

## EASTERN ORTHODOX WEDDINGS

The church of the Eastern Rite--including Greek and Russian Orthodox--are similar in many ways to the Roman Catholic, but they do not recognize the authority of the Pope in Rome. Mixed marriages are allowed, but the non-Orthodox party to the marriage must be a baptized Christian. Eastern Rite churches permit the remarriage of those who've received religious decrees of divorce or annulment. The bans of marriage may be proclaimed, but are not necessary.

The standard wedding processional with the bride's father giving her away is customary in an Eastern Rite church. The size of the wedding party and its arrangement during the ceremony are matters of personal taste and local custom. The maid of honor and best man (called koumbari in the Greek Church), however, usually have more complex duties in an Orthodox wedding. A face veil must be worn by a Greek bride, but is optional in the Russian church. The guests at a Russian Orthodox wedding usually remain standing throughout the ceremony, but in Greek churches in America they are often allowed to sit during the less sacred parts of the service.

## JEWISH WEDDINGS

No single set of rules applies to all Jewish weddings, for there are significant differences between the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform branches of the faith. Individual rabbis and synagogues also have their own variations. It is important, therefore, to



verify all rules and procedures with your own rabbi before making definite plans.

Jewish marriages are traditionally performed under a chupa, a richly ornamented canopy symbolizing the sky and supported by decorated standards. It is usually placed in front of an attractive background at one end of the room, or in front of the Ark in a temple. The procession walks toward the canopy, with each person taking a prescribed position under or near it. The bride stands on the groom's right under the canopy, and the rabbi stands facing them. It's customary for the honor attendants to stand under the chupa.

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