

THE WEDDING TIMELINE

Organized advance planning will ensure you enjoy every minute of your special day. Start planning your wedding 12 months ahead of time if possible and use the following timeline as a guide through the process. Once the planning is complete, relax and get plenty of rest - the festivities are about to begin.

12 MONTHS AHEAD

- Select the date for your wedding (& alternate dates)
- Consult with your fiancé & all parents to determine the financial support available to you & set a budget for the wedding (including all activities related to your wedding)
- Determine, with your fiancé, the type of wedding you will have (formal or informal, large or small)
- Determine, with your fiancé, (& your families if appropriate) the number of guests you wish to invite
- Select & reserve the ceremony site
- Select an officiant for your ceremony
- Select & reserve the reception site
- Determine your need for wedding coordinator services & hire one to help you (with entire planning process; with certain aspects; or with wedding day only)

10-12 MONTHS AHEAD

- Arrange for families to meet (if they have not already done so)
- Begin shopping for gown & accessories (veil, gloves, lingerie, shoes)
- Order gown
- Determine the guest list (compiled by you two & your families)
- Choose your wedding party attendants (bridesmaids, groomsmen, etc.)
- Select & order attendants wedding attire (bridesmaid gowns & accessories, child attendants' attire)
- Research, review & select your photographer
- Research, review & select your videographer
- If you're marrying during a busy time (i.e., the holidays), have a lot of out-of-town guests, or are planning a destination wedding, send save-the-date cards
- Get your engagement photo taken

8-10 MONTHS AHEAD

- Select & reserve the caterer
- Select & reserve the decorator
- Select & reserve the florist
- Select & reserve party rental equipment (tents, tables, chairs, décor)
- Determine wedding cake design; select & reserve a baker or bakery
- Select & reserve musicians for the ceremony
- Select & reserve music/entertainment for the reception
- Select & reserve transportation for the wedding party (limousines, carriages, etc.)
- Plan the details of the reception
- Begin shopping for wedding rings
- Discuss honeymoon plans with fiancé & begin arrangements

6-8 MONTHS AHEAD

- Order invitations, announcements, informal stationery & thank you notes
- Register for wedding gifts at one to three stores
- Reserve accommodations for out-of-town guests
- Reserve transportation for out-of-town guests to travel to/from the ceremony & reception
- Finalize honeymoon plans with fiancé (finalize arrangements, check passports/visas, notify employers)

4-6 MONTHS AHEAD

- Select & order men's formalwear
- Reserve accommodations for wedding night (if different from honeymoon plan)
- Select stylist or salon for bridal party hair, nails & make-up
- Meet with florist to plan details
- Select & purchase wedding guest favors
- Select & hire calligrapher, if needed
- Begin dance lessons with fiancé
- Find & reserve your rehearsal dinner location
- Finalize guest list

2-4 MONTHS AHEAD

- Announce engagement in local newspapers
- Confirm delivery dates for bridal gown & bridesmaids' dresses
- Meet with caterer to discuss menu
- Meet with officiant to discuss ceremony
- Select ceremony music, readings & vows
- Schedule ceremony rehearsal & notify participants
- Buy & wrap gifts for wedding party
- Address wedding invitations
- Buy wedding rings & order engraving

CONTINUED...

THE WEDDING TIMELINE CONTINUED

1-2 MONTHS AHEAD

- Schedule final fittings on your gown
- Remind bridesmaids to schedule final fittings
- Call your county clerk's office for marriage license details (when, where, how much) & schedule a date with your fiancé to get your license
- Schedule blood test (only a few states still require this)
- Mail invitations
- Prepare printed program for ceremony
- Start seating plan & placecards for reception
- Plan pre-wedding party or luncheon for bridesmaids
- Confirm ceremony & reception details with wedding coordinator, ceremony officiant & reception site manager
- Assign wedding day tasks to friends (guest book & table attendants, assistance with corsages & boutonnieres & cake cutting)
- Confirm request lists with photographer, musicians/DJ & videographer
- Purchase wedding accessories (guest book & pen, toasting glasses, unity candle, kiddush cup, cake knife & server, & flower girl/ring bearer accessories)
- Pick up wedding rings & check engraving
- Begin arrangements for changing bride's name on documents (if applicable)
- Record gifts received & write thank you notes promptly
- Schedule pre-wedding manicure/pedicure, massage & spa treatments

2-4 WEEKS AHEAD

- Arrange for cleaning & preservation of wedding gown after wedding
- Arrange for bridal bouquet preservation after wedding
- Confirm honeymoon arrangements
- Confirm arrangements for attire & accessories of all wedding party members
- Assist fiancé with writing toasts for rehearsal dinner & wedding reception
- Follow up with guests who didn't respond to the invite & finish seating chart/placecards
- Confirm final guest count to caterer & reception facility
- Notify post office of change of address (if applicable)

1 WEEK AHEAD

- Make final contact with baker, caterer, florist, musicians/DJ, photographer & videographer
- Make final preparations for honeymoon (pack suitcases, prepare camera, purchase traveler's checks)
- Confirm wedding-day assignments with wedding coordinator, family & friends
- Confirm time/location for rehearsal, rehearsal dinner & wedding with wedding party participants
- Confirm pick-up times/locations with transportation providers
- Put fees due on the wedding day in envelopes, for the best man to distribute
- Host bridesmaids' luncheon

DAY OF THE WEDDING

- Rings & marriage license
- Bride's wedding attire
- Bride's emergency kit
- Groom's wedding attire
- Groom's emergency kit
- Ring bearer pillow/flower girl basket
- Wedding programs
- Cake knife & server, toasting flutes
- Favors
- Guestbook & pen
- Unity candle, kiddush cup
- Pay officiant & vendors
- Assign person to collect/transport gifts

AFTER THE WEDDING

- Return rental attire
- Have wedding gown cleaned & preserved
- Have bridal bouquet preserved
- Freeze the top layer of your cake to enjoy on your one-year anniversary
- Record gifts received & write thank you notes promptly (they should all be done within two months (one month after returning from your honeymoon))
- Develop photos from disposable cameras (twin prints are nice to include in thank you notes)