



12+ Months Before the Wedding

Set the Foundation

- Discuss your wedding vision together
 - Formal or casual?
 - Local or destination?
 - Large celebration or intimate gathering?
 - Traditional, modern, cultural, religious, or a mix?
- Choose 2–3 top priorities
Examples:
 - Food and drinks
 - Photography
 - Music
 - Venue
 - Guest experience
 - Decor
 - Attire
- Set your wedding budget
 - Decide who is contributing financially
 - Set a total spending limit
 - Break the budget into categories
 - Leave room for unexpected costs
- Create a shared wedding planning system
 - Use a shared spreadsheet, app, or folder
 - Keep contracts, receipts, and notes in one place
 - Create a shared calendar for appointments and deadlines
- Draft your guest list
 - Create an A-list and B-list if needed
 - Collect mailing addresses
 - Estimate your guest count before booking a venue
- Choose a few possible wedding dates
 - Consider work schedules, holidays, family travel, and weather
 - Stay flexible if venue availability is limited

Book Major Vendors

- Research and tour venues
 - Ask about availability, pricing, capacity, catering rules, and included rentals
 - Review cancellation and payment policies
- Book your ceremony and reception venue
- Hire a wedding planner or coordinator, if desired
Busy-couple tip: If a full planner is not in the budget, consider a month-of or day-of coordinator.



- Book key vendors early
 - Photographer
 - Videographer
 - Caterer, if not included with venue
 - Officiant
 - Band or DJ
- Choose your wedding party, if you are having one
- Start a wedding website
 - Add the date, location, travel details, and FAQs
 - Update it as plans become final

10–11 Months Before the Wedding

Start Shaping the Details

- Choose your wedding style and color palette
- Research attire
 - Wedding dress, suit, tux, jumpsuit, cultural attire, or custom look
 - Accessories and shoes
- Begin shopping for wedding attire
 - Book appointments if needed
 - Ask about alteration timelines
- Reserve hotel room blocks for out-of-town guests
- Take engagement photos, if included with your photographer
- Create your registry
 - Add gifts at different price points
 - Include cash funds or experience funds if preferred
- Send save-the-dates
 - Send earlier for destination weddings or holiday weekends

Organization Tip

- Set a weekly 30-minute planning check-in
Keep it short. Review open tasks, assign next steps, and move on with your week.



8–9 Months Before the Wedding

Confirm Your Vendor Team

- Book remaining major vendors
 - Florist
 - Hair and makeup artist
 - Rentals company
 - Lighting company
 - Transportation
 - Dessert or cake vendor
 - Ceremony musicians
 - Photo booth or entertainment, if desired
- Review all vendor contracts
 - Confirm deposit amounts
 - Save payment due dates
 - Add deadlines to your calendar
- Start planning the ceremony
 - Discuss readings, music, vows, and traditions
 - Confirm any religious or cultural requirements
- Select wedding party attire
 - Share style, color, budget, and ordering deadlines
- Think through guest experience
 - Parking
 - Transportation
 - Accessibility
 - Weather backup plans
 - Welcome bags, if desired

Delegation Tip

Ask trusted friends or family to “own” specific areas, such as collecting addresses, researching hotels, tracking RSVPs, or handling welcome bags.



6–7 Months Before the Wedding

Plan the Guest Experience

- Finalize your guest list
- Order invitations and paper goods
 - Invitations
 - RSVP cards or online RSVP setup
 - Details cards
 - Envelopes
 - Postage
- Plan your menu
 - Schedule a tasting
 - Choose meal style: plated, buffet, stations, family-style, or cocktail-style
 - Discuss dietary needs
- Plan bar service
 - Open bar, limited bar, cash bar, or no alcohol
 - Signature drinks, if desired
- Book rehearsal dinner or welcome event location
- Arrange transportation
 - Couple's transportation
 - Wedding party transportation
 - Guest shuttles, if needed
- Start planning honeymoon or mini-moon
 - Check passports
 - Request time off work
 - Research flights, hotels, and travel requirements
- Choose wedding rings
- Schedule premarital counseling, if required or desired

Busy-Couple Tip

Batch similar tasks. For example, spend one evening on invitation wording, one lunch break reviewing transportation quotes, and one weekend morning handling registry updates.



