



## **WEDDINGS: Frequently Asked Questions**

### **The Basics**

#### **Can we come to the Calgary Zoo to do a Site Tour of your Wedding Venues?**

- Yes – in fact, we encourage it! We'd be thrilled to welcome you to the zoo for a private Tour of our facilities. Site Tours are free and we will take you through the Ceremony locations and Reception Venues for any of the locations that you're interested in. Please contact us to schedule the Site Tour.

#### **What dates are available?**

- Please contact us for our Wedding & Venue availability!

#### **Do I have to book a Ceremony and Reception, or can I just book the Reception?**

- You may book a Wedding Ceremony & Reception or a Wedding Reception – you do not have to book a Ceremony with the Calgary Zoo. We recognize that couples may already have a special location in mind when it comes to holding the Ceremony, so we leave that decision to you.

#### **How does your Wedding pricing work?**

- Our Wedding pricing has three essential components:
  1. Venue Rental Fee (which varies based on the location that you select)
  2. Venue Food & Beverage Minimum Spend (which varies based on the location that you select)
  3. Ceremony Fee (\$3 per guest if you choose to hold your Ceremony at the Calgary Zoo)

#### **Do you charge GST? Do you charge Gratuity?**

- As a charity not for profit, we do not charge GST on the applicable Venue Rental and Food & Beverage spend. An 18% gratuity will be automatically charged on all Food & Beverage selections.

#### **How many people can your Venues accommodate?**

- Our maximum capacities depend on the Venue that you are selecting, but generally speaking, we can host Weddings as small as 15 guests and as large as 300 guests.

#### **What is the Venue Rental Fee and what's included in that price?**

- The Venue Rental Fee depends on the Venue that you select – it ranges from \$1,100 to \$2,550. The Venue Rental includes Admission to the Calgary Zoo (for all of your guests) as well as your choice of complimentary linens and candles for each table. Tables, chairs, plates, silverware, and glassware are all included.

#### **What is the Venue Food & Beverage Minimum Spend mean?**

- The Food & Beverage minimum spend is the amount that you are required to spend on food & non-alcoholic beverage for all of your guests. This amount does not include alcohol, and there is no maximum to what you may choose to spend on your selections. This amount varies based on the Venue that you select, and please note that your Venue Rental Fee, alcohol, and AV needs do not apply to this amount.

As an example, if your Food & Beverage minimum is \$6,250 and you have 80 guests, you will need to spend \$78 per guest on food and non-alcoholic beverages.

#### **How do I confirm my Wedding with the Calgary Zoo and make payment?**

- We book Weddings on a *first-come first-served* basis and your date is not guaranteed until we receive the initial deposit and the signed Contract Agreement. Please contact us for more details.

#### **What would the payment schedule look like for my Wedding?**

- In order to guarantee your Wedding date and Venue selection, you must provide your initial deposit along with the signed Contract Agreement. This deposit is equal to the Venue Rental Fee for the Venue that you selected. 50% of the anticipated charges are then due 60 days prior to the Wedding date with the remaining balance due 10 days prior to the Wedding date (with this balance being based on fully anticipated charges).

#### **Can we have our rehearsal dinner here? What about a morning-after mimosa brunch?**

- Absolutely! Many of our couples include the evening before or morning after the big day of festivities as an ice breaker or a reunion of family members.

#### **Does the Venue Rental Fee include a rehearsal time the day before the Wedding?**

- Rehearsal times cannot be guaranteed unless space is confirmed via a separate Venue Rental. Please ask us for more details. (Upon request, your Event Sales Coordinator will check the Venue availability approximately 2 weeks in advance to determine if your Venue and/or Ceremony location is available for a rehearsal.)

#### **What is your cancellation policy?**

- You have the right to cancel the Wedding and terminate the Contract Agreement by giving the Calgary Zoo written notice. Cancellation will result in the forfeiture of your deposit(s) – please note that there are no refunds for Weddings regardless of the amount of written notice provided. Weddings cancelled within two (2) months of the Wedding date will result in the full anticipated charges of the Wedding being invoiced.

