

Nice Day for a White Wheels Wedding

HOW TO RIDE A BIKE IN YOUR WEDDING DRESS

By Kelley Newman
Photos by Steve Schultz



Kelley and her crew ride to the ceremony.

started dating was to go on a bike ride. Three years later, he proposed to me at the end of a 400-mile bike tour. Biking with our friends and family has brought us closer to them and to each other. For us, a biking wedding was the perfect way to tie all of those connections together.

Choose a Route

I know you really, really love to ride your bike. But you are not going to want to ride 40 miles to your wedding. The ideal wedding route is flat, scenic, and safe. Our 2-1/2-mile ride along the river path let us enjoy the beauty of the day without worrying about traffic or getting too sweaty.

Pick the Bike

While the groom and other men attending your wedding can ride virtually any bike, riding a bike in a wedding dress is not as easy as it sounds. Choosing the right bike will help make your wedding dreams a reality. Before the wedding, I donned an old bridesmaid's dress and tried riding around the cul-de-sac on several of my bikes. To my surprise, bikes with a top tube worked better than ladies' style bikes, because they did a better job of holding the dress up away from the wheels and chain. For the wedding, I borrowed a friend's beach cruiser, which came with a chain guard for additional protection. With the help of my friends and family, who rode behind me and cheerfully shouted out instructions like "Pull the dress up on the

right," I made it to the ceremony without a single greasy chain mark on my white dress.

Find the Dress.

A simple wedding dress is well-suited for biking. I wore a strapless, tea-length dress and had no problems while riding. Some of the women riding with me found that skirts made of light material tend to catch the wind and fly up more than those made with heavier materials. The men in our wedding wore suits, with Velcro leg straps made by my mother to keep their pants from getting caught in the chain. Shoes are also a consideration: my brother's girlfriend lost one of her high heels while riding along the river path. To make my ride easier, I wore comfortable sandals for the bike ride and switched to my wedding shoes at the ceremony site.

Be Prepared

Riding a bike to your wedding adds another element of uncertainty to an already complex day. Have a back-up plan for getting to the ceremony if the weather doesn't cooperate. You and your guests might be thirsty when you get to the ceremony, so make sure water will be

available. Have a photographer stashed along the route to get priceless pictures of your special day. Finally, it's a good idea to have someone bring a first-aid kit to the ceremony site in case there are accidents along the ride. No one was injured at our wedding, but there were a few close calls: at one point, the chain fell off my sister's beach cruiser, making it impossible for her to brake. Luckily, her hero of a boyfriend was able to grab onto her handlebars and stop both of their bikes by sliding his feet on the ground.

Enjoy Your Day

Once you have followed these simple planning tips, there's nothing left to do but have a great time riding your bike to your wedding! I rode to the ceremony with my bridesmaids and family, and I loved hearing everyone giggling, shouting, and ringing their bike bells festively behind me. The ride calmed my nerves and left me feeling simply excited to be getting married. After a brief rest, during which Josh and I got married, we jumped on the bikes again and headed back to the starting point. Our families had decorated our bikes with streamers and noisemakers, and Josh and I grinned at each other as we rode side-by-side on our first ride as husband and wife. It was sweet.

Although the wedding dress worked great, Kelley plans to return to spandex and jerseys for post-wedding bike rides.

"I've got a great idea,"

I said enthusiastically to Josh. "Let's ride our bikes to our wedding!"

My long-suffering fiancé sighed. He wasn't convinced. That is, he wasn't convinced until I got him out on our proposed route: a river path bordered by desert willows draping pink and white flowers and gorgeous views of the mountains surrounding the city.

He really got into it when we pulled into the park where we would get married. A sidewalk swooped from the river path to a flower-framed terrace, and Josh started to imagine how he and his groomsmen would ride in dramatically and skid to a stop in front of all the guests. What an entrance that would be! At that moment, we knew we wanted to bike to our wedding. However, as we started planning, we found little information on weddings involving bikes. So this, dear biking friend, is your comprehensive guide to combining your two greatest loves: your fiancé and your bike, into one very special wedding day on wheels.

Be True to Yourself

Let's be honest: a biking wedding is not for everyone. But if you're like us, biking has been a large part of your life. You've spent a lot of time in the saddle, laughing, sweating, maybe even crying on occasion. Your bike has taken you to amazing places, but most important, it has connected you with people: people who have inspired you, who have entertained you on long rides, maybe someone with whom you've fallen in love. One of the first activities Josh and I did when we



Josh and Kelley on their first ride as husband and wife.