4–5 Months Before the Wedding

Make It Feel Real

- Finalize floral and decor plans
 - Bouquets
 - Boutonnieres
 - Ceremony arrangements
 - Centerpieces
 - Aisle decor
 - Reception details
- Confirm rental needs
 - Tables
 - Chairs
 - Linens
 - Tableware
 - Lounge furniture
 - Tents
 - Heaters or fans
- Plan music selections
 - Ceremony processional
 - Ceremony recessional
 - First dance
 - Parent dances
 - Reception entrance
 - Last song
- Create a must-play and do-not-play list
- Schedule hair and makeup trial
- Plan wedding favors or guest gifts, if desired
- Order wedding bands, if not already done
- Start writing vows, if writing your own
- Buy or order accessories
 - Shoes
 - Jewelry
 - Tie, veil, belt, cufflinks, headpiece, or other details
- Confirm attire orders for wedding party

Organization Tip

Create a “decision parking lot” list. When you think of a detail but cannot handle it right away, add it to the list instead of trying to solve it in the moment.



3 Months Before the Wedding

Send Invitations and Confirm Details

- Mail wedding invitations
Aim to send them earlier if many guests are traveling.
- Track RSVPs in your planning spreadsheet or website
- Confirm ceremony details with officiant
 - Ceremony order
 - Readings
 - Vows
 - Marriage license process
- Finalize the menu with your caterer
- Order dessert or wedding cake, if not already booked
- Plan seating style
 - Assigned tables only
 - Assigned seats
 - Open seating
- Buy gifts for wedding party, parents, or anyone helping
- Schedule final attire fittings
- Create a wedding day timeline draft
Include:
 - Getting ready
 - First look, if any
 - Family photos
 - Ceremony
 - Cocktail hour
 - Reception events
 - Vendor arrival times
 - Cleanup and pickup
- Confirm honeymoon details
 - Flights
 - Hotel
 - Transportation
 - Travel documents
 - Pet care or house care

Delegation Tip

Choose one person who is not in the couple to be the “question filter” on the wedding day. Vendors and guests can go to them instead of interrupting you.



2 Months Before the Wedding

Tighten the Plan

- Follow up with guests who have not RSVP'd
- Start creating the seating chart
- Confirm final attire alterations
- Break in wedding shoes at home
- Finalize ceremony wording
- Finalize music choices with DJ, band, or musicians
- Send shot list to photographer
- Include:
 - Family groupings
 - Important details
 - Special traditions
 - Must-have moments
- Confirm vendor insurance requirements, if any
- Apply for your marriage license
Timing depends on your location, so check local rules.
- Create signage list
 - Welcome sign
 - Seating chart
 - Bar menu
 - Gift table sign
 - Guest book sign
 - Unplugged ceremony sign, if desired
- Order or create day-of paper goods
 - Programs
 - Menus
 - Place cards
 - Table numbers
 - Escort cards
- Plan final payments and tips
 - Review contract balances
 - Prepare gratuity envelopes, if using cash

Busy-Couple Tip

If the seating chart feels overwhelming, set a timer for 45 minutes and do the first version quickly. You can adjust later.



1 Month Before the Wedding

Finalize the Big Picture

- Confirm final guest count
- Send final count to venue and caterer
- Finalize seating chart
- Confirm all vendor details
 - Arrival times
 - Setup needs
 - Contact information
 - Payment status
 - Meal needs
 - Parking instructions
- Finalize wedding day timeline
- Share timeline with:
 - Wedding party
 - Immediate family
 - Vendors
 - Planner or coordinator
 - Anyone giving a speech or reading
- Have final attire fittings
- Pick up wedding rings
- Write or finalize vows
- Prepare emergency kit
 - Include:
 - Safety pins
 - Fashion tape
 - Stain remover
 - Pain reliever
 - Bandages
 - Tissues
 - Snacks
 - Water
 - Phone chargers
 - Sewing kit
 - Deodorant
 - Mints
- Confirm rehearsal details
- Create a packing list for the wedding day and honeymoon
- Assign someone to collect personal items after the reception
 - Examples:
 - Gifts and cards



- Guest book
- Decor
- Leftover favors
- Marriage license
- Special accessories

Delegation Tip

Create a simple “who handles what” list. Share it with your wedding party and family so everyone knows their role before the wedding weekend.

2 Weeks Before the Wedding

Prepare for the Final Stretch

- Check in with all vendors one last time
 - Confirm final payments
 - Prepare tip envelopes and label them
 - Pick up attire or confirm delivery
 - Practice walking in wedding shoes and attire
 - Pack decor and label boxes by location
- Examples:
- Ceremony
 - Cocktail hour
 - Reception tables
 - Welcome table
 - Getting-ready room
- Print copies of the timeline
 - Print vows, readings, and speeches
 - Confirm transportation schedule
 - Confirm hotel reservations
 - Confirm beauty appointments
 - Get any final beauty or grooming services
- Avoid trying anything brand new right before the wedding.
- Prepare thank-you notes or small gifts for helpers

Organization Tip

Use clear bins or labeled bags. Add a printed inventory sheet to each box so setup helpers know exactly what goes where.



