



# Now that's entertainment

Be sure to show your guests a good time every minute of the day, whatever your budget

Sometimes considered one of the 'fun' parts of planning a wedding – choosing the right entertainment to keep your nearest and dearest happy might be a simple choice for some couples. But for those who can't seem to think of the ideal solution, worry not, there's a whole host of local companies out there ready and willing to help create the perfect party atmosphere.

"Depending on how much couples have to work with, I would suggest spending around five to eight per cent of the wedding budget on entertainment," says Julie Dawson, wedding planner at The Wedding Genie ([www.theweddinggenie.co.uk](http://www.theweddinggenie.co.uk)). "However, it's a good idea for couples to sit down and discuss their priorities first, and if entertainment features highly on the list then they may want to spend more and cut down on other areas."

So how do you go about sourcing the perfect acts? There are lots of entertainment agencies online whose websites have pricing guides and sample clips of their acts, but another way of finding a suitable company is word of mouth. "Talk to friends, family or your venue coordinator to see if they have any recommendations," explains Julie. "They may have been to a wedding or party recently where the DJ or band was fantastic."

The services of a wedding planner can also help. They work with reputable companies every day and will be able to vouch for their standard of service. They will also be able to inform you of the kinds of entertainment within your price range.

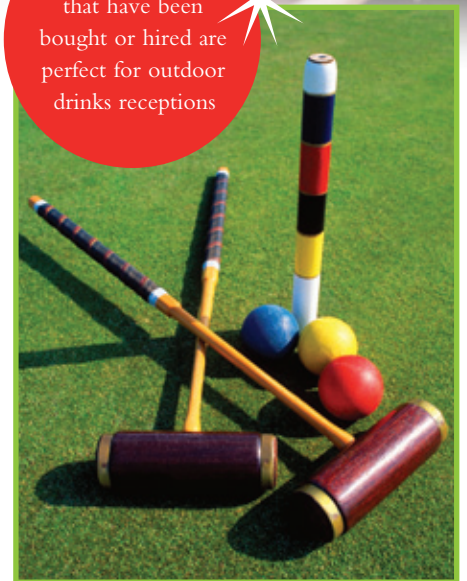
### *What's your flavour?*

When it comes to deciding on the kind of acts you want, have a think about the atmosphere you want to create. Maybe your wedding has a particular theme that a certain type of music or entertainment act could lend itself to.

"Also take into consideration what your friends and family would like, and how you want them to remember the day," says Julie. "Another factor would be the size and constraints of the venue. For example, fitting an eight-piece jazz band into a small room might not be suitable. You will also need to check that your venue is licensed for certain types of entertainment."

And last but certainly not least, the wedding budget will be the ultimate decider. It all comes down to what you can afford. "But don't worry," explains Julie, "you may only have a small budget, but if you choose wisely you can still have a whole host of fun on the big day."

Garden games that have been bought or hired are perfect for outdoor drinks receptions



### BUDGET MATTERS

Can't decide when and where to splash the cash? Here is a rough guide

*Cheap and cheerful*

Wedding budget: up to 10k  
Approx entertainment spend: £500

"Couples with smaller budgets should look to spend their entertainment allowance on the parts of the day where guests could potentially become bored," says Julie. "This is primarily the drinks reception, while the happy couple are having their photographs taken and during the wedding breakfast. Not forgetting, of course, the evening reception too."

**What can I get?** Garden games that have been bought or hired are perfect for outdoor

drinks receptions. Adults and children alike will love getting involved and they are extremely good value for money. For brilliant entertainment between the wedding breakfast and the evening event, why not hire a ceilidh band to get everyone in the party mood? “The music is lively and the caller will help create a great atmosphere and involve all the guests,” says Julie. “It’s a fabulous idea for country weddings.”

For the evening a DJ is definitely the ideal money-saving option. Most will have special lighting rigs and smoke machines to create a good party atmosphere.

### Try these...

**Garden games:** Midland Games  
[www.midlandgames.co.uk](http://www.midlandgames.co.uk)  
**Ceilidh band:** Ceilidhography  
[www.ceilidhography.com](http://www.ceilidhography.com)  
**DJ:** Lets Go Disco  
[www.letsgodisco.com](http://www.letsgodisco.com)

### Middle of the road

Wedding budget: up to 20k  
 Approx spend: £500 to £1,000

“While the evening reception is still the most important area when it comes to entertainment, having a larger budget means couples can splash out on other areas too,” says Julie. “A little light entertainment during the ceremony or drinks reception will create a good atmosphere, while some interactive entertainment during the wedding breakfast will be a great talking point for guests.”

**What can I get?** “If the budget allows, a string quartet or harpist will create a romantic mood,” says Julie, “particularly if the sun is shining and guests are spilling out into the gardens for drinks and canapés.”

Magicians and caricaturists always go down well during the wedding breakfast. “Magicians can be incredibly funny and entertaining,” says Julie. “A magician was never on my plan when I got engaged, but after being thoroughly entertained at a friend’s wedding, I booked one straight away! Caricaturists are also a good option as guests will each have something to take home as a reminder of the day.”

For a lively end to the evening, a band is always a top choice. Be sure to pick one that has a brilliant repertoire.

### Top tip

For a little free fun, why not create your own photo booth by having a box of props on standby filled with fake moustaches, giant sunglasses, hats, feather boas and more. Give each table a Polaroid camera and leave them to it! Ask guests to leave their photos in the guest book, with a comment next to their picture.



### Try these...

**String quartet:** Nero String Quartet  
[www.nerostringquartet.com](http://www.nerostringquartet.com)  
**Harpist:** Helen Barley  
[www.helenbarley.co.uk](http://www.helenbarley.co.uk)  
**Magician:** Magic at your Fingertips  
[www.magicatyourfingertips.co.uk](http://www.magicatyourfingertips.co.uk)  
**Caricaturist:** Wicked Caricatures by Luisa Calvo  
[www.wickedcaricatures.com](http://www.wickedcaricatures.com)  
**Four-piece band:** Capital Groove  
[www.capitalgroove.co.uk](http://www.capitalgroove.co.uk)

### splash the cash

Wedding budget: 20k+  
 Approx spend: Whatever you want!

“If money is no object then you can wow your guests with some fabulous entertainment,” says Julie. “But be warned, couples can go over the top. Your guests don’t want to be overwhelmed with activity, so choose carefully and just enhance the parts of the day when the guests are left alone.”

**What can I get?** To really give your wedding the wow factor, Julie suggests going all out with acts you wouldn’t usually see at an everyday wedding. “How about hiring an awe-inspiring and colourful act from the likes of fire performers or jugglers, choreographed to the beat of African drums?”

“Singing waiters are also a great addition to the wedding breakfast. Guests will have no idea who they are until they put on a fantastic opera-style performance. It will be a lovely surprise and definitely something that will get them talking.”

For the ultimate finish, we also recommend a wonderful firework display – a great way to end the evening.♥

### Try these...

**Circus performers:** Spinoff  
[www.spinoffevents.com](http://www.spinoffevents.com)  
**Singing waiters:** Elegant Entertainment  
[www.elegantentertainment.co.uk](http://www.elegantentertainment.co.uk)  
**Fireworks:** Celebration Fireworks  
[www.celebration-fireworks.co.uk](http://www.celebration-fireworks.co.uk)