

Wedding Planning Checklist / Timeline

The following checklist is designed with the timetable of 12 months.

If you're planning your wedding on a shorter schedule, just start at the beginning of the list and try to catch up as quickly as possible.

Use the boxes to the left of the items to check off tasks as you complete them.

9 TO 12 MONTHS PRIOR TO WEDDING DAY:

- Arrange a gathering for you and your parents.
- Determine budget and how expenses will be shared.
- Discuss the size, style, location, and scope of the wedding you want (theme and colors).
- Choose a target wedding date and time. (The actual date will depend on venue availability.)
- Create a binder to store and organize ideas, worksheets, receipts, brochures, etc.
- Visit and reserve wedding and reception sites.
- Meet with your officiant.
- Start compiling your guest list to estimate head count. Consider budget when thinking about "must-invites" versus "nice-to-invites."
- Begin shopping for the wedding gown.

6 TO 9 MONTHS PRIOR:

- Choose the members of your wedding party.
- Enroll in wedding/shower gift registries.
- Hire a photographer and a videographer.
- Book an engagement photo session, especially if you plan to include a professional engagement picture with Save-the-Date cards.
- Hire a caterer.
- Hire a florist.
- Shop for wedding shoes, veil, jewelry, and headpiece.

- Make arrangements for music to be played at the ceremony and reception.
(Tasks might include booking a band or solo musician, hiring a DJ, choosing significant musical selections, and so on.)
- Reserve a block of hotel rooms for out-of-town guests. (Ask about group rates.)
- Send out Save-the-Date cards. (Include lodging info and maps, as possible.)
- Shop for wedding rings.
- Select and order wedding gown, leaving ample time for delivery and alterations.
- Shop for bridesmaids' dresses.
- Schedule wedding cake design appointments and tastings.
- Start planning your honeymoon.

4 TO 6 MONTHS PRIOR:

- Finalize the guest list.
- Order invitations (25 extra) and other wedding stationery (i.e., place cards and thank you notes).
- Plan wedding-day beauty preparations; ask your stylist how far in advance they book wedding parties, and whether they are willing to work on the wedding site.
- Shop for ceremony and reception décor (candles, lights, centerpieces, signs, props, etc.)
- Shop for ceremony accessories (unity candle or sand ceremony set, ring bearer pillow, flower girl basket, etc.)
- Shop for reception accessories (guest book, favors, cake serving set, garter, toasting flutes, cake topper, etc.)
- Finalize all honeymoon plans. If traveling outside the country, arrange for visas, passports and inoculations.
- Hire your wedding day transportation (carriage, limousine service, etc.).
- Plan the rehearsal dinner.

2 TO 4 MONTHS PRIOR:

- Obtain a marriage license. Bring all necessary documents.
- Order tuxedos for the groom and groomsmen.
- Order your wedding rings.
- Confirm wedding ceremony and reception music.
- Book a hotel room for the wedding night.

- Meet with the caterer to go over menus, wine selections, etc.
- Order the wedding cake.

- If you plan on writing your own vows, start writing them now.

4 TO 8 WEEKS PRIOR:

- Mail the wedding invitations 8 weeks before your wedding date.
- Do a hair and makeup run-through (including wedding veil, if applicable).

- Confirm all transportation plans.

2 TO 4 WEEKS PRIOR:

- Work on seating arrangements for the reception.
- Finalize arrangements for out of town attendants and guests.
- Confirm details with the photographer, florist, and other vendors.
- Have final fitting for bridal gown and bridesmaids' dresses.
- Write your rehearsal dinner toast.
- Purchase gifts for the wedding attendants.

- Compile a list of all of the wedding vendors and wedding party, with contact information. Carry this list with you everywhere you go (just in case).
- Communicate rehearsal dinner details to those who will attend the rehearsal and rehearsal dinner.
- Look into where bride, groom and attendants will dress for the ceremony.

1 WEEK PRIOR:

- Enclose any fees due on the wedding day in envelopes for easy distribution.
- Give the caterer a final head count.
- Appoint a trustworthy person to bring important items (cake knife, toasting glasses, etc.) to the reception.

- Appoint someone to act as an "organizer" to handle any last-minute problems.
- Review final details for those in the wedding party.
- Get final beauty treatments (manicure, facial, massage, waxing, brow shaping, etc.)

THE DAY BEFORE THE WEDDING:

- Gather together the following:
 - Something old
Symbolizing continuity with family and heritage
 - Something new
Symbolizing optimism and hope for the new life ahead
 - Something borrowed
An item from a happily married friend or family member
 - Something blue
Symbolizing love and fidelity
- Confirm honeymoon arrangements.
- Pack for the honeymoon.
- Enjoy a relaxing day with family and friends.
- Attend the rehearsal and rehearsal dinner; give gifts to attendants.
- Give the rings, and officiant's fee, to the best man.
- Try to get some rest

WEDDING DAY:

- Post wedding announcements in the mail.
- Relax and remain calm.
- Remember to eat something.
- Allow at least two hours for getting dressed.
- ENJOY THIS ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME EVENT!**

POST WEDDING:

- Enjoy your honeymoon.
- Dry clean and preserve wedding gown and veil.
- Preserve wedding bouquet.
- Write and mail thank you notes within 2 months.
- Change all insurance policies to include your spouse.
- Complete name changing paperwork.
- Get your wedding photo album.
- Get your honeymoon photo album.