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Re-interpreting the classics

A traditional string quartet needn't play classical music. Ask performers whether they can reinterpret your favourite soul tunes or the summer hits of your courtship to play during the ceremony.

30

Love letters re-told

Have you hoarded old love notes or Valentine's day cards written to each other? Work some quotes into your vows or speech. You can even consider scanning and including the original words in your program.

31

Have someone who really matters perform your ceremony

You can choose a friend or relative to conduct your ceremony. You'll still need a celebrant to make it official, but their role can be minimal if you request it. Requirements may vary between states.

32

Say it loud and say it proud

Get your guests more involved by including call and response elements in your ceremony, such as asking for a group blessing. Have a few strong-voiced, confident friends briefed beforehand to encourage participation, or clearly print your intentions in your program so guests can be sure that they're on the right track.

33

Global gatherings

Research cultural rituals for weddings around the world and tweak any that resonate with you. The Jewish chuppah – a canopy often held over the couple during the ceremony by four friends – is one beautiful tradition easily adopted, or check out hand binding or feet bathing rituals common in Asian cultures. Just remember to be respectful – you might like to provide guests with an explanation of the origins of any rituals you adopt.

34

Do it twice

Finding it hard to compromise a religious background with your more fun-loving, frivolous temperaments? Why not have a beautifully formal, sombre church or religious ceremony, then crack out the streamers and say 'I do' all over again with a festival atmosphere in a local park or at your reception venue?

35

If you love it, do it

Go barefoot if you fancy, or don a traditional veil – whatever suits your personality. Don't be swayed by fashion or convention, or those around you – your ceremony is all about you.



36

Bubbles blow

Instead of the bubble blowers or rose petals, why not have guests throw custom-made confetti in your wedding colours. Just get up close with your hole punch – you can even punch decorative designs. To keep eco-friendly, use biodegradable paper.

37

There goes the church, there goes the steeple

Be creative with your ceremony location. With more and more couples marrying with a celebrant, why not do away with weather worries, give the local park a break and think about the zoo, aquarium or even public library?

38

Cross generations

Remember, marriage is the melding of families. Your ceremony will feel unique if you include the oldest and youngest guests in ways that are relevant to them – maybe a traditional sonnet read by Grandma and a first confetti toss from a nephew.

39

Whistle wetters and ice breakers

A simple welcome drink is a thoughtful touch for ceremonies – often a time of nervous mingling for guests. Keep it non-alcoholic if the wait might be long, though! Try chilled mini bottles of mineral water or cups of hot chocolate.

40

Here she comes

The arrival of the bride is a highly anticipated moment. Make the walk down the aisle something to really remember by adding a lovely aisle runner strewn with paper streamers, or a carpet of petals to glide through. Petals arranged in a geometric pattern are especially elegant and look fantastic in photographs.

41

Rocking processions

Work that entrance even further with a procession that's as extravagant as you can handle. A trumpeter, a single ballet dancer, a troupe of drummers, whatever you think is appropriate for the entrance of a bride.

42

Get creative with your crowd control

You may like to be encircled by your friends and family all standing around you as you say your vows. Or maybe you'd like your guests seated in brightly striped deck chairs, or perhaps you'd prefer to add a touch of luxe and hire couches and love seats.

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Keep things cool

We all know the folded program-as-fan routine. Avoid it by printing all the details of the ceremony on the fans themselves. Designer Anna Bond of Rifle provides illustrated fans with portraits of the ceremony VIPs. See rifledesign.com



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honeymoon ideas

What's more fun, the wedding or the honeymoon? You don't have to choose. Say 'I do', then say 'bon voyage'



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sun lotions



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