

# the “To-Do” before the “I Do”

## A Wedding Planning Timeline

There are so many things to think about when planning a wedding. We have provided this handy checklist so you can stay on top of your to-do list and have your planning go as smoothly as possible. Everyone has a different vision, so this is just a starting point. Amp up or scale back as you see fit!

### 9-12 Months Before

- Announce your engagement to your family and friends.
- Determine the approximate size, style, and formality of your event.
- Work out a budget. Decide who is paying for what.
- Start the guest list to know an approximate count for booking venues.
- Decide on an approximate date for the wedding.
- Choose the members of your wedding party.
- Hire a wedding planner, if you wish.
- Research and visit ceremony and reception venues. Note: If you are hoping to book a popular venue, especially if you are set on a particular date, this step should be completed earlier.
- Book your ceremony and reception sites.
- Create a wedding website, if you wish.
- Begin looking at wedding gowns.
- Start thinking about where you would like to take your honeymoon.
- Research florists, bands/DJs, and photographers and begin getting quotes.
- Research caterers (if separate from the reception venue) and bakeries for your cake.
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### 6-9 Months Before

- Purchase a wedding dress.
- Shop for and order bridesmaids' dresses.
- Send out save-the-date cards.
- Book a photographer and/or videographer. Note: If you are getting married during the peak wedding season, you probably want to complete this step sooner, especially if you have a particular photographer in mind.
- Get engagement photos taken and submit your announcement to your local newspapers.
- Start finalizing the guest list and collecting addresses.
- Book a caterer, set up a tasting, and begin choosing your menu.
- Choose a honeymoon destination and update your passports if necessary.
- Book a wedding officiant.
- Choose musicians for your ceremony and book reception entertainment.
- Meet with a florist and start choosing flowers.
- Create a wedding registry at several different stores/websites.
- Block off rooms at a nearby hotel for out-of-town guests.
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### 4-5 Months Before

- Begin premarital counseling, if you wish.
- Choose and purchase wedding invitations.
- Book your honeymoon accommodations and buy plane tickets.
- Reserve a site for the rehearsal dinner.
- Buy wedding shoes and try on veils and other accessories with your gown.
- Book a hair and makeup appointment at your salon.
- Book limos, carriages, a trolley, town cars, or other modes of transportation for your wedding and reception, if needed.
- Meet with bakers, have a cake tasting, and decide on your wedding cake design.
- Meet with the officiant and begin discussing ceremony details.
- Give your wedding guest list to the host of your bridal shower.
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### 3 Months Before

- Finalize your menu options.
- Send out wedding invitations.
- Choose ceremony music.
- Finalize flowers.
- Arrange for rental items for your reception, if necessary.
- Start looking for wedding favors.
- Purchase undergarments and other accessories, as well as bridesmaids' accessories.
- Purchase wedding rings and send them to be engraved, if you wish.
- Make an appointment for a dress fitting for alterations.
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## 2 Months Before

- Practice walking in your wedding shoes if you purchased high heels.
- Finalize ceremony music and readings.
- Go for dress fittings.
- Enjoy your bridal shower.
- Determine a day-of schedule and send it out to your vendors.
- Review your reception playlist with your band/DJ.
- Mail rehearsal dinner invitations.
- Finalize honeymoon details/itinerary.
- Choose the groom's and grooms-men's attire.
- Begin a beauty regimen (teeth whitening, pedicures, etc.).
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## 1 Month Before

- Get your marriage license.
- Purchase gifts for the wedding party and your parents.
- Have a trial run with your hairdresser for your hair and makeup.
- Send out final payments to vendors.
- Call any guests who haven't RSVP'ed.
- Give final counts to caterers/venues.
- Determine a seating chart.
- Get menu cards/programs printed, if you wish.
- Get place cards/escort cards printed.
- Look into the business of changing your last name (if you are planning to), as well as some of the other details of your status change.
- Write vows, if you are going that route.
- Have a final dress fitting.
- Prepare a shot list for your photographer.
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## Week of the Wedding

- Pack for your honeymoon.
- Enjoy a bachelor/bachelorette party.
- Pick up your dress.
- Pick up tuxes/suits.
- Gather any items that need to be transported to your venues (guest-book, photos, favors, etc.).
- Have the rehearsal and rehearsal dinner.
- Make any additional payments that haven't been paid.
- Confirm, confirm, confirm.
- Prepare envelopes with tips for vendors.
- Pack your emergency wedding day kit.
- Try to get some sleep.
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## Day of the Wedding

- Be sure to eat and drink plenty of fluids.
- Get your hair and makeup done.
- Enjoy your day!
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## After the Wedding

- Complete paperwork for changing your last name, changing insurance, etc.
- Send out thank-you notes.
- Get your wedding dress cleaned and preserved.
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# Here Comes *the* Bride!

(Organized, Unstressed, Totally Together)

Staying organized when planning a wedding is no small task, as the planning can be spread out over several months or even more than a year. Here are some suggestions to help you stay on track:

- **Write things down.** Write down important phone numbers, vendor information, and all the other details you'll want instant access to. Take these notes in something portable – whether it's an old-fashioned notebook or an electronic device – so you can jot down notes immediately instead of having to remember things until you arrive home.
- **Create a to-do list.** As you make certain decisions, strike those tasks from the list, so you'll always know which tasks you've finished and which still need to be done.
- **Create a wedding calendar.** Keep a calendar devoted specifically to the wedding. Include appointments with vendors and information regarding payment schedules and other deadlines. Jot down any deadlines you've set for yourself as well.

- **Take a digital camera along when shopping for your wedding.** Many couples want to explore their options before making decisions with regard to attire, floral bouquets, and other aspects of the wedding, but it can be difficult to remember all of the things you have seen throughout the process. Use a digital camera to take pictures as you're shopping so you won't have to rely strictly on memory when making your final decisions. Upload the pictures to your computer when you get home and label them with the name of the store so they are easily accessible when the time comes to make a decision.

- **Delegate certain tasks.** Sharing some of the work can save you time and make it easier to keep track of everything. Ask friends or family to handle tasks that don't require a personal touch (arranging guest transportation to and from the airport, for example). This way, the busy couple has one less thing to do and the helper doesn't have to take on too much responsibility.