

Wedding Planning Checklist and Tips

Once you and that special someone make the decision to tie the knot, there are a number of things that you need to start thinking about. Some may be trivial, some imperative, some just plain fun but most of them all need to be at least considered.

Here is Top Wedding Shows ever expanding, retooling and at times re imagining Wedding Planning Checklist with tips to help keep you on track during your wedding planning timeline. If you have any other suggestions or tips please share them with us so we can share them with other couples just like you!

One Year – Two Years Before Your Wedding

- Tell your parents or those closest to you about your decision to get married - Many times involving loved ones in the early stages can bring a lot of joy and happiness to parents or guardians when they find out that their kids are getting married. So why not give them that satisfaction if you can and it makes sense for you and your future life partner
- Purchase an engagement ring - Once you have decided that this is the right person for you and depending on your culture ask for the daughter's hand in marriage from the father or parents you will most likely want to pick the perfect engagement ring. There are many rules of thumb on what to spend on a ring. You can google them but all in all it really comes down to what you can afford or what you are willing to spend, what you like, what you think they will like and what you feel will make you both the happiest. It's doesn't hurt to talk about it ahead of time or keep a keen eye on what styles or types of rings your boyfriend or girlfriend keep gravitating towards or talking about the most. For example if they always like silver jewelry and never wear or talk about gold jewelry then it may be a good bet that they would like a white gold or silver engagement ring
- Announce your engagement - Get the word out and enjoy the exciting buzz and love you'll feel from family and friends
- Set a date for your wedding - Be sure to also have a few backup dates in mind in case your first choice for a reception site or ceremony is not available or important people are not able to attend on one of the dates

- Decide on the type of wedding you would like to have - Taking into consideration such things as cultural mix, religious affiliations, time of year, time of day, number of guests, types of guests (i.e. if lots seniors or people with mobility issues will be attending, try to pick a place that has good accessibility), formality or theme ideas (i.e. indoor, outdoor, chic, barn, traditional, glamorous, hipster etc.)
- Set a budget - Keep an organized record of when, how and on what you are spending your hard earned money on. It will help you from overspending and help you to make better decisions
- Consider hiring a wedding planner - If you have crazy work schedules, live a long distance from where you are planning to get married, not specially keen or knowledgeable on how to plan something this big or just maybe have the extra resources to spend. Hiring a wedding planner can be a huge time and money saver. With the added bonus of relieving some of the stress of planning and adding a degree of professionalism to your wedding day
- Compile a Guest List - Taking into consideration: Groom's family, Bride's family and decide who needs to be invited, those you need to invite, those you should invite and those that would be nice to invite. Decide if you want to invite children with their parents or make it adult only
- Reserve your officiate & reception site - Once you have a good idea of what type of wedding you would like to have, the amount of people that you would like to invite and what your budget will be, it's time to shop around for the best location. Make sure to look into this around the same time you are planning on whom will act as your Officiate. Not all clergy (minister, priest, rabbi, etc.) or judges, notaries, justices of the peace or public servants are available on demand. So be sure to meet with them early to express your wishes and ideas for location, date and rituals. Depending on the faith you may have to sign up for marriage classes or special sessions before you are allowed to get married
- Send engagement announcement to newspapers, Facebook or an email blast out to friends and family - The sooner you can do this the better. It allows people to save the date and make plans for travel, babysitters, work holidays etc. (don't forget to change your Facebook profile status lol)
- Select your Wedding Party - This is a special honour for people so be sure to give it due consideration. It can be a real fun and bonding experience for the whole gang. It's nice to meet with them separately and ask them in a personal and meaningful way. The further out you can do this the better as it allows for people to make work, life or travel

arrangements earlier to give them and you a better chance of all be able to work with the dates you have chosen

