

# BRIDAL GUIDE

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## GREEN WEDDING GUIDE

Eco-Chic Ideas

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Share the Love!

# 25

Ways To Give Back

Head-to-Toe Looks Under

# \$800

Destination Weddings

Expert Advice



# 25 Ways to Share the Love

Helping others is easy while you're on the road to wedded bliss. by Elena Donovan Mauer

Here's the good news: You don't have to turn into a self-obsessed Bridezilla while planning your wedding. With these simple, affordable ideas, you can contribute to some very worthy causes but still leave plenty of time, energy and sanity to prepare for the big day.

**1 Incorporate a charity into your shower.** Your bridesmaids can ask each guest to bring canned goods to donate to a nearby food bank. Find one at [secondharvest.org](http://secondharvest.org), and call for information on what's needed and where to drop off the goods.

**2 Rent a nonprofit's space.** Think of how unique and beautiful your reception would be if it took place at a museum, historical site or botanical garden. Even better—you'll know your site fee is supporting a favorite cause.

**3 Register for charitable gifts.** First, set up a *Bridal Guide* Registry at [bregistry.com](http://bregistry.com). Then go to your favorite charity's website and find its donation page. With the "Add Gifts" tool, you can easily put it on your registry list. The I Do Foundation and [firstgiving.com](http://firstgiving.com) also make it easy to arrange for guests to give in your honor.

**4 Reuse your flowers.** Call a local nursing home or hospital and ask if you can contribute your reception blooms

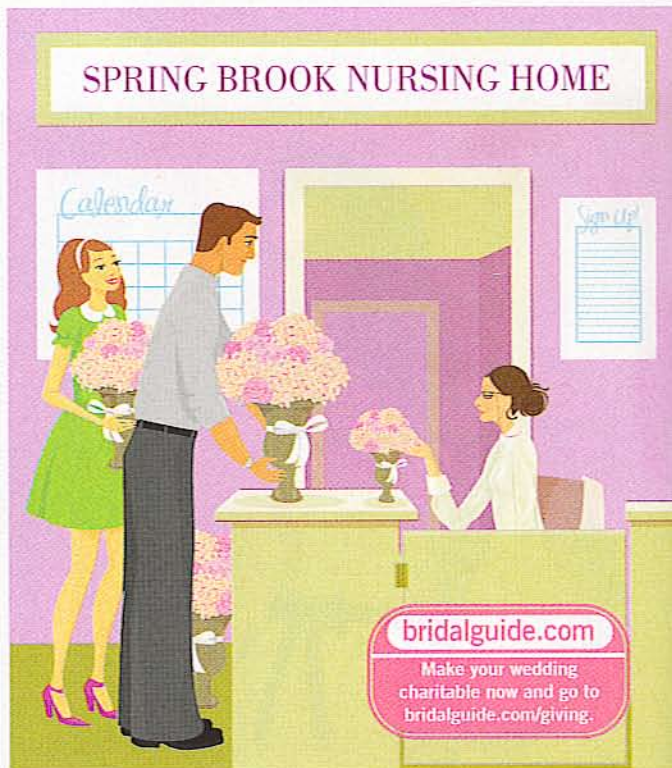
after the big day. Appoint a trusted friend or family member to transport the buds—and spread some cheer!

**5 Involve the wedding party.** Instead of having a bridesmaids' tea, ask your bridal party to spend a day on something worthwhile. Together you can help your state park by leading visitors on a group hike ([nps.gov](http://nps.gov)), or you can pitch in to build a home for a needy family ([habitat.org](http://habitat.org)). (You can still provide lunch or dinner afterward.) For more group ideas, go to [volunteermatch.org](http://volunteermatch.org).

**6 Shop and share online.** Check out [goodshop.com](http://goodshop.com)'s list of retailers (including airlines, jewelers and department stores) that will donate a percentage of your purchase to a good cause. Choose what you like—and click to start shopping.

**7 Forget the favors.** Give the money you'd spend on trinkets to a beloved charity. If you make the donation through [idofoundation.org](http://idofoundation.org), you can order place cards for your guests that explain the gift you've made.

**8 Or select favors with a purpose.** Still want to give guests a sweet treat? Order tins of cookies from [Feed Your Soul](http://FeedYourSoul.com) ([feedyoursoulcookies.com](http://feedyoursoulcookies.com)); a varying amount (up to 10 percent) of the proceeds will go to the charity of your choice.



**9 Don't waste the leftovers.** Arrange to have any extra food from your reception "rescued" to feed hungry people in your area. Find out more from [secondharvest.org](http://secondharvest.org).

**10 Set up some QT.** Make a date with your fiancé to spend some quality time as volunteers. See [charityguide.org](http://charityguide.org) for ideas.

**11 Charm your bridesmaids.** As a thank-you, consider buying pretty charm bracelets or necklaces from [Charity Charms](http://Charity Charms). They will donate 25 percent to 75 percent of the purchase price to the 'maids' favorite charities. Visit [charitycharms.com](http://charitycharms.com) to shop.

**12 Save a bundle.** Got your wedding party's gifts on sale? Give them the amount you saved in the form of donation certificates from [charitychecks.us](http://charitychecks.us). Then, your groomsmen and bridesmaids can choose the organization where they'd like to have it go.

**13 Consider posterity.** Record your grandparents' life stories—including their own wedding day. [StoryCorps](http://StoryCorps.com) ([storycorps.net](http://storycorps.net)) can

help. Not only is the recorded CD a gift to your grandparents, but it's also a keepsake for future generations.

**14 Be honeymoon helpers.** You can join an effort to build a much-needed school or clean up a beautiful valley—experiences you'll always remember with pride. To explore these trip ideas and more, check out [i-to-i.com](http://i-to-i.com), [americanhiking.org](http://americanhiking.org) and [charityguide.org](http://charityguide.org).

**15 Click your cause.** On some websites, all it takes is a click. (Sponsors contribute each time someone clicks on a specific button.) We like [thebreastcancersite.com](http://thebreastcancersite.com) and [thehungersite.com](http://thehungersite.com). Make one of these your homepage, so you're reminded of it each time you go online to research flower arrangements or limo services.

**16 Charge it.** With the Working Assets credit card, every purchase you make—your shoes, your dress, your catering bill—benefits a charity of your choosing. Check out [workingassets.com](http://workingassets.com) for more information.

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