#### **Where are your Ceremony locations (does it take place indoors or outdoors)?**

- The location of your Wedding Ceremony is assigned based on the Venue that you select. Our outdoor Ceremony locations are as follows (and please contact us to book a free Site Tour and experience these locations):
  - ENMAX Conservatory = Ceremony held in the Arbour Gardens
  - Safari Lodge = Ceremony held in the Cupid's Gardens
  - Grazers Restaurant = Ceremony held on Grazers Patio
  - Asia Lawn & Tent = Ceremony held on the Asia Lawn

#### **What time is the Ceremony?**

- As a general guidance, Weddings booked in the ENMAX Conservatory and Safari Lodge Venues may have the Ceremony begin at 3:00 pm or later. Weddings booked in the Asia Lawn & Tent may have the Ceremony begin at 4:00 pm or later. Weddings booked in our Grazers Restaurant will be dependent on the time of the year.

#### **Does the Ceremony have to be outdoors?**

- No, it does not have to be outdoors – we're happy to accommodate an indoor Ceremony based on the Venue that you select.

#### **What's your weather contingency (backup) plan for outdoor spaces?**

- Each of our outdoor Ceremony locations have a bad-weather back-up plan. Ceremonies taking place in our Arbour Gardens (with the ENMAX Conservatory being the selected Venue) will be moved into the Terrace of ENMAX; Ceremonies taking place in our Cupids Gardens (with Safari Lodge being the selected Venue) will be moved into Safari Lodge; Ceremonies taking place on our Grazers Patio (with Grazers Restaurant being the selected Venue) will be moved into Grazers Restaurant).

#### **Do you offer special rates for Calgary Zoo Members?**

- Unfortunately, there is no discount for members. Weddings are sold as a group package and the costs are not affected if some of the guests have passes or memberships.

#### **Can I take pictures and/or post photos of my Wedding on social media?**

- Absolutely, yes! When booking a Wedding at the Calgary Zoo, you are welcome to utilize all public areas on the zoo grounds for photos. While we respect your photographer's desire to capture the perfect shot, we would ask that you please be respectful of the grounds, our animals, and other visitors that may be on park. All photos on zoo grounds should be completed prior to 6:00 pm when the zoo closes to the public. Please contact us for more information on our preferred locations across the Calgary Zoo.

#### **What does a typical Wedding at the Calgary Zoo cost?**

- Weddings are entirely dependent on the selections that you make and the number of guests that will be attending. That said, we generally see our Weddings in the range of \$70 to \$200 per person, and these figures would account for all Venue Rental Fees, Food & Beverage spends, and Ceremony costs. Your decision as to whether you will include alcoholic beverages for guests is what will increase your expected per person spend.

#### **Are there any other fees that we should be aware of?**

- There are two organizations in Canada that levy fees for all events in which music or entertainment are employed – they are: SOCAN and Re:Sound. The Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada represent music creators and publishers. Re:Sound represents artists and record companies. The Calgary Zoo is bound to collect fees and remit them on a quarterly basis. Fees for both, plus applicable taxes, will be automatically applied to your Invoice based on the size of your Wedding. Please ask us for more information.

### **Food + Drinks**

#### **Do you have an in-house caterer?**

- At the Calgary Zoo, the exotic experiences don't end with the animals. Our chefs extend that feeling of discovery and excitement with inspired creations to delight your senses. With one of the largest catering teams in the city, we're confident your guests will enjoy a first-rate dining experience as civilized or wild as your taste!

#### **Can we do a food tasting before we finalize our menu selections? Does it cost extra?**

- Yes! We'd be happy to arrange an official Wedding Tasting. Please contact us for more information!

#### **How do we select from your Wedding Menus (plated options)?**

- We offer a very wide range of elegant cuisines. Generally speaking, the Wedding couple will select one starter, one entrée, and one dessert – and this will apply to all guests. Couples wishing to offer guests a choice of two entrées may do so for an added fee. A second starter may be added for all guests at an additional charge. Please note that indicators such as place cards, personalized menus, etc. are required

to identify guest meal choice and dietary restrictions. These must be provided no later than 10 business days prior to the date of the Wedding.

**When do we have to make our final guaranteed guest numbers?**

- Final guaranteed guest numbers for your Wedding are required no later than 10 days prior to the Wedding date.

**When do we have to make our final Menu selections?**

- Menu selections and dietary considerations are required no later than 30 days prior to the Wedding date.

**Can I bring in a cake from an outside baker or do I have to use a cake made on site?**

- Designing and choosing a Wedding cake is a very subjective part to the whole Wedding planning process and we want to leave that choice up to you. You are responsible for bringing your own Wedding cake to the zoo. The Calgary Zoo does not supply a Wedding cake.