- Select your flower girl and ring bearer - If you are having a ceremony that will include them, it's a good idea tell the parents early to be sure the kids will be either old enough when the day comes or too old. Plus, if there is travel involved they can be sure to set the kids up with the proper travel documentation (passports)
- Decide if you would like to have an engagement party - This a great way to bring all those that you would like to be closely involved in your wedding together. It kind of breaks the ice for those that have never met and starts to create special memories and bonds that will make your wedding day memorable
- Determine your colour scheme - It's a good idea to start planning colours earlier than later. Selection will be better and once you do many of the other themes in your wedding will come together
- Order your passport, birth certificate for your honeymoon or marriage license - Don't wait last minute to do this. You'll have enough to think about the months, weeks, days and hours before your wedding. Get it checked off early and save yourself the unneeded stress
- Research! - Start looking for a photographer, DJ Service, Videographer, caterer, wedding dress, florist etc. You can do this online, buying wedding magazines and when you are at other functions etc. One of the best resources for finding wedding inspiration and wedding professionals is by attending local wedding shows. Be sure to keep all the contact info you collect at the wedding shows for future reference and make notes on exhibitors that you really liked so when you are ready to book them you'll remember important details. Check out Bridal Show Producers International for list of upcoming Wedding Shows in your area
- Join a fitness club or start a regular exercise program - If you have been not very active in the past few years, feeling like you could stand to lose a little extra weight or just want to burn off some stress then exercise is one of the most scientifically proven ways of accomplishing a well-balanced and healthy lifestyles. You know that your world is going to change in the near future so why not create a good habit early on to take you through your wedding planning and hopefully into your new married life

Eight – Twelve Months Before Your Wedding

- Select a wedding dress and accessories - Ok time to go seriously shopping around. You've probably already started looking at dress in magazines, at wedding shows, or at your friend's wedding. This can be a real fun time. Don't rush into it. Take your time and shop around. Try to bring someone with you whose opinion you really value and trust to bounce off ideas and help you decide on best fit, style, colours and price.
- Purchase or rent a wedding dress or outfit - Once you did your shopping it's time to commit. You'll want to be sure you don't leave this to the last minute. Give yourself enough time to really pick the right outfit and the shop enough time if they need to order it or alter it.
- Select and order dresses for maid of honour, bridesmaids and flower girls - Many times you can do this at the bridal shop where you purchased your wedding dress. But not all Bridal Shops carry a huge selection of formal wear for the wedding party so you may need to shop around.
- Select formal wear for the groom, best man and groomsmen- If you are having grooms in your wedding party it is also a good idea to order them ahead of time to get the best pricing and selection. Some of you may choose to buy the outfits so leaving yourself enough time ensures that you and everyone else in the wedding party gets what they need and are properly tailored.
- Start looking at wedding cakes - If you have seen something you like, online, in a magazine or at a wedding show you can use that as inspiration. Many times at a wedding show you are able to see and taste a selection of local wedding cakes at the show. This is a great opportunity to sample the different flavours and quality right on the spot. Many times there will be show special as well if you book at the show. Alternatively, if you weren't ready to book at the show you were at you could pull out the company's contact from the info you collected at the show and book a good see (and taste... yum!!).
- Make your final bookings - This is a good time to book an number of vendors that you may have not yet firmed up before they get all booked up . Such as photographer, DJ, videographer, caterer, photographer, Gift Registry etc
- Firm up your choices in patterns and colours - This gives your florist, hall, wedding planner etc enough time to be sure that everything will be available, seasonal or in coordination with the rest of your ideas. i.e. room decoration colours, dish patterns, flowers or centerpieces.

