



Are you a Bridezilla?

Up close and personal with all shapes of bridezillas, little did wedding planner **Leticia Hsu** know she'd turn into one herself.

"The bridezilla is not a mystical creature or even related to the movie icon Godzilla, but is nevertheless very real and even more terrifying. The sweetest and most understanding girl can turn out to be a bridezilla overnight, no toxic waste required. The bridezilla's natural habitat is the ballroom of a grand hotel; she eats bridesmaids for breakfast and if you tell her that you won't be able to get the right shade of red roses she wants, well, good luck with that!"

"I should know. I was one. Ask any of my wedding vendors, my bridal party, my friends and family, and they will all agree that I went on a rampage (to put it lightly) when planning my wedding. They shivered whenever I called to ask a question."

"The bridezilla's main aim (in her terms) is to have a flawless wedding, perfect (according to her) to a T. As her friend, just stand back so you won't get burnt. As the groom, this is a true test of whether you love her or not. If you can survive this, you can survive anything."

"In my case, my husband and I were dating for 18 years before he popped the question, and he knew me so well that he proposed two years in advance to the perfect date WE wanted so I would have ample time to bask in the joy of being engaged (and being a bridezilla!)."



Tell-tale signs of a bridezilla

- You want a shade of 'happy' green that only you know and feel
- You make your bridesmaids agree to lose weight for the wedding, keep a chart on their progress and then weigh them periodically to make sure they're on track
- You make them wear gloves to protect the hundreds of invitations they are stuffing into envelopes for you
- You choose the ugliest bridesmaid's dress in history so that you'll look 'extra beautiful' by comparison
- The wedding ceremony ends at noon but the reception doesn't start until 6pm. Whatever. It's your special day, so everyone else can just deal with it and wait
- You get mad if guests don't dress up to your standards
- You ask for the reception venue to be painted to match your colour theme, the chandeliers to be more cheery and the carpets to match the colour of your eyes
- You demand three types of nuts in your wedding cake, even though the groom is allergic to nuts
- You try six makeup artists (no matter the cost) before deciding on one for the morning and one for the evening
- Although no one else can see that 1mm discrepancy in the way the branch on the tree in the wedding venue (it's a garden wedding) is tilted more to the left than the other branch (on your invitation card), you spot it and reprints the entire batch of cards
- You bought, customised and shipped every little detail you can think of from all over the world. From faux diamonds to strew on the tables, a customised parasol costing USD250 (almost RM800) just to use for photos, to even flying in the right scent of essential oil for the restrooms
- When you tell people, "I'm getting married!" without any mention of your husband-to-be. This is almost always followed by, "I've got so much work to do now."

Stuck?

Here are simple solutions to your common bridezilla problems.

The issue: TOO MANY COOKS

Everyone has something to say about everything. Among congratulatory wishes, you will get unsolicited advice, horror stories and negative vibes from friends and family who think they are helping.

Fix it: Decide what the both of you (yes, including the groom) want and stay centred. Set clear boundaries about what you want and stick to them. Some weddings are for the sake of other people (sad to say) but the marriage is for the two of you.

The issue: FIXATION ON PERFECTION

Some brides give the wedding day too much power. They believe that the perfect wedding will mean the perfect marriage and perfect life. There is an underlying fear that if something goes wrong with the wedding, it is a sign that will make or break the marriage.

Fix it: Step back, breathe. Now look at it with a fresh set of eyes: the wedding day, while important, is only one of many experiences and memories you will share together. The most important part is when you walk down the aisle into the arms of the person you love (so don't stare at your bridesmaids if they are not standing in perfect formation).

The issue: STRESS

Wedding planning is like taking on a part-time job (sometimes it can become full time); the stress of deadlines, demands of the family and managing vendors; it's no wonder you go a bit loco.

Fix it: Remember that although the wedding is the most important party you will throw, it is exactly only that, a party. Guests are inspired by the love they feel in the room. Who cares whether you had 28 cupcakes which had exactly 28 hearts, all 100 per cent...

Say "I do!" to budget-friendly weddings

You don't have to empty your savings to have a dream wedding. **Chua Siew Ching** gets tips from the experts for weddings that'll fit your budget.