**Is there a cake-cutting fee?**

- Yes, there is a cake-cutting fee. We charge \$100 for this service.

**Can we bring in our own food and beverage?**

- No outside food is permitted except for a Wedding cake.

**Can we bring our own wine, beer, or champagne? What about hard liquor?**

- No, you cannot bring in your own beverages, alcoholic or otherwise. All beverages must be ordered through the Calgary Zoo and served by Calgary Zoo Catering Staff.

**Are you licensed to provide alcohol service?**

- Yes, absolutely – we are licenced to serve alcohol throughout our park. All of our Venues have full Bar services.

**How is alcohol priced, and is there a bar minimum?**

- We would be happy to provide you with our full Bar Menu and possible selections. A Bartender labour charge of \$30 per hour will apply (minimum of three hours) if Bar sales are less than \$400.

**Are there additional charges for bar staff?**

- Only if Bar sales are less than the agreed upon amount of \$400 total.

**Can we create our own cocktail list?**

- Yes, in fact we encourage all Wedding couples to come up with something special and meaningful for their guests!

**How do bar charges work?**

- You have the choice to go with a Host Bar (E.g. Wedding couple pays for everything), a Cash Bar (E.g. your guests pay for everything), or a pre-arranged Subsidized Bar (E.g. provide your guests with drink tickets where they can be redeemed at a reduced cost).

**What time can the bar stay open until?**

- The bar can stay open until 12:00 am.

**Do you provide menus for children?**

- We recognize that little ones are an important part of the day and we've created menu options that will tempt their taste buds! Please contact us for more details.

## **DÉCOR + RENTALS**

### **Are tables, linens, chairs, plates, silverware, and glassware provided, or will I have to rent them myself?**

- Yes, all of these items are included in the Venue Rental.

### **Are we allowed to decorate our Venue?**

- Absolutely, yes! Please consult with your Event Sales Coordinator on the full list of prohibited items (due to the safety and welfare of the animals) which include but are not limited to: all balloons, rice, confetti, piñatas, sparklers, fireworks, and all open flames. All décor must be free standing and the setup time allocated is up to 3 hours (including time for Catering to set the Venue). Upon request, your Event Sales Coordinator can check the availability of your Venue for earlier setup.

### **When do we have to remove our décor?**

- All Wedding décor (including gifts and any other items brought to the zoo) must be removed at the end of the Wedding.

### **Do you have signage or other aides to direct guests to my event?**

- Yes, our Guest Services Team and on-park Volunteers will be happy to guide your guests to the proper Venue or locations. We will provide you with a dedicated zoo map which can be shared with guests as well as several on-park visual aides to direct your guests. Please note that signs are not allowed to be placed around the zoo without the prior written consent of the Calgary Zoo.

## **VENDORS + STAFFING:**

### **Does the Wedding couple need to provide an Officiant or Minister, etc.?**

- Yes, you are responsible for providing your own Wedding Officiant for the date of your Wedding. If you're still searching to find the applicable person/service, we'd be happy to provide you with a short-list of preferred (independent) partners that have worked with the Calgary Zoo before.

### **Can I hire my vendors or is there a preferred vendor list we need to stick to?**

- Yes, you may hire the Wedding vendors of your choosing. If you don't already have them selected, we'd be happy to provide a short-list of preferred (independent) partners that have a familiarity with the Calgary Zoo. Please note that vendors are required to carry their own WCB insurance and should be able to provide proof of insurance when asked. Uninsured vendors will be asked to sign a waiver before being permitted on grounds.

### **Do I need to provide my own DJ?**

- We strongly recommend that all Wedding couples consider hiring a third-party DJ and/or AV company for their entertainment/music component. The Calgary Zoo has basic audio equipment in each Venue which is designed for low-level usage throughout a dinner service or indoor Ceremony. We highly recommend employing a DJ for your Wedding Reception if you plan on having any dance component.

### **Do you offer on-site coordination? What services are included?**

- When you book a Wedding with the Calgary Zoo, you will be supported by one of our fantastic Event Sales Coordinators! Our Events Team is here to support you in the coordination and logistics of your Wedding Venue and Menu selections.

#### **Will you work with our Wedding Planner?**

- Absolutely, yes! Even though you're being supported by our Events Team, many couples decide to employ a Wedding Planner for their special day. We are happy to work with all Wedding Planners.

