caterer led them to Talhenbont Hall in Criccieth, where they got married in 2024.

"We weren't even fully through the gates before we realised it was the one," Lucy says. "They had a purpose-built area for the ceremony that was different to your traditional chairs on grass, and the backdrop of north Wales was too good to say no to."

Once they'd found the venue they loved, Lucy was set on having an outdoor wedding. But she admits that this determination stopped her from thinking about other plans: "I wanted the outdoor wedding so much that it would've been a huge disappointment if we'd had to move indoors. Our venue offered a beautiful indoor space, but I didn't give it enough consideration in the planning phase. If I was doing it again, I'd think much harder about a backup plan."

Thankfully, they got lucky and had beautiful summer sun on their day, but Lucy warns you can also have too much of a good thing. Though she previously thought it couldn't be too warm for an outdoor wedding, she was proven wrong.

"There was no cover to keep our guests cool, so we moved people to the ceremony area last-minute to stop them overheating. It was also a lot of work to be in such a big dress in the sun!"

The weather may have been hotter than expected, but Lucy and Matthew had put things in place that made it easier for themselves and their guests. Their choice to have an ice cream cart after the ceremony was appreciated, with Lucy describing it as a "godsend". Their baskets of essentials in the bathrooms also proved useful.

"It may seem like an unnecessary inconvenience, but the guests will be thankful," Lucy says. "We included things like sunscreen, hay fever tablets, bug spray, and deodorant, and they all got used up, probably because it was so warm. But even if your wedding was on a cooler day, you could have things like blankets and handwarmers and it would be just as helpful."

When preparing for an outdoor wedding, Lucy's main piece of advice is to have a plan for the weather and listen to your vendors' advice. She also recommends setting a deadline for when you'll decide if plans need to be changed.



Photo credits: Big Day Productions



"Our venue has a policy where two days before, they decide if we need to move inside," she explains. "But if you're the one deciding, have a date or time when you make the call. There's so much happening on the wedding morning, and your vendors will need time to adjust."

She also advises brides to not rush and take some time to slow down: "I regret not pausing for ten minutes and having some time with my dad for pictures and words of advice before walking down the aisle."

Though it was hotter than expected and not everything went to plan, Lucy and Matthew ultimately loved their wedding, especially their time together.

"We both had the most wonderful day," Lucy says. "It was so fun, and it really is a day that is all about you and your happiness. But I think the

best bits for both of us were the handful of moments that we got to be alone, like sitting in the garden with a cup of tea at 7am."



Photo credits: James Morrison Photography



Alice and Tom

Alice and Tom Marsh, 31 and 30, had their wedding plans shattered when Covid-19 hit the UK in 2020. With a church ceremony and hotel reception out of the window, they opted for an outdoor wedding at Cheshire Woodland Weddings, Cheshire, in 2021.

"We'd had to scrap our original plans and didn't want to push the day back any further," Alice explains. "I'd previously seen Cheshire Woodland Weddings when we started planning and I loved it, so we changed our wedding to get married there."

After the initial issues, it was a relief for Alice to book with a venue that offered so much and sorted most of the day. A variety of activities were available to choose from, including falconry displays, archery, mini golf, and lawn games. There was also an outside bar separate from the ceremony area.

But it wasn't entirely smooth sailing. Although the venue had a barn for bad weather, heavy rain early in the day caused worries that the ceremony would be disrupted.

"We were getting ready at home, and it was raining so heavily that it was bouncing off the floor," Alice says. "I was watching it, thinking 'oh god'. Thankfully by the time we got to the venue, it was just a bit overcast and cloudy."

And the weather wasn't the only issue. Despite Alice and Tom paying extra for a gluten-free option, one of their guests was given pizza containing gluten and became ill. Another miscommunication with the caterers meant that the falconry displays almost didn't happen.



"We booked a pizza company to come do food for us, and I thought they'd have a little van. But they started setting up on the green with a tent, and the wedding planner said that if we wanted the falconry, they'd have to go somewhere else. I told them to move because I wanted the birds!"

Though she had her own worries, Alice's biggest piece of advice for outdoor weddings is to be as casual as possible about the weather. She says: "You could book for August and think

you're guaranteed great weather, but that's never the case.

It doesn't matter when you book, because you have no control over it on the day."

She advises couples to have a backup plan and prepare for the worst, so that you can still have the best day possible. And although there were some problems, overall, Alice and Tom loved their wedding, with Alice saying, "we had such a beautiful day."

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