

Bridal Shower Invitations in the New Millenium

Bridal showers used to have a legitimate role in the right of passage of a woman. Legend says that Holland was the first to introduce the bridal shower. A woman fell in love with a miller, who was poor because he always gave to the needy. When the father of the young woman learned the two wished to marry, he protested by refusing to put up a dowry. The couple was determined to marry anyway. All the people who had previously been helped by the miller decided to return the favor. They showered the couple with the things they would need to start their new life together. The couple did not, of course, send out bridal shower invitations. Their community was compelled to help. Another legend has the shower originating in the United States. An American newspaper article from 1904 implies that the word "shower" originates from a Victorian era practice of putting gifts in a parasol. Regardless of where the custom began, the purpose was to compensate for an absent trousseau (hope chest) or dowry.

The bridal shower tradition continues in the 2000s from the origins of the late 1800s. It appears that the United States and Canada are the main celebrators of the bridal shower. The current custom seems to be a greedy version of its former self. If the purpose of the bridal shower is to compensate for the basic things a bride and groom need to start a home, then most couples today do not need much additional assistance. Yes, in some cases, the bride and groom are fresh out of high school or college and do not have basic things. But the majority of couples that are boosting the sales of Pottery Barn and Target registries are not in that situation. I cannot tell you how many bridal shower invitations I receive for friends who are double income couples in their early 30s. I was astounded to hear one bride explain that this was their chance to get some fancy appliances that they would never buy themselves. That, my friends, is not the appropriate use of the bridal shower.

Do not get me wrong, I like a good party. I think it is completely appropriate to get your friends and loved ones together to help you celebrate your bride or groom status. Your friends and family should not, however, feel obligated to buy you new stuff to help you celebrate, though. The friends and family who will later be mailed wedding invitations are often the same ones who are mailed bridal shower invitations. People want to help the couple celebrate and toast to their future. Friends and family should not foot the bill for the newlyweds to outfit their new master suite.

Couples should keep some perspective when planning these things. For a couple that does not have much, it is okay to have a traditional shower. For couples who are well established and have everything they need, they should not be greedy and want new replacements for those things courtesy of their guests. Remember that those same guests will be giving the bride and groom a wedding present. Those future newlyweds should use their collective imagination and offer something different. Give all your friends and family bridal shower invitations that allow them to help you celebrate with fun and frolic. Have a recipe party, where everyone offers their favorite recipe or signature dish and puts it in a fancy cookbook for you to have, for example. The idea of bridal shower invitations inviting your loved ones to have fun and party in your honor in a new and different way will be your gift to them.

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