#### **What time can my vendors start setting up on the day of the Wedding?**

- Generally speaking, we allow setup within three hours prior to the agreed upon Wedding Ceremony or Reception time. Upon request, your Event Sales Coordinator will search the availability of your Venue for a potential earlier setup. It is not uncommon to be granted access to your Venue the day before the Wedding for setup purposes only – we just cannot guarantee this.

#### **Can the Venue accommodate a DJ or live band?**

- Yes – every Venue can accommodate a DJ or live band. Please contact us for more details.

#### **Do you offer any assistance in getting gifts and/or décor back to the designated parking lot after the Wedding?**

- Yes, we have several carts that can be used for the handling of gifts and décor after the Wedding. Please contact us for more information on special parking locations for such a purpose.

### **LOGISTICS:**

#### **Are there changing areas for the bride, groom, and/or wedding party?**

- Due to the flexibility of our Venue spaces, we cannot offer designated changing areas. We always recommend arriving ready to go to avoid stress.

#### **Can our guests come in early or stay at the zoo after the Wedding?**

- Yes, your Wedding includes admission to the zoo for you and your guests. Guests may arrive up to two hours prior to the Ceremony start time to enjoy the zoo. From 6:00 pm and onwards, you and your guests are requested to remain inside the Venue. Please note that your guests will not be able to access the Wedding Venue location before the start time. In order to facilitate entry, your guests will give the name of the Wedding Party that they are attending – E.g. the Smith & Johnson Wedding.

#### **What if my Wedding is taking place during ZOOLIGHTS?**

- If you're holding your Wedding with the Calgary Zoo during ZOOLIGHTS, your guests will be granted free access to come and go to enjoy the ZOOLIGHTS experience – they will not have to stay in the Venue!

#### **Where do guests park?**

- The guest parking location will be determined by your Venue (E.g. where the Reception is being held). Weddings taking place in the ENMAX Conservatory (on Saturday's and Sunday's) will be permitted to have their guests park in the Administration Lot. Weddings taking place in Safari Lodge and Grazers Restaurant, will see guests parking and entering through the main North Parking Lot gates located on St. Georges Drive. Please note that parking is not included in your Wedding. The cost is \$12 per vehicle daily. Any attendees with a valid Engage or Inspire membership may use their pass for parking access. Please note that all vehicles must be moved by 11:00 am the following day or they will be towed at the owner's expense.

#### **How do Wedding guests get into the Zoo?**

- Your guests will give the name of the Wedding they are attending. E.g. the Smith & Johnson Wedding.

**Is there a separate space for a cocktail hour?**

- Both the ENMAX Conservatory and Safari Lodge Venues have a dedicated space and lobby area for a cocktail hour, with a full Bar setup if you elected to have one. Grazers Restaurant and the Asia Tent have a full Bar setup but not a fully dedicated lobby space.

**Do you have a sound system and/or microphones for speeches?**

- Yes, each Venue offers a basic sound system. Please ask us for more information on additional Audio/Visual needs at the Calgary Zoo.

**How many restrooms are there?**

- Every Venue comes equipped with fully operational washrooms that are separated by men's and women's facilities. Please note that the washrooms for our Asia Lawn & Tent Venue are located just across from the main Asia Lawn area.

**Is the site handicap accessible?**

- Yes, all of our Venues are handicap accessible. Please ask us for more information on each Venue.

**Can I store food, gifts, décor, etc. in the Venue while we are in the Zoo?**

- Unfortunately, the zoo does not provide any storage areas after the Wedding concludes – all belongings must leave the Venue when your Reception has ended.

**What do people usually do between the Ceremony and Reception?**

- It's entirely up to you and your guests! Your guests have the choice as to where they want to go around the zoo grounds – they can discover the many animals that call the Calgary Zoo home, they can enjoy a drink at any one of our Food & Beverage outlets, or they could even participate in a pre-arranged Team Builder or Scavenger Hunt game. Please note that these Team Builders must be planned out well in advance of the Wedding date and are associated with a cost per person.

**Do you have any playgrounds for kids?**

- Yes! The Calgary Zoo offers several play areas for the little ones. They include: Brawn Family Foundation Bugtopia (located in the Canadian Wilds), Kinsmen Zoventure Playground (located in Destination Africa), and the Calgary Co-op Kids Zone (located in Eurasia). Please note that all playgrounds close at either 5:00 pm or 6:00 pm depending on the time of year.