

# *Wedding Expense Summary Spreadsheet*

If you are familiar with excel spreadsheets, you will find the Wedding Expense Summary spreadsheet extremely easy to use and almost completely self-explanatory. If you are not familiar with excel spreadsheets, read on and I'll explain how to use this free version of the wedding expense summary included with my book. The wedding expense summary included with my book includes everything in the free version plus many more expanded features. The book also includes a printed version of the summary for anyone who is not comfortable using excel or does not have access to excel.

All areas in the spreadsheet that do calculations are locked so you can't change them. This is because they contain important formulas for automatically calculating amounts and totals. If the formulas get changed, the spreadsheet will not work the way it is supposed to.

The first thing to notice is that all the expenses are listed in the left column of the worksheet. They are organized into the same categories or sections as the worksheets in my book. For example the first section is Ceremony. In the Ceremony section there are separate items listed; Ceremony Site, Officiant, Marriage License, Prenuptial Agreement, Rehearsal Site, and Rehearsal Dinner with a final line for a total of all the Ceremony expenses. The Prenuptial Agreement is not strictly associated with the Ceremony but I included it here rather than create an additional section just for it.

At this point, I imagine you may be saying, "Hang on there! I'm not having any Prenuptial Agreement! That's so unromantic!" Try to withhold judgment on that for now. In my book I go into detail about the reasons why you may want a Prenuptial Agreement. It can be a good thing for both of you.

Looking at the Budget and Expense Summary again, notice that the next two columns have to do with budget. The first is a percentage of the total budget allocated to that section. The second is that percentage of your total budget in dollars. I have set up a sample budget of \$25,000 to show how this works. You can change your total budget in line 72 and the amounts will be automatically calculated for you.

As you meet with prospective vendors and get a better idea of what each item will cost, it is a good idea to breakdown the budget for each section so you end up with a budget for each item. These amounts go in the area directly below each section total. Anything you enter here will be automatically added in the total line for that section so you can see the total amount of budget you have entered as breakdown amounts compared to the total allocated by the percent.

The budget percentages that are in the spreadsheet when you download it are standard percentages used in the bridal industry. You may wish to adjust them for your personal style and preferences. You can change any of the percent numbers except for the total. The total is

calculated by a formula as a double check that you do not enter percentages that add to more than 100!

It is not important how you set up the percentages for your budget. What is important is that you think about it carefully and make some decisions about where and how you want to use the budget available. Of course, you can adjust the budget as you go and start establishing actual prices but be careful. Don't fall into the trap of increasing your budget for flowers before you know or at least have a rough idea of the cost for everything else. Increasing budget in one section without considering the whole picture could leave you with no money for something important – maybe even your cake!

The next four columns are for tracking who will actually pay for each item. If you are not responsible for paying for an item, you still need to track its progress. There is nothing worse than arriving at your ceremony location only to find that someone forgot to pay the rental fees and you are no longer scheduled to be married there! That example is a bit extreme and would probably never happen but I think it helps you understand the importance of keeping track of absolutely everything. That way you will know about any potential problems in plenty of time to solve them without any last minute stress.

The rest of the columns are self-explanatory. They are Total Cost and Cost versus Budget. The spreadsheet included with my book has two additional columns, Deposits Paid and Balance Due Date. The last column, Cost versus Budget automatically calculates the amount you are over or under your budget for each section. It automatically subtracts the total cost for each section from the total budget allocated to that section. The spreadsheet included with my book contains additional features for calculating the amount over or under budget for each individual item when you enter breakdown amounts.

I suggest taking a little time to get familiar with the Wedding Expense Summary spreadsheet by changing the total budget to see how the budgeted amounts change and by adding some expenses. You can also change the budget percent numbers but you may want to make a note of the original numbers before you do it in case you want to change them back to industry standard percentages. Here are some suggestions of changes you can make to learn how the spreadsheet works.

Example 1: Starting with the spreadsheet exactly as it was when you downloaded it, change the total budget amount to \$50,000. To do this you do not need to enter the \$ sign. Just place your cursor where it shows \$25,000 now and click your left mouse button. After you click the button, you will see an outline around the area, or cell as it is called in excel, that shows \$25,000. Now just type 50000 with no \$ sign and no comma. In other words, just type the numbers. Type 50000, not \$50,000. You could type 50000.00 if you wanted to and the end result would be the same. After typing the numbers, press the enter key and you will immediately see all the budget amounts double because you just doubled your total budget.

