

Marwari Jain (Oswal) Wedding

The Oswals, who are mainly Jains, come from the town of Osian, forty-eight kilometers from Jodhpur. Along with the Maheshwaris and the Agrawals, they claim to be of Rajput descent. Formerly there was no intermarriage between these communities, not even between similar groups like the Oswals and Poswals (both of whom are Jains claiming Rajput descent) but such restrictions are breaking down today.

Jainism, which was adopted by many of them influenced their attitude towards the acquisition of wealth as the 'the Jain doctrine of 'anekanisvada' (many-sidedness of reality) gave them a broader outlook on life than the average Hindus.

Some surnames: Baid, Jain, Sethia, Surana, Bhandary

List of ceremonies

1. Khol Barana : The marriage alliance is confirmed
2. Tikka : Gifts for the groom
3. Bathse : Personal invitations to family and close friends
4. Mayara: Exchange of gifts between the two families
5. Bana Betai : Ritualistic bath
6. Nikasi : Groom leaves for the wedding venue
7. Padla : Bridal outfit gifted to the bride
8. Varamala : Exchange of garlands between the bride and groom
9. Phera : Circling the sacred fire seven times
10. Bidai : Bride leaves her parental home
11. Reception : Post-wedding party

1. KHOL BARANA: The marriage alliance is confirmed

Once an alliance has been arranged the groom's family comes to the bride's home carrying the auspicious coconut and cash on a silver platter. Neither the bride nor groom is present at this ceremony.

Requirements: Silver platter Coconut Gifts

2. TIKKA: Gifts for the groom

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*16, Sant Nagar, Frist Floor, East ofKailash, New Delhi-110065
Tel: +91 11 26286782, 26286783*

The bride's family goes to the groom's home bearing lavish gifts: cash, jewellery, suit lengths, electronics, watches etc. This is carried in cane baskets and silver platters.

Requirements: Silver platters Jewellery Watches
Cane baskets , Suit-lengths/men's Designer wear
Pen, Gold Ring

3. BATHSE: Personal invitations to family and close friends

The groom's mother and the bride's mother (in their respective towns or cities) visit all their close relatives to personally invite them for the wedding. Sweets are gifted to each relative along with the invitation.

Requirements: Sweets

4. MAYARA: Exchange of gifts between the two families

Just before the wedding, the bride's parents, brothers, uncles and other family members go to the groom's home bearing lavish gifts for all the family members of the groom .The same gesture is returned by the groom's family towards that of the bride. Gifts can be almost anything from silver, cash, saris, outfits to electronics, watches, crystal etc.

Requirements:

Silver, Jewellery, Outfits, Sarees, Electronics, Accessories

5. BANA BETAI: Ritualistic bath

This is a ritual where the bride and groom are 'prepared' for the wedding in their respective homes by all the close relatives.

The bride/groom wears old clothes and channa ka atta (chickpea flour) paste is applied on their face, arms, and feet. This paste is traditionally used to beautify the skin. Only the women folk of the family participate in this ritual and naturally, there is a lot of fun and teasing that goes on. The bride/groom then goes for a bath and their discarded clothes are traditionally taken away by the barber and his wife.

Requirements:

Paste made from channa ka atta
(chick pea flour)
Barber and his wife

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6. NIKASI: Groom leaves for the wedding venue

This is a very grand and colourful ceremony.. The groom wears a ‘sherwani’ - a formal Nehru collar long jacket with slim trousers in a rich white/off-white brocade. He wears a bright red or saffron ‘safa’ – headgear, a waistband and around his neck a rich ‘satladi’ – seven rows of pearls and emeralds. On his safa is clipped on a ‘sarpach’ or brooch, which often is a family heirloom. The groom sits on a mare richly decorated with silver and jewels. He is accompanied by a band playing music and led by all the young members of the family dancing and singing. Traditionally only men participated in the dancing and singing but nowadays, women of the family also take active part in this function.

Requirements:

Sherwani (groom's outfit)
Satladi (groom's jewellery)
Sarpach (brooch)
Safa (headgear)
Decorated mare
Band

7. PADLA: Bridal outfit gifted to the bride

The groom’s sisters, very gorgeously dressed, carry with them a richly woven and embroidered lehnga (traditional Indian skirt) or a rich sari and jewellery to be gifted to the bride. This is usually in tones of red. The Marwari traditional jewellery is jadau - uncut diamonds set in gold. The bride at the wedding ceremony will wear this outfit and jewellery.

Requirements:

Lehnga or sari
Jadhau (traditional Marwari jewellery)

8. VARAMALA: Exchange of garlands between the bride and groom

At the wedding venue, the groom is received almost royally by the bride’s father and led into the mandap.

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The bride's maternal uncle carries the bride and circles him thrice while she showers flowers on him. The uncle then puts her down in front of the groom and the couple exchanges garlands. The bride wears the heavy lehnga (or sari), gifted to her by the groom's sister. The bride's head is always covered almost completely, either with her sari pallu or her odhni (shawl). She wears a 'nath' -nose ring - and 'mangtika' (jewellery on her head), and silver anklets. These pieces of jewellery are a must even in the simplest of Oswal weddings.

Traditionally the Oswals show a preference for the 'jadau' style of jewellery (uncut diamonds set in gold).

Requirements:

Garlands

Decorated mandap

Mangtika (jewellery for the head)

Nath (nose jewellery)

Jadau

9. PHERA: Circling the sacred fire seven times

This is the main wedding ceremony performed by a Brahmin pujari. The bride and groom sit in a mandap decorated with flowers. The bride's parents are present to do the 'kanyadaan' or the giving away of the bride. The bride's pallu or odhni is tied to the groom's waistband. A 'homa' or sacred fire is lit and amidst vedic chanting by the pujari. The couple circles the fire seven times (each is called a phera) and wedding vows are exchanged.

The vows are:

1. To provide our home with a nourishing and pure diet
2. To develop our physical, mental and spiritual powers
3. To increase our wealth by righteous means
4. To acquire knowledge, happiness and harmony by our mutual love and affection
5. That we may be blessed by strong, noble and virtuous children
6. For self-restraint and longevity, that we may work for our welfare and that of our community
7. So that we become true companions and retain a lifelong friendship with each other

A sumptuous vegetarian Marwari dinner is served after the wedding ceremony.

Requirements: Pujari Caterer Havan Or Sacred fire

10. BIDAI: Bride leaves her parental home

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This is an emotional ceremony and only close family and friends are present. The bride is showered with flowers and almost everyone present invariably weeps as she leaves for her new home in a decorated car.

NOTE: SANGEET, MEHNDI AND RECEPTION

These functions are not traditional to the Marwari Jains but have been adopted and are now a must in many weddings.

Sangeet is held in the days preceding the wedding ceremony and all the young members of the family sing and dance. Often professional singers are hired.

A Mehndi ceremony is held by the bride and her close friends and relatives are invited. Mehndi is a custom where an intricate tracery of mehndi (henna) is drawn on the palms and feet of the bride by a professional mehndiwali. Generally all the women and girls present have mehndi put on their palms, wrists and sometimes up till the elbows.

11. Reception is held much like any other at five star hotels with friends and family attending and partaking of an elaborate meal. Alcohol however, is taboo.

General Requirements:

Groom's suit

Bride's outfit

Venue

Band/entertainment

Mehendiwali

Shamiana/ Tentwala

Caterer

Marwari Jain(Oswal) Wedding is now complete.

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