	The budget: RM10,000	The budget: RM20,000	The budget: RM30,000
DRESS	<p>Buy off the rack. "Think of a simple dress you can dress up with accessories," says wedding planner Leticia Hsu of Elysium Weddings and Parties (www.elysiumweddings.net). For the groom, all he needs is a new shirt to update a suit he already owns.</p> <p>COST: RM1,000</p>	<p>Buy off the rack but choose something dressier, like an evening gown or a long dress. For him, buy a suit off the rack.</p> <p>COST: RM2,500</p>	<p>Looking for something more 'bridal'? "Opt to rent from a bridal studio," says Cindy Chang of Nupts & Such (www.nuptsandsuch.com). Again, for him, a suit off the rack will do the trick.</p> <p>COST: RM2,500</p>
VENUE	<p>Forget banquet dinners that cost a bomb. Instead, go for something more intimate in a smaller restaurant. Got ample space at home? Why not order in for a cosy affair? "Remember to keep the guest list below 50 pax," advises Cindy.</p> <p>COST: RM5,000</p>	<p>Want something a little more formal than a luncheon? Cater a dinner do either at home or have it in a restaurant. "If you stay in a condominium, rent the community hall for your wedding party. Just keep it small," says Cindy.</p> <p>COST: RM10,000</p>	<p>You can afford to splurge a little when it comes to the venue, like dinner in a restaurant (but nothing too fancy!) "Have the banquet at a smaller hotel in the suburbs," advises Cindy. "Choose an entry-level buffet menu but request to bring some DIY goodies or set up a candy bar for pre-dinner cocktails."</p> <p>COST: RM20,000</p>
DECOR	<p>Time to rope in those creative friends! Buy flowers from the market, and get your girlfriends to help out with decorating the venue.</p> <p>COST: RM500</p>	<p>"Do your own decorations but get a florist to work on your bouquet or car decoration," says Leticia.</p> <p>COST: RM1,500</p>	<p>DIY your own decorations but rent the linens and hire a florist for your bouquet to make things look a little prettier.</p> <p>COST: RM1,500</p>
CAKE	<p>Work on non-conventional wedding cakes, like cupcakes or cookies.</p> <p>COST: RM500</p>	<p>For that special touch, get a homemade cake for your wedding cake.</p> <p>COST: RM1,500</p>	<p>To cut cost, use the dummy cake offered by the venue, says Cindy. Otherwise, go for homemade.</p> <p>COST: RM1,500</p>
PHOTOGRAPHY, MAKEUP, ENTERTAINMENT	<p>No money for professional wedding photographers? Don't worry. Try freelancers or photography students who will charge a lower fee. Do your own makeup (Kate Middleton did, so can you!) and get friends to pitch in for the entertainment.</p> <p>COST: RM3,000</p>	<p>Engage up-and-coming wedding photographers who will be more than happy to help you out. Splurge a little and hire someone to do your makeup for you.</p> <p>COST: RMRM4,500</p>	<p>Do the same; use up-and-coming wedding photographers and hire a makeup artist, but for entertainment, just plug in your iPod for your favourite tunes to dance to all night long. All you have to do is rent basic AV equipment.</p> <p>COST: RM4,500</p>



MORE WAYS TO SAVE \$\$\$

1 *DIY as many things as you can, such as invitation cards, favours, décor* “Your only limit is your imagination,” says Leticia. “Or ask your relatives and friends. You never know the hidden talents lying within. I even had a bride who sewed her own wedding dress and evening gown!”

3 *Not all of us can afford a Kardashian wedding* Also, don’t be swayed by the many pretty wedding sights you see online. “Be practical,” advises Cindy. “There is no need to follow all that you see on the Internet.”

2 *Prioritise* Think of what you can splurge on... and what to save. Leticia’s tip? “Splurge on a good photographer because all you have are the photos after the wedding day. Save on decoration; make use of your venue!”

4 *Stick to your budget!* “Don’t let your wants overcome your needs,” says Leticia. The best way to keep to your budget? “Keep an excel sheet to note your budget as well as how much you’ve spent,” says Cindy.

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