Example 2: Change the ceremony budget percentage from 3% to 5%. Click your mouse on the cell showing 3% to activate it, type the number 5 and then press the enter key. There is no need to type the % sign as the spreadsheet is set up so anything entered in the percent column is formatted correctly as a percentage. If you still have \$50,000 for your total budget, you will now see that the budget allocated for your ceremony has increased to \$2,500. Now look at the grand total for budget percents. Adding 2% to your ceremony budget also added 2% to the total of all percents allocated to the various budget sections leaving the new total at 102%! You can not have a budget total of more than 100% so now you need to subtract 2% from another section. For this example let's say that your reception will not cost as much as the average reception so you can decrease the amount allocated to it. Find the percentage originally allocated to the reception and change it from 48% to 46%. Remember all you type 46, not 46%. Now check your percentage total to be sure it is 100%. Change the ceremony percent back to 3% and the reception percent back to 48%.

Example 3: Now you can start breaking down your budget in each section to the individual items. For the sake of this example, enter the following amounts for your ceremony budget – ceremony site \$250, officiant \$450, marriage license \$50, rehearsal site \$100 and rehearsal dinner \$350. Leave the amount for prenuptial agreement blank. After you have entered these amounts you will see the spreadsheet has totaled them for you and that the amounts entered add up to \$1200, not \$1500 that was allocated by the original percentages. Look at the Cost vs Budget column and you will see that you are still shown as under budget by \$1500 because the budget variance is calculated using the totals allocated to each section by the percent values. The spreadsheet included with my book provides additional capabilities for calculating the variance using the breakdown amounts. It also includes a second Grand Total line that calculates your total budget variance using the breakdown amounts for each section. This can be very useful as you develop your budget more completely. It can help you see where you may not need some of the originally allocated budget and where you need more budget than originally planned.

Example 4: Next we will add some expenses to your spreadsheet. In the budget for example 3 you entered \$250 for the ceremony site. Suppose it actually does cost \$250. Type 250 (no \$) in the Total Cost column for ceremony site and press the enter key. If you were using the spreadsheet included with my book, the right column for Cost vs Budget would now show a 0 because your actual cost is exactly the same as your budget. Let's enter a few more expenses to see what happens. You budgeted \$450 for the officiant but he is only going to charge \$350. Your lawyer is charging \$200 for your prenuptial agreement and the rehearsal dinner site will cost \$150. In the total Cost vs Budget column you now see that with the expenses you have accounted for so far you have \$550 dollars left in your ceremony budget. However, the total of your breakdown budget amounts is only \$1200 and you still have two items to cover, marriage

license and rehearsal dinner. The budget for these two items totals \$400, which means you are over budget when you compare your total estimated cost of \$1350 to your total breakdown budget of \$1200. Double checking your spreadsheet you realize that you did not enter any breakdown amount for a prenuptial agreement but you did decide to have one. In this case, your problem is easily solved by going back and putting in a breakdown budget amount. If you enter \$300 for the breakdown amount your total breakdown budget now matches your original percent allocated budget and instead of being in trouble you are actually under budget at this point.

When you feel comfortable with how the spreadsheet works, go ahead and start using it for setting up your wedding budget and tracking your expenses. The wedding expense summary will be your best friend while you are planning your wedding. It will help you make the right decisions so you can stay within your budget.

You may want to print out your wedding financial summary now and then so it is easy to view the complete picture of where you stand with your budget and expenses. A printed copy may also be useful when talking to each of the people responsible for part of your wedding cost. If you do print it, the heading rows across the top of the spreadsheet will be printed at the top of each page, making it easier for you to remember what goes in each column.

It's also a good idea to keep a printed copy of the spreadsheet in your Wedding Planning notebook if you have one. You may need to refer to it when you are shopping or talking to vendors to remind yourself how much budget you have available and to help you make wise financial decisions.

Keeping your wedding expense records up-to-date is an important step toward creating your dream wedding and at the same time staying within your budget requirements. Treat your Wedding Expense Summary spreadsheet as if it were your best friend – you'll be glad you did!

If you would like additional help planning your wedding and a more thorough and complete expense summary spreadsheet, consider purchasing my complete book that includes worksheets for every phase of the planning process plus many tips and hints for creating your dream wedding while staying within your budget. You can purchase it from my website, [www.planningwedding.org](http://www.planningwedding.org).

No one else knows the words that would be most meaningful to you for your wedding ceremony and vows. You are unique and your ceremony and vows should be unique too. If you know you want your own personalized ceremony and vows but are having trouble writing them, visit [www.weddingsweddings.com](http://www.weddingsweddings.com) for lots of free ideas and examples.

Best wishes to you in this wonderful adventure upon which you are embarking.