

Traditional Cypriot weddings

Introduction

Grade 3 students studied the Cypriot traditional wedding. They found information about the traditions of a typical "village" wedding and they presented it in the classroom. They were very impressed with the habits that we have in traditional weddings since nowadays couples usually choose to have a nontraditional wedding.

Weddings in the old times were held always on Sundays because that was the only day off they had. They always took place at the bride's village and they had guests from all over Cyprus. That is because we, in Cyprus, call this an "open" wedding.

Before the wedding:

Before the wedding, there was an agreement (a match making) between the families. The bride's family prepared a list of what they offered to the couple. The assets they offered were called "prika".

The day before the wedding, one-time married non-widowed or divorced women used to stuff the couple's mattress with sheep's hair and then they knitted 4 red crosses on the edges of the wedding mattress. After, they rolled a little boy onto the bed for the couple to be fertile and their first kid to be a boy. Afterwards some male relatives of the bride carried the mattress around the village so that everybody will see it.

Seven of the bride's friends prepared "resi", the traditional food of the wedding. It was made of wheat and lamp. They also prepared meat, pasta in the oven, kolokasi etc.

Meantime, the groom and his friends went in a forest to gather wood for the oven since after the wedding a big party would be held.

The wedding day:

The bride's friends brought her the wedding dress and all the cloths she needed in baskets. The bride was dressed by her bridesmaids at noon with the accompaniment of a violin and a lute and all her relatives were invited to her house to celebrate her last hours as a single girl. The groom was shaved by his best man, always with the accompaniment of a violin and a lute.



Afterwards they used to go to church, each from a different path. They were accompanied by musicians. The father of the bride was holding her by the hand during the walk.

When the couple went out of the church the wedding guests used to throw them rice and rose petals.



After the wedding:

After, they were all headed to the couple's new house for the celebration. They went from a different path this time, because it was bad luck to go from the path the couple went to church.

Outside of the house, the groom broke a pomegranate for good luck, prosperity and success.

At this celebration the couple dances "The dance of the married couple" while the wedding guest will pin banknotes on the couple's garments which was the habit of making presents to the newlyweds. The party would last all night and then the couple would leave to go to their new house.

