

# Wedding Traditions



PAPUA NEW GUINEA

## WHAT DOES THE BRIDE WEAR?

The bride wears her traditional clothing. This includes a grass skirt, traditional bead necklaces, a headdress made of feathers and beads from the respective village, and it is adorned in different valuable items such as modern money, doa (pigs' tusk) and traditional money (a shell known as toea). This traditional money is also worn around her waist, around her body like a sash and as necklaces. The more shells she wears, represents her value and worth to her family. The final part of her attire would be her tattoos. They are traditional marking that are marked along her legs, arm and face and represent her journey to womanhood.

## WHAT DOES THE GROOM WEAR?

The groom also wears traditional clothing. He would wear a laplap (a cloth) around his waist, arm bands made from pandanus leaves, beads and shells threaded to make sashes, necklaces made from seashells with a doa on the end and lastly, his head piece. This head piece is decorated with bird feathers and depending on how big it is, it represents his position in his village.

## CEREMONY TRADITIONS

The ceremony is usually held at the groom's family home. The bride's entire family and clan make their way to the groom's home. With them they carry long sticks that have valuable items tied to them. These sticks are known as Ivaras. What is on these sticks has changed over time, in the past it would be crops such as sweet potatoes, banana and casava, as well as the traditional money. Today they have more modern items, like bags of flowers, rice and other household items like dishes, pots and pans, and both traditional and modern money. When they arrive, they offer up what they have brought and inspect what the groom's family has purchased. Usually, the groom's family must put together more as they are "paying" for the bride. If all is acceptable, the marriage is socially accepted and recognised.

## SPECIAL TRADITIONS IN YOUR CULTURE

**Are there any cultural symbols or items used?** The Doa, the groom's headpiece, the bride's tattoos and the Ivaras are all important items.

**Are the parents involved in any part of the ceremony?** Yes, it is usually the parents who organize the ceremony and assess the items brought to see if they are adequate.

**Is there a certain food/ dessert that is served?** In modern times the food does not really matter, but one staple that is always there is a dish called Bariva. A dish made from sago powder and banana and is boiled in coconut cream.

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CHINA

## WHAT DOES THE BRIDE WEAR?

Most commonly wear today: the qipao or cheongsam and the qun kwa. Qipao or Cheongsam: This Chinese traditional wedding outfit consists of a long, form-fitting red dress with a Mandarin collar and side slits, often featuring gold embroidery and elaborate adornments. Qun Kwa: This two-piece set consists of a jacket ("kwa") and a long skirt ("qun") and usually features a dragon and phoenix to symbolize male and female harmony. "It's typically red with gold thread, symbolizing wealth and fertility,

## WHAT DOES THE GROOM WEAR?

Outfit choices for grooms today are the tang suit or tangzhuang. Tang Suit or Tangzhuang: This traditional Chinese groom outfit consists of a long robe paired with a mandarin jacket, often in deep red, gold or sometimes even navy.

## CEREMONY TRADITIONS?

The tea ceremony is one of the biggest components in a traditional Chinese wedding. Once this is done, it is a sign of marriage in the eyes of Chinese tradition. It's a ceremony where tea is served to the elders of the couple and a chance for the elders to impart well wishes and advice to the soon-to-be newlyweds. The newly married couple honour their parents by serving them tea. They kneel and serve the parents and in-laws tea. Not only do you serve the parents tea, but you must also serve tea to all of your elders in the family

## SPECIAL TRADITIONS IN YOUR CULTURE

### Is there something the bride or groom does?

The journey to pick up the bride is a lively affair. It can involve anything from the use of firecrackers, playing of drums and gongs, or even a lion dance troupe. A child usually walks in front of the procession together with the groom to symbolize fertility.

Testing the Groom - Chuangmen, also known as door games, is a key highlight of the day's festivities. "These days, the games have been modernized with fun tests," explains Froelich. "Typically they're prepared by the bridesmaids to test the groom's determination to marry the bride and to win approval from the bride's family."

### Are there any cultural symbols or items used?

Red and gold play a critical role in all Chinese wedding decorations. The former is linked to love, success, happiness, prosperity, luck, fertility, honour, and loyalty, while the latter is a symbol of wealth.

### Do the couple who are marrying give something to each other?

Exchange of Vows - Depending on the couple, the ceremonial exchanging of vows may take place at a local government office, or in an intimate ceremony where the couple stands in front of the family altar to pay respect to ancestors and conclude with a bow to each other

### Is there a certain food/ dessert that is served?

The wedding banquet is a lavish eight-course affair hosted by the couple's parents. The evening's menu consists of symbolic, auspicious foods: a fish course for abundance, a suckling pig to symbolize the bride's purity, a poultry dish (usually chicken or duck) for peace and unity, and a sweet lotus seed dessert for fertility.

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## FIJIAN HINDU

### WHAT DOES THE BRIDE WEAR?

The Fijian Hindu bride traditionally wears a red or maroon saree or lehenga. Her outfit is often heavily embroidered with gold thread and embellished with sequins and beads. She wears gold jewellery including bangles, earrings, and necklaces, and her hands and feet are adorned with intricate henna (mehndi) designs. A maang tikka (forehead jewellery) and dupatta (veil) complete her ensemble.

### WHAT DOES THE GROOM WEAR?

The groom typically wears a sherwani or kurta with churidar pants, often in shades of cream, gold, or maroon. He also wears a dupatta draped over one shoulder.

### CEREMONY TRADITIONS

The wedding ceremony is usually held at a Hindu temple or a family home decorated with marigolds, lights, and colourful drapery. The bride's family arrive first, followed by the Groom. The groom often arrives with a Baraat (wedding procession) accompanied by music and dancing. A few prayers are exchanged before the bride arrives to the ceremony. The ceremony is hosted by a Pandit (priest) who conducts prayers at what's known as a Mandap (altar). The couple is seated throughout the ceremony whilst prayers take place.

### SPECIAL TRADITIONS IN YOUR CULTURE

#### Is there something that symbolises a long and happy marriage?

Leading up to the ceremony there are days of rituals involving the bride and grooms' family that prepares them for this union and symbolises a strong connection to each other's families. There are also rituals completed straight after the ceremony which involves the couples' immediate families. Once all rituals are completed the couple follows with a traditional western reception the day after the ceremony.

#### Do the couple who are marrying give something to each other?

The couple often exchanges rings and garlands during the ceremony. In some families, they also give each other gifts or tokens after the wedding as a personal gesture.

#### Are the parents involved in any part of the ceremony?

Yes, the bride's parents play a major role. The parents from both sides also participate in the blessings and rituals throughout the wedding.

#### Is there a certain food/dessert that is served?

Yes, Fijian Hindu weddings include a vegetarian feast known as a saatvik meal, featuring dishes like puri, curry, rice, chutneys, and daal. For dessert, gulab jamun, barfi, and laddoos are commonly served, along with Fijian-Indian favourites like lolo buns (sweet buns cooked in coconut milk). The family also does not consume alcohol leading up the ceremony.