

## Vermont Vows: Showers in the Forecast

Written by Anna Post

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The Bridal Shower is the ultimate "girl" moment of the pre-wedding process, summoning up images of tea parties, finger sandwiches, and lots of ribbons and bows - but showers can be so much more than that these days. You're not the girly-girl type? Opt for a chic wine and cheese party, where everyone brings a bottle of their favorite vintage. Can't stand to leave your man? Coed "Jack and Jill" showers are all the rage. Showers can also be a ton of fun to plan, with so many possibilities for creating something just right for the bride's lifestyle - and the groom's!

### Party Timeline



Ideally, showers are held anywhere from two months to two weeks before the wedding. Any closer to the big day and it just gets too hectic for everyone. Any further out, and the shower won't build momentum for the wedding.

### Who Hosts?

In years past, close family members of the bride (her mother, sisters, aunts, and so on) wouldn't have dreamed of throwing her a shower. Why? Because the main point of a shower is to give gifts to the bride, and it seemed inappropriate for the bride or her close family to host such a party - as though they might be asking for gifts.

These days, while it's still considered a faux pas for an engaged couple to throw their own shower - the asking-for-gifts thing again - pretty much anyone else can host one. In fact, as long as they aren't inviting anyone under the sun or throwing multiple showers, it's often easiest for the bride's friends or relatives to host the shower together - sharing the expenses and the organizing.

### Who's Invited

Showers are usually intimate affairs. While the exact size of the event is up to the host, the idea is not to invite the entire guest list for the wedding. (This really would look like a grab for gifts.) Usually the guest list is made up of close female friends and relatives of the bride. The

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one rule of thumb: However big or small the guest list ends up being, anyone invited to the shower should also be invited to the wedding. The only exception to this rule is when coworkers throw an office shower.

### Shower Gifts

The choice of a gift is always up to the giver, but if there's a theme, it's more fun if everyone plays along. Theme information - "It's a blue and white kitchen shower!" - is fine to put on the invitation, but any registry information, gift preferences, or, if necessary, the bride's sizes should be communicated in a separate enclosure with the invitation or by word of mouth. Make sure to open all your shower gifts at the party and pass them around for all to see. Keep pacing in mind, so that everyone has a chance to have her gift opened, appreciated, and fully "oohed and ahhed" over.

### Thanks-and Thanks Again

Acknowledge all gifts with a handwritten thank-you note, even if you've already thanked the giver in person. Most people expect a thank-you note when they give a gift. Sending one ensures that no one is left offended or left wondering whether their gift was ever received. Just think of it as good practice for all those wedding-present thank-yous, as well as a chance to buy some chic new note cards!

### The Etiquette of Multiple Showers

Multiple showers are okay, but hosts should be sure to invite different guests to each party. Only close family, friends, and the wedding party should be invited to more than one shower. Guests who are invited to more than one shower only need to bring a gift for the first one - that goes for members of the wedding party, too. To make sure a repeat guest doesn't feel awkward, make a mention of their previous gift at the second shower, so it's clear to other guests that the person already gave something.

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