

2019 Wedding FAQs



We understand that planning your wedding can be an exciting and challenging endeavor. To better assist you during the planning process, we've provided answers to some frequently asked questions:

What steps must I take to secure a date and space for my wedding?

Once you establish a date, the Duke Mansion will provide you with a formal contract that outlines your event times, location(s) on property and deposit schedules. Your event date will be held tentatively for up to 7 business days while you review, sign and return the contract along with your initial deposit. When your signed contract and deposit have been received, your wedding date will be guaranteed by the Duke Mansion.

What is the deposit amount?

The Duke Mansion requires an initial deposit of \$6,500 to secure your wedding date. This initial non-refundable deposit is the estate fee (*pre-tax/service charge*). A second advanced deposit will be due 90 business days prior to your wedding date, and a third advanced deposit will be due the Monday prior to your wedding date. Second and third deposits vary and are calculated based on the estimated revenue of your event.

Where is the reception site located?

The estate fee (\$6,500 *plus tax*) consists of use of the mansion's main level for your wedding receptions. The main level includes the following spaces: The Duke Mansion Grounds & Gardens, Grand Foyer, Brooks Courtyard, Ray Dining Room, Solarium, Levine Living Room, Front Porch, Nisbet Garden, and Barnhardt Terrace.

Also Included in Estate Fee:

Full Inventory of Tables
Gold Chiavari Chairs with Black or Ivory Cushions
Floor Length Wheat Damask Linen & Bar/Food Station Linen
Ivory Bone China
Silverware & Glassware
Votive Candles
Black & White or Wood Parquet Dance Floor (16'x16', or 12'x20')
Regular Wait Staff, Plus:
Butler Passers for Cocktail Hour
2 Bartenders
4 Chef Attendants for Reception Style Food Stations

Will any other events be taking place at the Duke Mansion?

The estate fee grants you exclusive use of the Duke Mansion's main level on the night of your wedding. We guarantee a minimum 3 hours setup time for you and your vendors prior to event start time. Other events may be taking place the Friday night prior or the morning of your wedding. If available, you may opt to rent out the main level of the mansion for an additional fee on the morning of your wedding. This would grant total exclusive use of the event space on the day of your wedding. If you are interested in an all-day "privacy rental", please ask your Sales Manager for further info on pricing and availability.

What type of security will be at my event?

The Duke Mansion requires that a minimum of two (2) off-duty police officers are present at your event from 9:00pm – 2:00am. Security for all receptions will be arranged by the Duke Mansion management team and the cost will be the responsibility of the event host.

The cost for two (2) off-duty police officers (meals included) is \$500.

Are prices different if I select a Friday or Sunday for my wedding?

The Duke Mansion is limited to 25 weddings per year, so we are unable to extend any discounts on the estate fee or food and beverage minimum.

When is my guaranteed attendance due?

Guaranteed attendance is due by 12:00pm, the Monday prior to the Saturday wedding. This number shall be considered a minimum guarantee and is not subject to reduction. If a guaranteed count is not received by that Monday, then number of guests previously stated on the banquet event order will serve as your guarantee.

May I host my wedding ceremony on-site?

Our lush Barnhardt Terrace (\$2,300 rental fee) or McGuire Lawn (*lawn subject to availability* - \$3,000 rental fee) create the perfect backdrop for a beautiful outdoor ceremony. Your ceremony package includes your choice of garden chairs – white, natural, black or mahogany. We do require that you host your reception with us if you are having your ceremony on our grounds.

What is your inclement weather policy regarding on-site ceremonies?

As our only ceremony space is located outdoors, a non-refundable tent deposit of \$850 (a portion of the total cost for a basic white top tent & marquee) is required by all on-site ceremonies, so that we may hold a tent in case of inclement weather. The Barnhardt Terrace, located to the right hand side of the home, is the only area on the grounds where a tent is permitted. If a tent is deemed necessary by your Event Manager, due to a high chance of inclement weather in the forecast on your event date, the ceremony must take place on the Barnhardt Terrace under a tent. Please ask your Event Manager for full information on tent pricing and décor options.

***Please note: All tents must be taken down the morning after the event. Standard pickup fees will apply.*

Is it possible to have a ceremony rehearsal on property?

For guests who are hosting their ceremony at the Duke Mansion, a one hour rehearsal will be guaranteed on the evening prior to your wedding date. The time frame of rehearsal is dependent on other events taking place the evening of the rehearsal, and an exact time will be scheduled a minimum of two weeks prior to your event.

