

10

Top Tips for Organising a Hen Party

Having the responsibility of organising your best friend's last farewell to single life can be a double-edged sword: on one hand, you're flattered to have been chosen as the Maid of Honour. On the other, the burden of arranging activities, accommodation and a hefty dose of fun lies heavily on your shoulders.



However, your friend obviously trusts you to do a good job, so let's do them proud! If you're organised and follow our Top Ten Tips, we can help you put together a send-off to remember.

1. DOUBLE-CHECK DATES

It might sound obvious, but the first thing to do is confirm the date of the wedding! Then check with the bride-to-be when they'd like to hold the hen party, and see when everyone else is available. Peak season for hen parties is May to July, so bear that in mind when it comes to booking accommodation and activities.

2. WHO'S WELCOME?

Hen parties are usually a smorgasbord of school friends, family and work colleagues, and it would be impossible for you to know who to invite without consulting the bride-to-be. The whole point of the party is to make sure they have a good time, so leave the guest list up to them. However, it's worth having a word in their ear about numbers; the last thing you want to do is herd a group of 40 drunken revellers around town! The average number of people on a hen is 13, which seems like a sensible amount!

3. BREAKING THE ICE

Now you've sorted the guest list, it's time to think of ways to break the ice. As mentioned above, hen parties are usually a hotchpotch of friends that might not have met each other before, so you'll probably need to encourage a bit of bonding. A really simple and effective way to do this is getting t-shirts with everyone names printed on (or nicknames), to make you all feel like you're on the same team. Another good idea, if you're all in the same area, is to meet up for a casual drink before the big day.

4. MONEY MATTERS

As the party planner extraordinaire, it's up to you to make sure the whole affair is affordable. This is when some knowledge about the people on the guest list comes in handy: are you all in the same boat financially or will someone struggle to do much more than a night out? If everyone's up for forking out a couple of hundred on a long weekend, great, but don't start planning anything until you know roughly what everyone's willing to spend.

5. HOME OR AWAY?

The above discussion will give you a good steer on whether people are up for going abroad, or whether you need to look for something closer to home. This is not always a clear choice: sometimes a weekend in the UK can cost more than getting a budget flight to a European city with cheap drinks! Having a change of scene is certainly a popular choice, with 32% of stag and hen parties opting to celebrate overseas.



6. ARRANGING ACCOMMODATION

If you're having a great time on the hen, you should only really be using the hotel for sleeping (and making the most of the breakfast buffet), but it's still worth doing a bit of research before booking. You might think it's simply a case of choosing the cheapest one, but what if all the budget options are out of town? Any money you save on the room will soon be swallowed up by late-night taxi fares. Some hotels aren't keen on hosting large groups of ladies on hen nights, with some even enforcing an outright ban on them, so make sure you'll be welcome before you turn up.

7. ANYONE FOR ACTIVITIES?

We all know that these days, a night out isn't quite enough of a send-off for our soon-to-be-wed friends. Most hen parties involve an activity of some kind, with adventurous days out (paint-balling, go-karting) or relaxing spa breaks more popular than ever. There's also been a rise in instructional activities, such as learning to pole dance or having a go at archery. It all comes down to the personality of the hen and what they would enjoy; don't forget, this party isn't about what you want to do! As with budgets, it's good to test the temperature of the group on how adventurous/active they want to be. And make sure that you accommodate all ages and abilities into possible activities: if someone's got a bad knee or is afraid of heights they're not going to want to go hurtling down a zip wire!

8. COMMUNICATION IS KEY

Throughout the whole process of organising your friend's farewell to single life, communication really is key. Everyone needs to be kept up to date on what's been booked and who needs to pay what. You might find it easier to start a Facebook event or WhatsApp group chat to keep everyone in the loop. Saying that, don't take any prisoners when it comes to getting things sorted: if people haven't made the effort to stay on track with what's being planned, that's their problem. It's no use someone moaning that they don't fancy flying to Prague when you asked everyone's opinion on it months ago!

9. PROMPT PAYMENT

One of the biggest worries for people arranging a hen do is that they'll be out of pocket. Even the most reliable friends can be completely useless when it comes to settling bills, and chasing people for money is a sure-fire way to test friendships and patience! To avoid confusion, make it clear from the beginning how things are going to work. Are you going to pay for everything to secure bookings and get people to pay you back? Or will everyone be responsible for their own bookings? If it's the former, be clear about when and how you want to be reimbursed (we're guessing you don't accept bags of 2p coins?). Be strict about deadlines: if you need paying by a certain date, make sure everyone knows it.

10. ASK FOR HELP!

Finally, and most importantly, don't feel like you have to plan the party to end all parties completely solo! Ask for help when you need it, whether that's asking your friend to help you check which hotels welcome hen parties, or checking with an expert which activities would suit smaller groups.

We hope you've found these tips useful, follow them and you'll be sure to have a great time! If you need some extra tips and advice, you can email us at info@LetsGoOut.co.uk. If you're feeling inspired and ready to get booking, check out the range of awesome activities on our website: www.LetsGoOut.co.uk.

