

IMPORTANT TIPS TO CONSIDER FOR YOUR ENGAGEMENT PHOTOS

Newly engaged couples choose to capture the occasion in photos that they can cherish. Often, one of these photos is used as an announcement to family and friends and might even be published in the newspaper.

Engagement photos may be part of a package negotiated with the photographer who will be covering the wedding day. Some couples enlist the help of a friend or a budding photographer to capture an engagement shot. The average cost of engagement photos can range from \$200 to \$500. Some couples opt to use a photographer who might specialize in other areas (i.e. fashion models) but may want to break into the wedding biz because of how lucrative it can be. Costs may be negotiated as a result.

When shopping around for a photographer, there are certain things couples should keep in mind. The first and most important is selecting a photographer you can relate to. If you don't feel a connection with the photographer, he or she will have trouble coaxing the shots that will produce the best results. He or she should also be a professional and have some experience working with posing couples. This way the photos don't look stiff or contrived. Here are some other tips that can lead to great photos.

* Find a photographer who fits your style. If you're a quirky couple, go with a quirky photographer. If you're reserved and a follow-the-book type of couple, then select a more traditional photographer. Some photographers out there forget that this is your moment and want to impart their idea of what you want. Make sure he or she takes your ideas into consideration.

* Select one who is open to different shoot locations and brainstorming. Some of the best photos occur in natural settings, where things aren't entirely planned. If a photographer simply works out of a studio, you may want to select one who has more free reign with different locales.

* Choose your location wisely. Certain locations will stand out in your minds because they are visually stunning or are special places where you have spent moments as a couple. By choosing a place that offers a personal connection, there's a good chance you'll appreciate the photos in the long run. Also, be open to the fact that unplanned stops may offer a great background for the image. Be open to the unexpected.

* Try random poses and some candid shots. Although you might have a vision of the perfect photo in your mind, experimenting with different ideas can sometimes lead to a great photo you really love. Expect to take your share of kissing, nose-touching and portrait shots. But some fun poses, such as running or jumping (or rolling around on a beach full of waves) can produce candid shots that are truly masterpieces. Remember, sometimes photographers will pose you in positions that seem a bit awkward, but this is to get the best lines of the body and flattering images.

* Choose clothing that fits the mood. If time and budget allows, have several different wardrobe changes so that you can see which outfits work and which ones don't. A formal outfit, comfortable street clothes, something beachy or clothing that fits with your interests (such as polo or baseball) can make for interesting



engagement photos. Avoid clothing that is too trendy or busy, which may take away from the actual images in the long run. Plus, you don't want to look back at these photos in the future and say, "What was I thinking?" Avoid matchy-matchy, though. If you are dressed alike, you may appear to be trying too hard. It's the individual personalities you want to shine through.



2

WEDDING FUN FACTS

It has become tradition for married couples to jet off on a post-wedding vacation. This honeymoon is a way for the bride and groom to enjoy quiet time together and start off their married life together on an intimate level. Although the word "honeymoon" has happy connotations today, the original meanings of the word may not be so blissful. There are varying accounts of the evolution of the word "honeymoon," but many believe it to be a Norse tradition deriving from the word "hjunottsmanathr." Northern European history describes women being abducted from their families and forced into marriage with a man from a neighboring village. This husband would take his new bride into hiding and stay there for a while until it was certain the bride's family had given up the hunt and retreated. It was also tradition for Scandinavian couples to drink a sweet, honey-infused wine known as mead for a month after getting married. This may be where the "honey," for the sweet drink, and the "moon," for the one-month period of time, originated. Others say "honeymoon" refers to a sarcastic quip that a marriage starts out sweet as honey, but then wanes much as the moon will each cycle.

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