

A Wedding Guide

by



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- ☐ Lock-in a Budget
- ☐ Choose Wedding Party
- ☐ Find Your Venue
- ☐ Purchase Your Dress
- ☐ Book Vendors

- ☐ Wedding Planner
- ☐ Officiant
- ☐ Photographer
- ☐ Videographer
- ☐ Caterer/Bar Services
- ☐ DJ/Music
- ☐ Cake
- ☐ Florist
- ☐ Hair & Make-Up
- ☐ Tuxedos
- ☐ Transportation

- ☐ Compile Guest List / Block Rooms at Local Hotel

Wedding Checklist



- ☐ Take Engagement Portraits
- ☐ Create & Order Invitations
- ☐ Create Wedding Registry
- ☐ Choose Wedding Party Attire
- ☐ Book Honeymoon
- ☐ Organize RSVP's (Finalize Guest List)
- ☐ Confirm Itinerary with all Vendors
- ☐ Arrange honeymoon pet care
- ☐ Take Bridal Portraits
- ☐ Order Thank You Cards
- ☐ Attend Rehearsal Dinner
 - Get to bed at a decent hour
- ☐ Relax and enjoy becoming a Mrs.

Getting Started

Whether you're at dinner with friends, a family gathering, or on your couch browsing a certain "board" themed website – planning a wedding has the potential to consume your thoughts. We've seen so many brides stress due to the unknown, so we decided to create this guide to assist you in navigating the waters and hopefully allow you to enjoy your wedding planning journey that much more.

Create a Budget



Before you can dive into the details, it's important to know just how much you can spend. An overall budget is a great place to begin - then you can carve out funds for specific items (think venue, dress, vendors, honeymoon).

Get Inspired



Utilize everything at your disposal. Talk to married friends, browse the internet, pick up bridal magazines. This will help you to create your vision!

Limit Choices



Once you have your vision, limit your choices by staying focused on the kind of wedding you want. There are plenty of great ideas out there, but try to only look at the ones that fit the feel you want to create for your wedding.

Choose Your Wedding Party



The advantage of choosing your wedding party early is that you have more people on deck to help! They most likely all have different skills, so get them involved in what they'll do best - whether it's venue tours, creating decor or vendor research.



Happily Ever Venue



What is the capacity for your venue and how crowded will it seem with your expected guest list?

Will venue managers work with you or are they inflexible? Some venues don't allow certain items
i.e. ballons, confetti, sparklers



Are areas broken up or do they flow together well?
Will there be separate areas for the ceremony and reception?

Do they allow outside vendors? Also: Table and chairs can be expensive - some venues provide them at no cost and others will charge.



If you can find a venue that's close, no problem!
If not, something to consider: Anything over a 45 minute drive will start to reduce attendance.

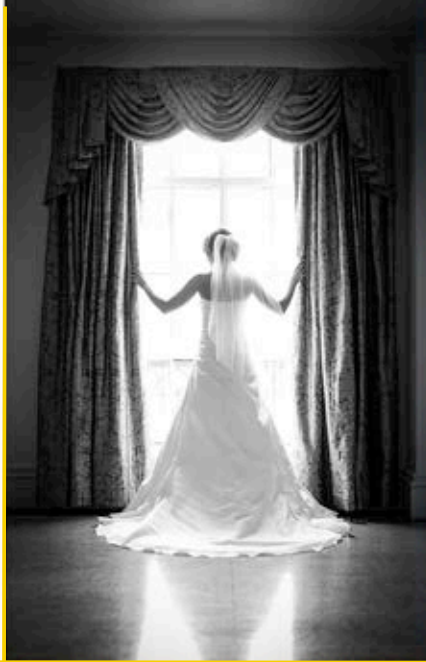
Lighting is huge! Light can shape how your photographs look. Photographers can work around this but it will affect your end results.



Choosing the Best Vendors

After setting a budget and booking a venue, the fun of selecting vendors can commence! This can seem like an overwhelming task, but tackling decisions one at a time will reduce stress.

Choose what's most important to you and begin there.



Research

Check out vendor websites and social media presence. Make sure that they have quite a few reviews and it's best if they span a few years.