1 Week Before the Wedding

Keep It Simple

- Review the full wedding day timeline
- Give final instructions to your coordinator or point person
- Drop off items at the venue, if allowed
- Pack wedding day outfits, accessories, and backup items
- Pack honeymoon bags, if leaving soon after the wedding
- Confirm who has the rings
- Confirm who has the marriage license
- Confirm who will give final payments and tips to vendors
- Send a final reminder to wedding party and family

Include:

- Arrival times
 - Locations
 - Dress code
 - Transportation details
 - Contact person
- Drink water, eat well, and get rest when possible
 - Set boundaries around last-minute changes
It is okay to say, “We’re keeping the plan as-is.”

Busy-Couple Tip

Do not schedule major work deadlines, house projects, or extra social plans this week if you can avoid it. Protect your energy.

1 Day Before the Wedding

Rehearse and Reset

- Attend ceremony rehearsal
- Review ceremony order with wedding party and officiant
- Give rings to the assigned person
- Give marriage license to officiant or assigned person
- Hand off vendor payments and tips to your coordinator or trusted helper
- Confirm transportation pickup times
- Charge phones and backup batteries
- Lay out wedding attire and accessories
- Pack snacks and water for getting ready
- Enjoy the rehearsal dinner or welcome event
- Go to bed as early as you can



Encouragement

At this point, enough is done. If something small is unfinished, it probably does not need to be perfect. Focus on being present.

Wedding Day

Enjoy the Day You Planned

- Eat breakfast
- Drink water
- Give phones to a trusted person if you want fewer distractions
- Follow the timeline, but allow some flexibility
- Let your coordinator or point person handle questions
- Take a quiet moment together before or after the ceremony
- Sign the marriage license
- Thank your guests and loved ones
- Celebrate
- Make sure assigned helpers collect:
 - Gifts and cards
 - Guest book
 - Personal decor
 - Leftover food or dessert, if allowed
 - Attire and accessories
 - Marriage license copy, if needed

Wedding Day Reminder

Your job today is not to manage every detail. Your job is to get married, feel loved, and enjoy the people who came to celebrate with you.

After the Wedding

Wrap Up and Reflect

- Make sure the marriage license is filed
- Pay any remaining vendor balances
- Return rentals, attire, or borrowed items
- Preserve bouquet, attire, or keepsakes, if desired
- Review vendor contracts for post-wedding deliverables
 - Photo gallery
 - Video
 - Albums



- Edited ceremony footage
- Send thank-you notes
Start with gifts, then vendors, family, and wedding party.
- Leave vendor reviews, if you are happy with their work
- Review and organize wedding photos when ready
- Handle name change paperwork, if applicable
- Close out your wedding budget spreadsheet
- Take time to rest together

Quick Delegation Guide

You do not need to carry the whole plan alone. Assign tasks based on people's strengths.

Good Tasks to Delegate

- Collecting guest addresses
- Tracking RSVPs
- Researching hotels
- Picking up attire
- Assembling favors
- Creating welcome bags
- Dropping off decor
- Managing the emergency kit
- Bringing snacks and water
- Handling vendor tips
- Directing guests to transportation
- Collecting gifts and cards
- Returning rentals

Helpful Wedding Day Roles

- Main point person for vendors
- Family photo helper
- Decor setup helper
- Gift and card collector
- Transportation contact
- Getting-ready room organizer
- Emergency kit holder
- Timeline keeper



Staying Organized When You're Busy

- Keep one shared master checklist
- Add all payment dates to your calendar
- Use one email folder for wedding messages
- Keep vendor contacts in one document
- Schedule short planning sessions instead of long planning marathons
- Make decisions in batches
- Set a weekly “no wedding talk” night
- Use templates for emails and guest messages
- Assign deadlines to each task
- Celebrate small wins as you go

Simple Weekly Planning Routine

Use this routine when life feels packed.

Once a Week

- Review upcoming deadlines
- Choose 3 wedding tasks to complete
- Assign each task to one person
- Send any needed vendor emails
- Update the budget
- Check the calendar for appointments
- Stop after 30–45 minutes

Once a Month

- Review the full checklist
- Confirm budget status
- Update guest list and RSVPs
- Check vendor payment schedule
- Revisit priorities if needed



Final Encouragement

Wedding planning can feel like another job, especially when your schedule is already full. Take it one step at a time. Focus on what matters most, ask for help early, and give yourselves permission to skip details that do not feel meaningful.

A beautiful wedding does not come from doing everything. It comes from making thoughtful choices, staying connected, and celebrating your commitment in a way that feels like you.