



# General Planning Guidelines

## 12+ Months Out

- Confirm your budget. Be sure to include everything from the venue, catering, and photographer to clothing, shoes, hair trials, and bridal party gifts.
- Pick a wedding date and time.
- Start planning your guest list.
- Scout out reception and ceremony sites, book these as early as possible.
- Assemble your wedding party.
- Book your officiant, if needed.
- Book your reception musicians/entertainment, photographer/videographer – these vendors tend to book well in advance, so I recommend contracting with them as soon as possible.

## 8 – 10 Months Out

- Bride: Think about, shop for, and order your gown.
- Begin planning your reception food – meet with caterers, have a tasting at your selected venue, etc.
- Think about your floral décor, research possible vendors.
- Research and reserve hotels for out-of-town guests. If you're planning to reserve a hotel block, read the contract thoroughly for attrition so you aren't required to pay any large fees for rooms not booked.
- Contact rental companies if you need to rent anything for ceremony/reception, such as chairs, tables, and tent.

## 6 – 8 Months Out

- Book your florist.
- Register for gifts.
- Book ceremony musicians.
- Order bridesmaid dresses.
- Start planning honeymoon.
  - Renew your passports, if necessary.
- Send save-the-dates.
- Shop for and order invitations. Discuss having your printer make your programs as well.
- Shop for wedding rings.
- Shop for formalwear.
- Research bakeries for your wedding cake.
- Research hair dressers and make-up artists.
- Consider any additional vendors you might want to book: Photo booth, transportation, specialty lighting or décor, reception games, etc.



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## 4 – 6 Months Out

- Order your wedding cake.
- Groom: Rent the men's formalwear.
- Bride: Take your dress to a seamstress for any major alterations.
- Hire transportation: limousines, trolleys, buses for guests, etc. (note: if your wedding falls during a popular wedding month, you may want to book earlier to ensure you are able to reserve the transportation vehicles of your choice)
- Begin working on any DIY projects and think through any special wedding touches (sparkler exit, special guest book, wedding favors, dance floor flip flops for ladies, restroom toiletry kits, welcome bags for out of town guests, candy buffet, etc.)
- Confirm your wedding rentals, if needed
- Book any additional vendors.
- Book your wedding night room.
- Purchase wedding rings.

## 2 Months Out

- Mail your invitations. (While the standard is 8 weeks before your wedding, if you are having a destination wedding or have a lot of guests traveling to your wedding, it would be best to send your invitations 10 weeks out)
- Write your vows.
- Purchase gifts for parents, bridal party, and each other.
- Book your hair stylist and go for your trial.
- Book a makeup artist and go for your trial.
- Select your music (first dance, father/daughter dance, mother/son dance, etc.)

## 1 Month out

- Apply for a marriage license. Check with the local bureau in the town where your wedding is.
- Bride: Have final gown fitting. Bring 2 people with you to learn how to bustle your dress. If the bustle is complicated, take pictures/video. Have the dress pressed and bring it home.
- Check in with your bridal party, ensure bridesmaids have their gowns ready for the wedding.
- Make last-minute adjustments with vendors.
- Create a wedding program.
- Finalize details with your photographer, send shot list.
- Call other wedding vendors to confirm details; you may have a to-do list from the meeting with your coordinator.
- Bride: If you are changing your name, prepare the appropriate documents for this.



# General Planning Guidelines

## 1-2 weeks out

- Give your reception site and caterer the final guest head count. Include vendors, such as the photographer or band members, who will expect a meal. Some vendors will have this written into their contract. For those vendors who do not, I recommend feeding anyone who is with you for 6 hours or more.
- Plan and solidify your dinner seating chart, send this to your venue and caterers as well. Be sure to include a list of who is at each table and their meal choices. This will help your vendors if any changes or questions come up regarding seating.
- Print place and table cards, or finalize list with your printer if they will handle this.
- Groom: Get your hair trimmed.
- Make all final payments, or write checks for vendors who will receive their final payment day-of.

## At the Rehearsal

- Bring day-of items to your coordinator (place cards, card box, unity candles or other items needed for the ceremony, guest favors, etc.)
- Give your coordinator envelopes with checks for any vendors requiring final payment and for gratuities you would like distributed that evening.
  - See separate document for gratuity recommendations.
- Hand out gifts to your bridal party.