Is there a space for the bridal party to get ready before the ceremony?

Most Duke Mansion brides choose to get ready right in our beautiful Bridal Suite. We are also happy to provide the Dickson Boardroom for additional space to get ready. If you are interested in offering refreshments, please contact your Event Manager.

Food and Beverage Information

Can I provide my own food and beverage?

All food and beverage must be provided by the Duke Mansion's Executive Chef and Culinary Team. The Duke Mansion specifically prohibits the removal of food and beverage from the function by the client or any of the client's guests.

An exception to this rule is made for your wedding cake, which may be provided by a baker of your choice. Our cake cutting fee is incorporated into the per person menu price and includes a coffee station. We also require a copy of the baker's license.

What is the food and beverage minimum?

The minimum you are required to spend on food and beverage is \$13,000 (*before tax and service charge*).

Can you please clarify the food and beverage minimum?

The food and beverage minimum is the least amount of money you are required to spend in food and beverage, excluding service charge, sales tax and facility fees. Please keep in mind that this not all you

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can anticipate to spend. The food and beverage minimum is reached by selecting menu items to equal or exceed the required dollar amount.

The following are examples of items which apply toward the food and beverage minimum:

- Hors d'oeuvres and Display Stations
- Plated Meals
- Buffet Meals & Carving Stations
- Dessert Stations
- Bar Service, Champagne Toasts and Non-Alcoholic Beverages

The following are examples of items which do not apply toward the food and beverage minimum:

- Facility Fees
- Staffing Fees
- Rental Items
- Guestroom Rates

What are the applicable service charge and taxes?

Our service charge is 20% on all food and beverage. State tax is 7.25% on all items (*including the service charge*). A 1% supplemental food and beverage tax is applied to the food and beverage. Taxes and service charge are subject to change without notice.

Do you have a different price for kids' meals?

Yes, we offer kids meals for \$25 per child (*plus tax and service charge*) for guest 12 years and younger. This meal includes a seasonal fresh fruit cup, chicken fingers with French fries and unlimited non-alcoholic beverages.

Do you have a different price for vendor meals?

Our chef can prepare hot meals for \$35 per vendor (*plus tax and service charge*). Vendors are not allowed to drink alcoholic beverages while working at the Duke Mansion.

Is there a fee for bartenders or other staff members?

Two (2) bartenders, four (4) chef attendants and butler passing fees are included in your estate fee. If needed or requested, additional bartenders and chef attendants are available for an additional cost.

All guests in attendance who are drinking alcoholic beverages will be required to have a valid identification regardless of age. Our bartenders have the right to require proof of age if a guest appears less than forty years of age.

When will Wedding Menu items and pricing be finalized?

Wedding menu items and pricing are subject to change on a yearly basis. 2019 menu pricing will be finalized and distributed to wedding clients no later than January 2019, before the Grand Tasting takes place.

***The Duke Mansion reserves the right to confirm specific menu item prices ninety (90) day prior to your function, and any prices quoted prior to are subject to change. In the event of increased cost of commodities or menu items, the Mansion may, at its option, make reasonable substitutions in menu items. Cost shall not exceed 20% of original price.*

Can a tasting of the menu be scheduled in advanced?

The Mansion hosts an annual Grand Tasting each year for all of our wedding clients. This event is intended to be the sole tasting for your event and normally takes place in late January or early February. If you are unable to attend the Grand Tasting, private menu tastings may be contracted and scheduled based on the Chef's availability. These tastings may only take place during the weekday and must be scheduled within a month of your event, to maintain the integrity of the seasonal foods. If you need to schedule a private tasting please contact your Event Manager for further pricing information.

Event Services

When arriving for the event, where do my guests park?

Our on-site parking is limited and street parking is prohibited, so in some cases valet parking is required. We estimate \$8 - \$10 per vehicle for valet parking. Shuttle transportation and guests' carpooling is a great way to help reduce this cost. If Duke Mansion's Management Team determines valet parking is not needed, this fee will be waived.

Is amplified music allowed at my event?

Yes, amplified music is permitted but must be contained **inside** the Duke Mansion's walls. Un-amplified, or acoustic, music only is permissible on the outside grounds.

Do I rent upgraded table linens, lighting, etc. through the Duke Mansion?

