

Registries once served simply to let guests know your china, crystal and silver patterns (and that of course you needed eight of everything); now brides and grooms create wish lists that reflect their lifestyles, so camping equipment, power tools, and gas grills are as common as towels and glassware.

While there's no end to what you can register for, it's a good idea to have a plan in mind before you and your betrothed grab the scanning gun.

Think about what you need.



It may sound obvious, but base your list on your lifestyle. If your style is casual, you might skip the fine china or crystal. Many wedding registry sites have checklists of everything a couple might need. Printing one out and deciding what you need before you go to register is a great way to put together a focused list.

Choose thoughtfully.

Since a registry is really for your guests' convenience, think about it from their point of view. Consider registering at several places so your guests have options (but don't register for the same items in more than one place!) Local bricks and mortar stores are handy for guests who live nearby, but if your guest list spans the continent, consider online registries or national chain stores which offer both online and local shop-in-person options.

Offer options.

Take your guests' varying budgets into consideration and make sure your list contains a variety of items in different price ranges.

Inform politely.

It's best to let people know the 'old fashioned way:' by word of mouth. Tell your family and attendants where you're registered. Guests will ask, and they'll help get the word out. It's fine to have links to your registry on your wedding website, but don't make them the most important or prominent feature of your page. Remember, a registry is a "wish list." Guests aren't required to choose from your registry.

Step away from the invitation!

It's never okay to include registry information on or with any invitation to the wedding or reception, or with any announcement. Why? Because the emphasis shifts from "we want you to be with us on our special day" to "you need to buy us a gift and here's what we want." For a wedding shower, it IS okay for the host to include a separate sheet of paper along with the invitation letting people know where the couple is registered. It may seem like splitting hairs, but the end result is that the focus stays on the couple and the event rather than on the gifts.

Alternative registries.

You're not limited to just registering for "stuff." Charities are another option, but avoid controversial causes. You can register for a honeymoon or a trip (be careful – some services charge a fee or a percentage of the gift to cover "handling") or even dance lessons.

The choice of gift is always up to the giver. Give your thanks graciously, enthusiastically, and in writing.