- Select and order invitations - Depending on where you are ordering your invites from it's always smart to give yourself a buffer in case of unforeseen circumstances such as a mail strike, inclement weather or seasonal overload (like in December). You'll want to get them in your hands with enough time to get them organized to resend them back out to your list of invitees.
- Discuss honeymoon destinations and firm up your plans- Depending on what you have in mind you'll want to be sure that you are not going to be disappointed by it being all booked up or the room you really want not be available. Also, many places have early booking bonuses.
- Destination Weddings - If you are planning on a destination wedding you'll really want to start organizing sooner than later. If you are attending a wedding show around this time be sure to talk with all the travel agents at the show. Many of the travel companies at wedding shows are destination wedding experts and can save you a lot of time, money and heartache. Part of their services is doing site inspections of the packages they sell. Which means they will know better than anyone the rules, regulations and best wedding vendors in all the countries and hotels around the world to help make your wedding go off without a snag.
- Reserve a block of hotel rooms for out of town guests - If you have family or friends coming for out of town, you'll want to make sure that they are comfortable and conveniently located for the wedding week. It's really nice that you may want to house them all at your place and hey if you have the room and help why not. But chances are you don't yet. Trust us, it will really be hard for you to enjoy your wedding day preparation when you have to wait for your Uncle Bill, Aunt Carm, cousin John, cousin Annette, Grandma and your Great Grandfather to shower, eat breakfast and get dressed in your one bedroom, one bathroom apartment. When you're buzzing around trying to get dressed yourself, feeling like you need to make small talk while brewing up another pot of coffee for everyone.
- Look into liability insurance for your Stag and Doe and Wedding Reception - This is something that almost no one ever considers and may not even know is available. Depending on where you live, where you are having your wedding or reception, you may be overly exposed to undue legal liabilities if something happens.

Four - Eight Months Before Your Wedding

- Order your wedding cake
- Book your limousine
- Order your flowers - If needed sit down with florist and decide on or finalize bouquets, boutonnieres and talk over details again such as are you going to go with fresh or silk flowers.
- Make an appointment for your dress fitting - Things may have changed since to your purchased your dress or outfit since your first order it. For example you may lost or gained a few pounds, got pregnant or changed your mind on a few details such as length or silhouette. So get in around this time so that any reasonable alterations can be done with the least amount of worry.
- Make an appointment with your hair stylist
- Book rehearsal dinner - Be sure to check with those that you will inviting ahead of time to see what are the best available dates and times.
- Plan the menu for the rehearsal dinner - Take into consideration any dietary needs of your invitees
- Make sure bridesmaids have gone for their fittings
- Meet with reception hall or caterer to plan menu
- Start working on getting your invitations written out
- Select and buy gifts for wedding party
- Make sure you booked honeymoon
- Get the appropriate name-change forms - You can usually pick them up at your city hall or check online with your municipal government office to see if they are downloadable.

Two - Four Months Before Your Wedding

- Check to make sure you have all the legal requirements to get married in your province or state
- Confirm your honeymoon reservations and double check your passports if you are travelling out of country
- Confirm your music selection
- Bridal Showers should be arranged
- Arrange to get the wedding party together - Consider making reservations for a golf outing, spa day, lunch, dinner cruise etc. to get the team together to further bond, celebrate the wedding or just to have fun to take away some of the stress that can go with planning such a big event
- Apply for your marriage license
- Go for your final dress fitting – bring shoes and lingerie to be worn that day or anything else that may be a part of your outfit to be sure they all work together.
- Have Ushers go for their fittings
- Mail out your invitations
- Start writing your thank you cards - Believe us after the wedding you will not have the energy to do them all. Get a head start now so that you will just need to do the final touches after your wedding.
- Book your engagement photos - Plan where, when and who will be taking your photos

One Month Before Wedding

- Plan seating arrangements
- Plan the rehearsal dinner party
- Let hairdresser work with your headpiece and make-up
- Purchase your lipstick
- Purchase your perfume
- Rehearse your wedding vows
- Maintain a record of RSVPs and all gifts received
- Arrange final fitting of bridesmaid's dresses
- Finalize shopping for wedding day accessories - Be sure you make a list. There can be a lot of thing to remember to get such as ring pillow, toasting glasses, nylons, kleenex, gloves, blister bandaids, etc
- Make sure all your vendors have maps to all locations - Your house, your partner's place, your parents' house, banquet hall, church, synagogue, mosque, farm, waterfalls, park for the pictures or ship etc...
- Find "something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue and a sixpence (or shiny penny) for your shoe" - For whatever tradition you wish to keep, start or create. Be sure not to leave until last minute
- Get your engagement photos done

