





from india WITH LOVE

Kathryn Elise Adams  Ravee Mehta

by clancy mitchell | photography by fotowala: sephi bergerson photography

MARRY ME

In accepting Ravee Mehta's proposal of marriage over Memorial Day weekend in 2010 while vacationing at Dungeon Provincial Park in Newfoundland, Jackson native Kate Adams promised to go with him "to all the ends of the world."

Honoring tradition and family, Kate Adams and Ravee Mehta were married in a three-day Rajasthani wedding on December 18, 2010, in Udaipur, Rajasthan, India. The traditional wedding in the culture of the groom's family was a Royal Rajput wedding, Rajput meaning "warrior class," as the Mehta family is considered to be. A small group of family and friends from Mississippi was able to attend, with a more significant contingent celebrating with the couple stateside. "Royal Rajput weddings are grandiose affairs that last for days," explains Kate. "We squeezed ours into three days."



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HER GOWN

Kate bought all of her wedding clothes just one week before the wedding at Frontier Bazar in New Delhi, including a magenta-colored dress she had been “craving” and her wedding dress in the traditional color of red with matching bangles. “It took me a while to come to terms with this idea,” says Kate. “The selection and prices were significantly better in India than in New York, and waiting until the last minute to buy wedding clothes is apparently quite common there.”



HALDI

Wedding festivities officially began the morning of December 17 with Ganesh Puja, where prayers were made for a successful and peaceful completion of the wedding. The Haldi ceremony followed in which family members “prepared” the bride and groom for the forthcoming wedding ceremony by applying a turmeric paste to their faces, arms, and feet.

MEHNDI

Next was the Mehndi, at which the bride’s hands, arms, feet, and legs were intricately painted with henna which signifies the strength of love in a marriage. “The longer the henna is left on, the darker it becomes and the more the bride is said to love her groom,” explains Kate. During this time, guests enjoyed lunch and were decorated with henna throughout the afternoon.



SANGEET

Evening brought Sangeet, which is traditionally the liveliest celebration of the wedding. Guests were entertained by traditional Rajasthani folk dancers and performers at a site overlooking the Fateh Sagar Lake and Nehru Garden. The night ended with a late-night camel race around the lake.

CEREMONIAL ATTIRE

Ravee's ceremonial suit, known as a pajama kurta, was accented by his turban known as a safa. His safa was adorned by gold, rubies, and diamonds and was made from Rajasthani bandhani-printed cloth. The decorative ornament on the safa is known as the toran and is typically seen as a door decoration during religious rituals, welcoming visitors and God into the ceremony. He also wore a five-strand pearl necklace.

BARAAT: THE PROCESSION OF THE GROOM

Two things that are particular to a Royal Rajput wedding are the use of an elephant and a sword during the Baraat, or groom's procession, which took place the following day. An 11-piece marching band, folk dancers, family, friends, and even bystanders danced while leading Ravee atop an elephant, flanked by his brother and cousins on horses and camels, to the final wedding ceremony. "I was not able to participate," laments Kate. "I simply had to await his arrival before I could make my entrance."



Let's celebrate

MEET ME AT THE MANDAP

Kate was carried in on an intricately painted silver palaki and met Ravee on the mandap, a covered structure with pillars and a stage where they exchanged heavy garlands made of hundreds of fresh flowers symbolizing acceptance of each other.



THE CEREMONY

To her family's surprise, Kate's father had the biggest role in the ceremony, with the priest instructing him to perform a number of rituals in order to "give his daughter away." "Toward the end, I was so caught up in everything we were doing that I nearly missed the moment we were married," exclaims Kate. Ravee was instructed to place a gold and black beaded necklace called a mangalsutra over Kate's head when applause erupted and the couple was showered with flower petals. "It was like, 'Surprise! You're married!'" remembers Kate of the big moment. "I love my mangalsutra. It's my wedding ring equivalent."





LET'S CUT THE CAKE

The couple had one final surprise in store, as fireworks had been arranged by their family to go off overhead as the couple cut their wedding cake during the reception

A NIGHT OF CELEBRATION

The evening ended at the Udaivilas hotel, where family and friends continued celebrating into the night.



PHOTO BY CAROL REACH

EVER AFTER

About a week after returning from their honeymoon in Rajasthan and Seychelles, a stateside wedding was held. Their stateside wedding was held in their hometown of New York City at Bayard's in the historic India House on January 15, 2011.

Following the stateside wedding, the couple made good on their engagement promise, beginning their married life with a yearlong trip around the world. M