We would encourage you to rent these items through your Duke Mansion Event Manager. We have access to a wide selection of linen companies, lighting technicians, sound engineers and furniture/equipment rental in the Charlotte area. Our relationships with vendors and knowledge of the venue make this process much easier for you. A fee may be assessed if you or your wedding planner decides to rent linens from your own vendor.

Do you have a preferred vendor list?

We are pleased to recommend any number of vendors and provide you with our preferred vendor list. It is our preference to work with our preferred and recommended vendors. By forging a relationship with these vendors, the Duke Mansion can ensure both exceptional quality and value.

All vendors you choose to work with must read and sign the Duke Mansion's Vendor Policies and Code of Conduct Agreements. All vendors are required to provide The Duke Mansion with a Certificate of Liability 72 hours prior to the event.

Does the Duke Mansion require that I hire a wedding planner?

The Duke Mansion requires that a professional wedding planner or coordinator with a business license, be hired for your event at the expense of the client. All planners will be asked to provide a certificate of insurance acceptable to The Duke Mansion. If a planner has not been hired 90 days prior to the event, The Duke Mansion will hire one on behalf of the client, at the client's expense. The planner must attend the final walk-through scheduled at least thirty days prior to event date.

Some responsibilities of a wedding planner include:

- Manages overall organization of the event
- Assists with protocol for written materials such as invitations and menus
- Creates timelines and maintains schedules for the venue and all hired vendors
- Liaison between family, wedding party and all vendors
- Collect personal items once the event is over

What types of grand exits are permitted?

Exits involving throwing items (flower petals, confetti, glitter, etc.) or sparklers are prohibited. Open flames, like sparklers, may not be used on property for the safety of all guests, vendors and our historic venue.

Noisy departures are also prohibited at the Duke Mansion, due to noise ordinances established by the neighborhood. All post-reception departure arrangements must be pre-approved by your Duke Mansion Sales Manager. The Duke Mansion reserves the right to cancel, at any time before or during your event, non-approved arrangements that are deemed too noisy by the Duke Mansion management.

Does the Duke Mansion have any event time restrictions?

Duke Mansion requires that all events conclude by 11:00pm. No time extensions will be granted.

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When are my deposit and final payment due?

The initial non-refundable deposit is due with your signed contract. An additional deposit is due 90 days prior to your event date. Your estimated event charges must be paid in full at least 3 business days prior to your event date. Any additional charges incurred on the day of your event must be paid within 30 days after your event date.

Is smoking permitted at the Mansion?

The Duke Mansion allows smoking outside in the designated smoking areas. A \$250 smoking fee will apply if you or your guests smoke inside or on screened porches.

Guest Rooms

Can my guests spend the night at the Duke Mansion?

The Mansion operates as a historical bed and breakfast with 20 guest rooms on-site. We would love for your guests to stay at the Duke Mansion on the wedding weekend!

Am I required to have my guests reserve rooms at the Duke Mansion?

The mansion holds a total of 20 guest rooms (seven on 2nd floor, thirteen on 3rd floor). All 20 guest rooms are required to be filled by your group the night prior to your wedding and on the night of your wedding. A group discount room rate will be extended to all guest rooms in your wedding room block. If you require more than 7 rooms on the night prior to your wedding; please ask your Sales Manager about third floor availability. The discounted group rate for the 2nd floor is \$229/night (before tax), and the rate for the 3rd floor is \$199/night (before tax), and includes our delicious in house breakfast buffet in the morning. **Your package also includes a complimentary Bridal Suite on the night of your wedding!**

Will any other guests be staying at the Duke Mansion during the weekend?

No, there will not any other overnight guests staying on property, as you will be renting all 20 guest rooms for two nights. There may be external guests exploring the property outside of your contracted event space timeframe.

Will I need to sign a contract?

Yes, to receive the discounted group room rate, and to guarantee room availability, a signed agreement will be required.

What happens if my guests do not fill all of my room block?

You are required to fill all 20 guest rooms the night before and the night of your wedding. If your guests do not fill all of these rooms, you will be responsible for the payment of remaining vacant rooms.

How will my guests access the special rate?

Your guests must call the mansion to speak to a Front Desk Agent to make their reservation at the special rate. Reservations cannot be made on-line at the special rate.

What is the cancellation policy for individual rooms?

Individual cancellations must be received 48 hours prior to arrival (check-in) to avoid full payment of their stay.