One - Two Weeks Before Your Wedding

- Call your rehearsal site with the final number of guests who will be attending your rehearsal
- Call your reception site with the final number of guests who will be attending your reception and finalize seating plan
- Pick up your dress or outfit
- Pick up attire for the groom and ushers
- Start packing for your honeymoon
- If traveling right for wedding or honeymooning right after wedding get the cash - Purchase traveler's cheques or exchange currency, call your credit card company to let them know you will be travelling to a certain country so they don't put a hold on your card thinking that it was compromised
- Confirm - Accommodations, florist order, videographer, photographer and any special photos you want taken, music for the ceremony, details with the limousine company, music for the reception or first dance
- Write place cards and draw a seating chart for the reception
- Write speeches
- Determine the order for the procession
- Contact guests who haven't responded - Double check to be sure that you aren't missing someone that for some reason hasn't got back to you to be sure if they are coming or not
- Arrange all final payments to your vendors
- Arrange to have someone hand out bombonieres - Sometimes the florist or wedding planner does this but just make sure you have that setup ahead of time

The Day Before Your Wedding

- Congrats you are almost there
- Pick up your marriage license if you have not yet done so
- Confirm all of your reservation times - i.e. limo pick up, hair appointment, etc.
- Get ready for your rehearsal dinner - be sure to pack any gifts, speeches or presentation you may need
- Don't over do it if you have a rehearsal dinner/party - You have a long and exciting day ahead of you so you want to be in reasonably good shape. So try not to over-drink, dance, party or scream. You still want a voice to say "I Do" the next day and be able to have your first dance!
- Get a good night sleep... so again word to the wise, no bachelor or bachelorette parties the night before

The Day of your Wedding

- Eat breakfast - You are going to need your energy!
- Schedule plenty of time to get ready
- Give the groom's ring and the bride's ring to the best man or woman
- Go to your hair appointment
- Go to your makeup appointment
- Splurge and get a massage - We know wishful thinking but if you can pull it off it will be worth it.
- Get dressed
- Get some cool wedding prep pictures - These can be some of the most memorable pics
- Get to your wedding ceremony location
- Meet with your clergy to go over plans
- Check in with your videographer or photographer - Just go over the next steps with them so you don't miss any moments that you may want recorded

- Hook up with person who will be handing out programs at the ceremony - organized in advance or course to check in to be sure everthing is how you want it
- Check in with person handing out bombonieres - organized in advance to be sure they are on the same page as you
- Let the ceremony began -Relax, Enjoy & Have Fun!!

After Your Wedding Ceremony

- Check to make sure you have everything - Be sure you have someone help you to gather everything that you brought to the church, park, barn or wherever you had your ceremony. Especially if your reception is going to be at another location.
- Check in with your videographer or photographer again - Be sure they all know where to go next and how you want things to transpire
- Congratulation you are now married!!!!

At your Wedding Reception

- Once you get to the reception location check in with manager or cater - Just make contact with the person in charge to be sure everything is ready to go and to your liking
- Check in with Band, DJ or Musicians - Go over plan and let them know if there are any changes or updates
- Pace yourself - It's going to be a long and fun night. But try to over due it. Don't over exert yourself on the dance floor and pull a muscle, drink or eat too much or pass out. You'll want to remember the night and be able to chat or dance with as many people as you can.
- Designate a special helper - this person's job is to help make sure that all your wedding gifts, cash envelopes etc are put in a safe place and sent home with you after the reception.

After Your Wedding or Honeymoon

- Pick out your thank you picture from your photographer
- Write out/email Thank You cards
- Send Thank You cards with pictures to all your guests & suppliers
- Email or Facebook out a blog link or photo sharing link that has all your wedding photos to friends and family
- Take your dress to the cleaners
- Return any rented items ASAP
- Enjoy being Married!



You supply the love, we supply the rest.