

Love statistics

Getting married is considered by many to be one of the most exciting events in life. However, while they are saying the faithful *I do* or putting the final dot on their marriage, hardly anyone is aware of the fact that, in that moment, they are becoming a part of statistics. In addition to the initial and the final point of one's marital journey, statistics also record a number of other interesting facts that create an image of the habits of the population, but also of the changes in society. As February is *the month of love*, we have gathered these facts in one place and we encourage you to find out more about love statistics!

I do

The beginning of married life is marked by simple two words – *I do*. It is part of the ceremony, which is the beginning of a new era in one's life. Nevertheless, although this event is very special and memorable for the whole life, less and less couples have decided to get married in the last ten years. In 2009, there were 22 382 marriages, while in 2018, there were 19 921 marriages. It is still slightly higher than the record 2013, when the lowest number of marriages were concluded in the previous decade, namely 19 169 marriages.

In addition to the annual sum at the level of Croatia, it is interesting to observe the frequency of concluding marriage at the level of counties. Whether due to a tradition or age structure, some counties in Croatia are leading by the number of marriages per 1 000 inhabitants. The County of Požega-Slavonia and the County of Slavonski Brod-Posavina (6.1) can boast the highest marriage rate in 2018, followed by the County of Vukovar-Sirmium (5.9). The lowest marriage rate belonged to the County of Istria (3.8).

Before the registrar or in a religious institution

In addition to frequency, the manner of concluding marriage has changed over the years. In the observed period from 2009 to 2018, the number of civil marriages grew, while the number of religious marriages fell. In 2009, a total of 36.5% of marriages were civil, and according to the latest available data, this share was as high as 49.9% in 2018. Therefore, there were 50.1% of religious marriages in 2018.

Late summer most popular for expressing wedding vows

Trends are changing. Although it is somewhat expected that the appearance of invitations, cakes, wedding dresses and wedding customs will change, it is a bit surprising that the time of the year when most couples decide to get married will change. In the fifties, sixties and seventies of the 20th century, the most popular months for getting married were January, February and December, in the eighties, these winter months were replaced by April, while in the last fifteen years, most marriages have been concluded in late summer and early autumn, that is, in September and October. This was also the case in 2018, when most couples decided to celebrate their special day in September.

However, there are always exceptions. Some find it especially romantic to make a vow of eternal love on Valentine's Day. Therefore, 26 marriages were concluded on 14 February in 2018.

Bride and groom are getting older

How many times have you heard expressions such as *spinster* or *old bachelor*? In the past, they used to be attributed to the age when most young people today don't even think about marriage. Over time, the average age of bride and groom has grown substantially, which is well illustrated by statistics. More than half a century ago, couples married in their early twenties. In 1960, the average age of bride at first marriage was 22.6 and of groom 25.8. In fifty years, this age increased for both for five years, so in 2010, the average bride was 27.3 years old and the groom was 30.1 years old. In 2018, women got married at the average age of 28.7 and men at the average age of 31.3. Although many societal changes have taken place over the decades, and this analysis shows that couples were part of these changes as well, one item is constant. Men are still older when getting married, that is, they are almost three years older on average than their better halves.

Marriage lasts for 14.9 years on average

However, although couples rarely think about the expiration date of their marriage, unfortunately, many marriages end before expected. Whatever the reasons for the divorce,

INTERESTING FACTS

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the fact is that in the last ten years, their number has been on the rise. In 2009, there were 5 076 divorces, then this number grew over the years and peaked in 2016 (7 036 divorces), after which the annual number of divorces started to decrease, amounting to 6 125 divorces in 2018. Marriages that ended in 2018 lasted for 14.9 years on average, and spouses were in their early forties on average. Women got divorced at the average age of 41.0 and men at the average age of 44.2.

New love and marriage

The end of one marital experience does not necessarily mean the loss of faith in this centuries-old institution. Moreover, after their first, unsuccessful marriage, some have decided to give marriage a second chance. In 2018, a total of 2 064 women and 2 017 men got married for the second time, after having been divorced. There are also those who have not lost faith in marital happiness even after losing their spouse. In 2018, a total of 226 widows and 236 widowers concluded a new marriage in 2018.

In the end, the only conclusion is that love does not really have a given agenda. It is good to follow your path and not to forget that it is never too late for this queen of emotions, a spice of life!