Ask for references - you don't have to call them but it's important that they can provide

Value and Price

These are often confused. Compare quality first! Don't over/under estimate what a vendor can do for you based solely on their prices.

If you like a vendor's product, don't count them out just because they have a lower price tag.

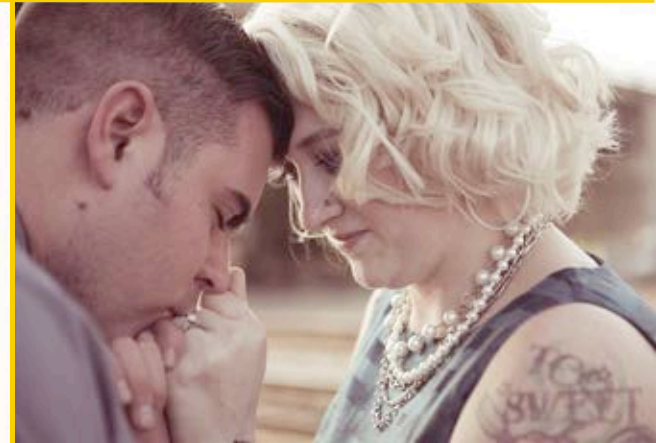
On the other side, don't assume quality because someone is charging a lot.



You Deserve a Meeting

You will be investing a lot in your vendors. DO NOT choose anyone that you can not meet.

Not everyone clicks and it's important you're comfortable with the person who will be present on your big day! Avoid companies that cannot guarantee who will be taking care of you.



Helpful Websites



Kayak.com

We've booked a round trip ticket from Chicago to London for \$700. It was amazing!



Airbnb.com

Find a unique place to honeymoon.



Minted.com

Custom Invitations



Amazon.com

*Great for everything!
I mean....it's AMAZON*



Brides.com

Great Wedding Planning Tips



Postable.com

Send your invites or thank you notes hassle free



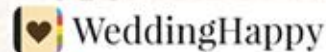
WeddingWire.com

Direct Links to Vendor Sites with Reviews



Tendr.com

Elegant way to receive cash



WeddingHappy.com

Amazing app for planning your wedding!



Honeyfund.com

Great for cash gifts or Honeymoon Funds



THE *Big* DAY

2.5 Hours Prior to Ceremony
WEDDING PARTY ARRIVES AT VENUE

2 Hours Prior to Ceremony
ALL PHOTOS OF GETTING READY, FAMILY AND WEDDING PARTY

0.5 Hours Prior to Ceremony
GUESTS BEGIN ARRIVING
WEDDING PARTY RETIRES TO THE ROOMS TO FRESHEN UP

Ceremony, 30-45 minutes

Cocktail Hour
GUESTS MINGLE
FINISH UP ANY WEDDING PARTY/FAMILY PHOTOS

Grand Entrance / First Dance, 15 minutes

Dinner, 45 minutes

Toasts / Special Dances, 15 minutes

Open Dance Floor

Cut and Serve Cake, 15 minutes

Bouquet Toss / Garter Toss

What Every Bride Should Know

Getting Ready

Everyone wants to look their best, so plan on everyone having hair and make-up mostly complete when you arrive at the venue or arrive at the venue 3-4 hours before the ceremony begins to allow for adequate prep time. Photography coverage should start about 30 minutes before you step into your dress. Clutter can be distracting, so try to keep the room tidy when getting ready.

Details Matter

The details of your wedding (invitations, dress, shoes, flowers, jewelry, etc.) are what make your wedding unique and stylish. That being said - don't stress over the little things on your wedding day. Chances are, your guests won't notice a candle that wasn't lit or a bridesmaid that used a safety pin to hold up a broken zipper - and it won't matter to you after the big day either!

Communication is Crucial

It's crucial for you to communicate with vendors about your timeline. This ensures that everyone knows what is going on, and where to be. Surprises for your guests are great, but not your vendors - especially photographers & videographers who need to be ready to capture everything that's important to you.

It's Your Party..... Tips So You Only Cry If You Want To

Preparation & Delegation

Create an outline for the day and put someone in charge who knows your vision. Ensure both sides of the wedding party know what's expected of them - last minute speeches rarely go well. If family/friends are involved in the decorating, allow 3-4 hours before the ceremony for set-up.

