



Planning Your Wedding



Steps to the Perfect Wedding

Wedding Planning

Second to the Normandy Invasion, there's probably nothing that requires more careful long-range planning than a wedding. To prevent things from slipping between between the cracks and to help you stay on track, use the following checklist:

12 months before

The question has been popped and you're in planning mode. Now is the time to pick the date, decide the style and scale of the event, and work out a budget. (If you're still speaking to each other after this important initial planning stage, that's a very good sign.) Once you've accomplished the above, it's time to:

- If you haven't already, buy an engagement ring. Get tips on buying a diamond, check out nearby jewelers and browse for great diamond rings
- Hire a wedding consultant (if you want professional help)
- Book wedding and reception sites
- Hire a photographer
- Select bridal attendants, best man, ushers
- Plan for your financial future and discuss pre-nuptial agreements

6 to 12 months before

Start shopping for your wedding finery – it will take longer than you think! You'll need extra time if your garments are being made to order. And here's your moment to explain to your fiancé that no one wears powder blue tuxes. Overcome his objections with some honeymoon planning.

- Choose a gown for yourself and your bridal attendants



- Find a tuxedo
- Choose a person to officiate at the wedding, such as a clergyman or judge
- Plan your honeymoon
- Plan the guest list and order invitations
- Reserve a wedding night suite
- Make arrangements for wedding music/entertainment

2 to 4 months before

- Book the rehearsal dinner
- Book accommodations for out-of-town guests and plan their entertainment guide
- Book the bride's beauty appointments
- Address invitations
- Make a wedding wish list (and check out these wonderful gift ideas)
- Buy your wedding rings
- Make an appointment for a physical exam
- Arrange wedding day transportation
- Order the wedding cake
- Start looking for a new home to share

1 to 2 months ahead

You're heading for the wire. Don't forget to:

- Mail invitations four to six weeks before the ceremony
- Complete arrangements with the photographer, florist, caterer, musicians, reception hall, and wedding officiator
- Write the vows/ceremony



- Plan the rehearsal dinner
- Get final fittings for bride's and attendants' gowns
- Buy gifts for bridal attendants, best man, ushers
- Buy bride and groom gifts for each other (if you're following this custom)
- Send copies of ceremony readings to wedding participants

2 to 6 weeks ahead

Let's make it official. Time to get that marriage license. Contact city hall to find out the requirements for your state. Generally, you'll need:

- Proof of age (birth certificate)
- If divorced, a copy of divorce decree
- If widowed, spouse's death certificate
- License fee

Some states require a blood test. You must deliver the license to the officiant before the marriage can be performed. After the ceremony, the officiant will complete the license. Sign it, and return it to the town clerk's office within the time specified by your state. Then don't forget to:

- Complete legal and business details, such as changes to insurance and medical forms, bank accounts, etc.
- Send wedding announcements to local newspapers
- Get a formal bridal portrait

1 week ahead

- Go over final details with your caterer, florist, reception hall management, DJ or band, and the officiant at your wedding. Make lists of all last-minute questions and leave nothing to chance (think Murphy's Law!) Sketch out your ideal scenario of



how everything should work during the ceremony and reception. Then examine each detail to be sure you have it covered.

- Give photographer/videographer the final list of picture/shots you want
- Call the etiquette-challenged guests who haven't RSVP'd
- Go to your rehearsal and rehearsal dinner – relax and enjoy!

THE BIG DAY

- Don't forget to eat something in the morning
- Bride have your hair/makeup done about three hours before the ceremony. Start dressing at least one hour before
- Groom, give the best man the bride's wedding ring. Put officiant's fee in envelope and give it to the best man to deliver after the ceremony. Don't forget to bring the marriage license!
- Music starts 30 minutes before the ceremony. Five minutes before the ceremony, seat the groom's parents. Immediately following the processional march, seat the bride's mother.
- Groom, dance first with your bride and then with your mother, your new mother-in-law and the bridesmaids.

After the wedding

- Send the announcement and wedding photo to local newspapers
- Write and mail thank you notes