



Here's an excerpt from: "Back in the Good Old Days."

*Valentines Day is near... so maybe it's a good time to take a look at our honored traditions..*

## I'm Dreaming of a White Wedding

Like so many other long-time traditions, a wedding ceremony could easily be viewed by an outsider as a silly affair. In the United States, the bride usually wears an outrageous white dress and a veil, and she would look ridiculous if she were anywhere but at her wedding. Immediately after the ceremony, the bride and groom get together to cut a piece of cake as everyone watches and applauds – a little strange, since cutting a piece of cake usually isn't that big of a deal. There are other strange customs, as well, such as the throwing of the bouquet or the tossing of rice after the reception. So where did all of these crazy ideas come from?



Similar to many of the customs in the United States, the traditional "white wedding" was a carryover from some of the British customs. For example, the color white was chosen for the bride's dress because it represented innocence. Queen Victoria wore a white dress when she married Prince Albert in 1840, and many claim that she started the white dress craze.

The addition of the veil to the bride's costume has a few pieces of significance. For starters, the veil adds a sense of modesty and humility to the bride, and it also helps to keep the groom from seeing his future wife's face until the proper time. There is also a legend that the veil masks the bride from evil spirits that are intent on ruining the day. In fact, the tradition of having several bridesmaids originally began when the bridesmaids were used as decoys to keep anyone from interfering with the bride (*whether it be evil spirits or real-life kidnappers*).

The throwing of the bouquet by the bride (*or tossing of the garter belt by the groom*) is also an old English tradition. Since the bride and groom have already had their day, it is only fair that they pass on their good luck. It is said that the woman who catches the bouquet, or the man who catches the garter belt, will be the next to marry. The final strange piece of tradition is the throwing of rice at the bride and groom as they exit the reception. Originally, guests threw rice, wheat, or flowers to the newlyweds to help wish them future fertility and prosperity (*It has recently been rumored that rice is harmful to the birds that come down and eat it. Instead, birdseed, confetti, or bubbles are often used*).

**Excerpt from:**

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