Write a Note

A sweet wedding tradition that sometimes gets lost in the fray. The night before your wedding, write a note to your future spouse for them to read the next day and ask them to do the same.

Light Matters

The most important component of photography is light and the more soft lighting the better! It makes the difference between light/airy and dark/moody photos. Consider the light & time of day when planning your timeline. Optimal light provides optimal photos.

Button Up

Wear something that unbuttons, so there is no need to drag a shirt over your beautiful hair and makeup.

Rings and the Ceremony

Who should hold the rings for the ceremony? The BEST man is the BEST choice. He has pockets & will appreciate being so involved. Wear your engagement ring on your right hand for the ceremony & switch it to the proper finger after, to complete the set.

Eat!

So many times we've seen the bride and groom end up not eating by the end of the night. Take the time and have your DJ announce when you'll be sitting down to eat. This lets guests know to give you some space.

Take the Time

There are people that have been there for you through a lot. The day is all about you but you will feel better if you purposefully take a moment to make sure your specials know how much you appreciate them.

Beauty Guide

Cut & Style

Choose your cut and style a few months before the big day to match your dress, face shape, hair length, veil & accessories.

Trial Run

Trials are a MUST. This gives you a chance to voice your opinions to your stylist and ensure the desired look can be achieved so you can look and FEEL your best on the big day!



So Fresh & So Clean

Styles hold best on “second day” hair. Shampoo, condition & blow dry with a round brush the night before your wedding. Concerned about oily locks? Ask your stylist her preference and if she recommends using a dry shampoo.

Fake Lashes

They truly make your eyes POP and CAN look natural! Choose lashes that are the right shape and length to fit your eyes.

Natural Glam

Your make-up needs staying power on your wedding day, so invest in a good primer. This allows you to avoid caking on make-up and results in a natural “you” walking down the aisle.

Lack of Sleep

Refrigerate your eye cream the night before your wedding & apply under your primer the next day. The coolness can reduce puffiness & leaves you feeling more awake. Pink-toned concealers will help balance out any dark circles.



Engagement Portraits

Engagement photos are all about the couple and we hate to see our clients go without them. This is a fun session to capture some loving moments. We really have a blast taking these photos and the energy of the shoot is all encompassing. Making sure you and your fiancé have fun, while getting some great shots is our goal!

Bridal Portraits

A bridal session is a time to show off the beauty of that dress! A lot of women are nervous about the idea of a bridal shoot, but we have never had a bride say that it was a bad experience. A bridal shoot is fun and non-stressful! Our job will be to guide you through the process of getting the pictures that show off what you will look like on your big day. Have some fun friends? Bring them along!

Intimate Moment

A first look is one of the few moments on your wedding day that you'll truly be alone. It's a great time to talk and bask in the day. You'll also be able to get 40% more portraits of just the two of you.



Tradition

Many times, couples are nervous about breaking tradition. If you're superstitious - best not to risk the possibility of bad juju on the big day!

First Look vs. Wait and See

Extend Your Day

Family and wedding party photos can be complete before the ceremony when you do a first look. This allows you to get to the reception more quickly so you won't keep your guests waiting.



Surprise

Many brides and their guests look for the groom's reaction. If it's the first time he's seen you that day, his reaction (no matter how big or small) will be genuine!

Family Portraits

Having an idea of the family photos you want to capture helps keep things moving & organized on your wedding day. It also ensures no one is forgotten in the chaos of the moment.

Pre-Ceremony

Bride with her Grandparents

Bride with her Parents

Bride with Mom, Bride with Dad

Groom with his grandparents

Groom with his parents

Groom with Mom, Groom with Dad



Post Ceremony

Bride + Groom with Bride's Parents

Bride + Groom with Bride's Siblings

Bride + Groom with Bride's Grandparents

Bride + Groom with Bride's Extended Family

Bride + Groom with both Bride & Groom's Extended Family

Bride + Groom with Groom's Extended Family

Bride + Groom with Groom's Grandparents

Bride + Groom with Groom's Siblings

Bride + Groom with Groom's Parents





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