



UNIQUE IDEAS

Cultural Connection

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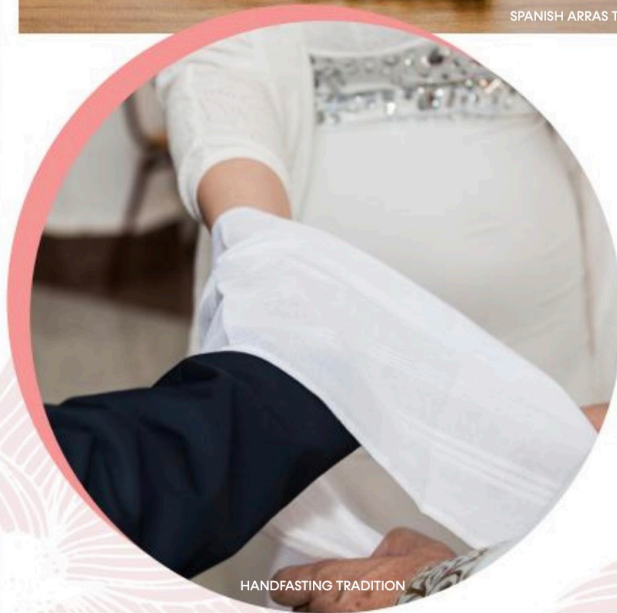
Embrace the family ties that bind. Add a dash of romantic symbolism to your wedding ceremony by incorporating a tradition that speaks to your cultural roots.



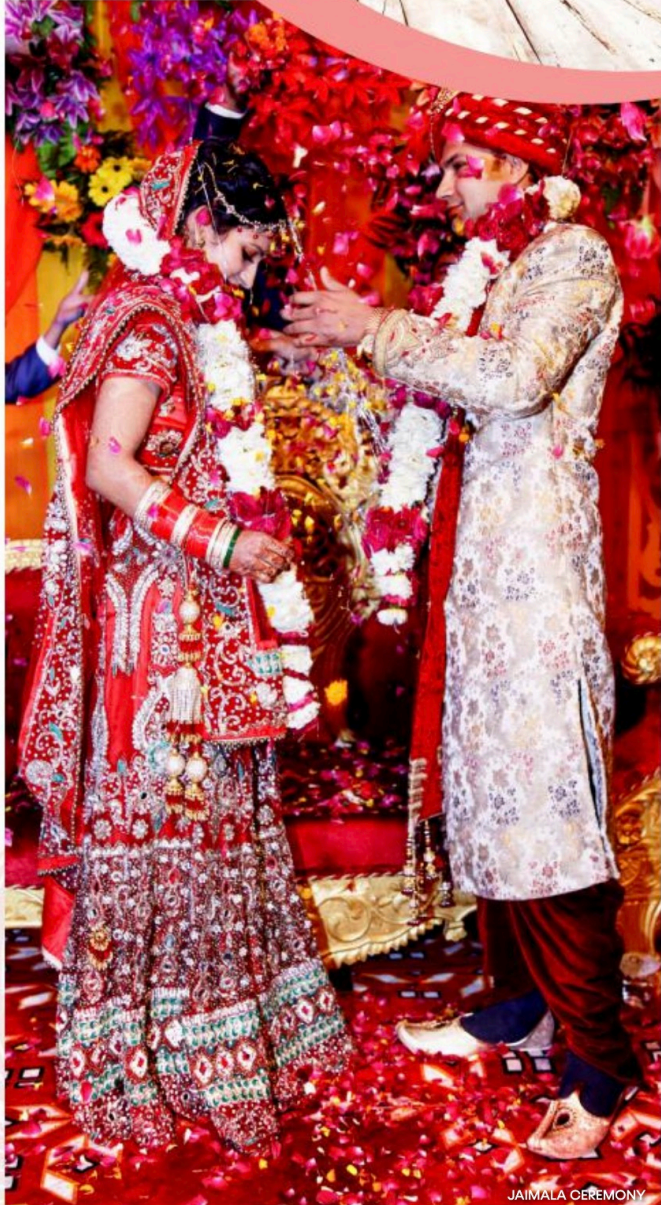
WISHING TREE



SPANISH ARRAS TRADITION



HANDBASTING TRADITION



JAIMALA CEREMONY

Spanish Fortune

In Spain, a custom called *arras* once saw the groom giving the bride coins, signifying a promise to support her. This tradition has been updated, with the couple now exchanging 13 coins to show that they will both support the marriage financially. One other monetary convention involves the groom's tie being cut into pieces and auctioned off to guests to raise funds for the new couple.

Irish Unity

The wrists of the bride and groom are tied together with twine in Ireland, a Celtic tradition called handfasting that symbolizes unity. It springs from a tradition wherein a couple was "bound" together for a year to test their compatibility, after which the marriage took place – or not. This ancient bond of wedlock is believed to be the origin of the phrase "tying the knot."

Dutch Wishes

A Wishing Tree is set up near the bride and groom's table at receptions in the Netherlands, along with paper leaves on which guests write their well-wishes. Newlyweds read out the notes and tie them to the tree with ribbons. Real branches, paper trees, twinkling lights or crystal strands – the art direction is open to interpretation. The Wishing Tree is a great alternative to a guest book and the leaves can later be added to a scrapbook.

Indian Garlands

The *jaimala* or *varmala* ceremony is an ancient Hindu wedding tradition that features the bride and groom exchanging garlands of flowers. It symbolizes both an acceptance and respect of one another as well as the union of the two families, a merging of values and customs. Roses, jasmine, and marigolds are the typical flowers used, with colours varying to suit the bridal party attire.

Mayan Symbolism

Couples can add a spiritual and cultural experience to their wedding ceremony on Mexico's east coastline with a sacred, non-religious Mayan ritual. It involves a shaman calling on the four elements – earth, water, fire, and air – to focus their energies on the bride and groom to help strengthen their love. The ceremony can be conducted in the rainforest, near a sacred cenote or on the beach. Incense purifies the setting, which is augmented with drums, flutes, and dancing.