



How-to

The Ultimate Guide to Eloping in Style

by McKenzi Taylor • 27 Aug 2020 • 5 min read

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“Just the two of us, building castles in the sky, just the two of us, you and I...” Remember that classic song by Grover Washington? When you fell in love and you were proposed to, it was likely just the two of you. Intimate, romantic, and private.

Recent world events and the need for social distancing may be causing you to put off or completely scrap that big wedding with hundreds of guests, but the good news is you don't have to forfeit romance if you and your significant other choose to elope.



Courtesy of Cactus Collective Weddings

You can slough off the stress, social expectations, and judgment that comes from booking a large hall, laying out tens of thousands of dollars to feed hundreds of people you barely know, and having to smile and air kiss until your face is frozen in place. Between the location, decorative accouterments, your wardrobe, musical accompaniment, accessories, and preparation, you get to make your nuptials all about the two of you.

Welcome to your extraordinarily lavish, intimate, and romantic elopement.

Start with the setting: breathtaking canyons, historic parks, nature preserves, beaches, old-world chapels, or even a museum... the choice is yours! Let your imagination run wild and choose an ideal setting that feels meaningful to you and your partner.



Courtesy of Cactus Collective Weddings

Micro-weddings and elopements have the distinct advantage of accommodating interesting and exotic locations that may not work for a larger gathering of guests due to space and other logistical constraints. Once you decide on that special location to say “I Do” it is always a good idea to work with a wedding coordinator who knows the lay of the land and can obtain any necessary permits for your chosen location. This will clear the path for an unforgettable ceremony that will not be interrupted by passersby, and you won't run the risk of legal complications.

With the money saved, you can afford to splurge on yourself, so do it!

Allocate a good part of your budget towards a drop-dead gorgeous wedding dress or another piece of stunning wedding wear.

A beautifully detailed wedding dress (or other attire) will not only make you feel like royalty, but it will also be a special keepsake that you can look back on fondly as you peruse your wedding photos. You can pass it down to a future child or even wear it again should you choose to throw a big wedding celebration in the near future. Your wedding attire can be traditional or more modern. This is your day, so design or purchase an outfit that suits your unique style.



Courtesy of Cactus Collective Weddings

Flowers are synonymous with romance and a luxury bouquet really makes the moment. Rather than a basic tight bouquet of factory spun flowers, go for wildflowers, peonies, garden roses, orchids, or sunflowers. Lavish your bouquet and other floral arrangements with exotic pops of color. Make your bouquet and floral arrangements a statement of your personality and allow them to reflect the energy of the day.

Embrace tradition.

Though elopements have long been thought of as being impulsive, rebellious, and an outlier to traditional large weddings, that narrative has changed in recent years, and it continues to evolve and level up as COVID-19 and social distancing change just about everything in our lives.



Courtesy of Cactus Collective Weddings

Your elopement can hit all the beats of a traditional wedding. Something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue... find creative ways to incorporate these items into your elopement.

Make a day of it and take your time getting ready.

A lot of couples like to start having themselves photographed prior to the wedding ceremony, and while they are getting ready for their big day. Have the photographer shoot pictures of you in your bathrobe and slippers, getting your hair and makeup done, and getting into your attire.



Courtesy of Cactus Collective Weddings

You can even take a “first look” picture capturing the moment your partner sees you all dolled up for the first time. Many couples are forgoing the superstition of not seeing a bride until the ceremony and doing this first look picture during the getting ready process. It captures so much emotion and love between a couple.

Drive up in style.

Whether your dream car is a spruced up '57 Chevy convertible, a classic Cadillac, Rolls Royce, Bentley, or a stretch limousine, there are car rental companies to suit every taste for a fantasy ride to your wedding ceremony.

Music is essential.

Since elopements tend to be in less conventional locations from natural settings to smaller spaces, a harp may not be practical, so go for an acoustic guitar or violin for musical accompaniment.



Courtesy of Cactus Collective Weddings

Choose a song that is meaningful to the two of you. You can choose one signature song for your walk down the “aisle” and another song for your first dance as a married couple. Picture it: you are gazing into each other’s eyes beneath a gorgeous sunset as a violinist and vocalist provide musical accompaniment just for the two of you. It will always be *your* song.

Pictures to last a lifetime.

To make things interesting, you can also hire two photographers, one to shoot digital pictures and one to shoot on film. Digital photography allows for unlimited and candid shots. Film is more limited and needs to be planned out and posed, but shooting a handful of posed photos on film will give some of your pictures a softer quality that only film can capture.



Courtesy of Cactus Collective Weddings

Arrange for your favorite bottle of champagne and your dream cake to share after the ceremony, but don't end your wedding day there. Keep the day or evening going with a post-wedding sunset drive, a three-course meal, or perhaps a small group dinner and round of toasts if you choose to invite a handful of guests to your wedding.

Take a mini-moon.

Since travel is currently limited, a domestic destination or staycation elopement can easily transition right into your post-wedding mini-moon in the same city. From the Catskill Mountains to the Hamptons, the Las Vegas desert to the Colorado Rockies, or the beaches of Malibu to southern California, you'll get a two-for-one romantic wedding ceremony and post-wedded getaway.