

Detailed Wedding Planning Checklist

By Sherry M. Lewis

At least 12 months before

- Date** You need to choose the date, or at the very least the month of your wedding. Be ready to be flexible to accommodate the space and the minister.
- Time of day** An evening wedding does not require the same kind of planning as an afternoon one.
- Engagement** Decide if you want to have an official engagement party.
- Budget** Look at your finances and consider what kind of financial help you will get from your and your partner's parents, if any.
- Reception** Reserve the location for the reception.
- Minister** Choose an officiant for your wedding and reserve the date.
- Size** Decide if you want a big party or an intimate reception.
- Guest list** Write down an initial guestlist according to the reception size.
- Rings** Look at online catalogues or go shopping for your rings.

9 to 12 months before

- Contributions and gifts** You can go the traditional way and let guests bring gifts, or ask them for a financial contribution towards the reception in its place.
- Gift register** If going for gifts, book your gift list with your favourite store and let your guests know.
- Dress** Order your wedding dress and the bridesmaid's dresses online or at your local wedding dress store.
- Photo/videographer** Look at portfolios of photographers and choose one whose style you like.
- Catering** Choose your caterer and reserve the date with them.
- Decor** Choose your colors and meet with a decorator you like. Order the linens and chair covers, if any.
- Flowers** Book the date with your florist. Build up a basic bouquet with the colors you chose.
- Cake** Order a cake from your favourite bakery. Many bakeries have online portfolios.
- Rentals** If you need to rent any specific equipment, do so well ahead.
- Entertainment** Book your entertainer, whether it is a DJ or a live band.
- Out-of-town guests** If any of your guests plan to stay at a hotel, book it now, especially if your wedding happens during tourist season.
- Honeymoon** If going on a honeymoon, book it now with your travel agency or an online provider.

6 to 9 months before

- Menu** Meet with your caterer and plan the menu for the reception.

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- Music for the ceremony** If you will have a singer or musicians at the ceremony, book them now.
- Transport** Reserve your transportation to the ceremony with a limousine or car company.
- Stationery** Go to a designer and order your invitations and other stationery.
- Wedding favours** Plan your wedding favour and order its components. You can save money by putting them together yourself.
- Mothers** Buy or reserve both mothers' outfit, leaving time for modifications if required.
- Licence** Verify the requirements for a marriage licence in your state or country.
- 3 to 6 months before**
 - Final guestlist** Write down the finalized guestlist for the ceremony and the reception.
 - Reader** Choose a reader for your ceremony within your friends and family.
 - Flowers** Confirm the flower arrangements with your florists, and make last-minute changes.
 - Men's attire** Choose and reserve the wedding attire for the groom and the best man.
 - Hair** Make your appointment with your favourite hairdresser. They are very busy during wedding season, so it is good to do so well ahead.
- 2 months before**
 - Invitations** Mail your final invitations, leaving enough time for those who need to get overseas. Notify them by email before the invitation comes, if needed.
 - Vows** Write down your final vows with your partner.
 - Menu** Finalize the menu with your caterer. Make any last-minute changes, and make sure the caterer knows about specific dietary requirements.
 - Ceremony** Confirm the date and time of the ceremony with your officiant and musicians.
 - Programs** If you are giving out programs, go to your designer and have them printed.
 - Gifts** Buy the gifts for your parents and the attendants.
 - Beauty care** Make an appointment with your favourite aesthetician for your nails and make-up.
 - Dress fitting** Arrange for the final dress tailoring.
- 1 month before**
 - Licence** Request your marriage licence.
 - Rehearsal** Arrange a date for the rehearsal dinner with your attendants.
 - Photo/video** Meet one last time with your photographer to finalize the details.
- 2 weeks before**
 - Party** Throw your party for your attendants.
 - Speeches** Start drafting everybody's speeches at the ceremony and the reception.
 - Reception** Confirm the last details with the space provider, caterer and entertainers.

- Guests** Contact guests who have not replied and confirm their attendance.
- Beauty** Consult with your hairdresser and aesthetician to choose style and colors.
- Music** Choose your music and give the list to your entertainer.
- Honeymoon** Confirm your trip with your travel agency or tour operator.
- 1 week before**
 - Seating plan** Make the seating plan and confirm with family and friends for any conflicts.
 - Place cards** Write down or print your place cards according to the seating plan you've drawn up.
 - Procession** Build the procession and decide the order.
 - Rehearsal** Have your attendants over for your rehearsal dinner.
 - Accommodations** If you have made reservations with hotels for out-of-town guests, confirm the reservations with the hotel and your guests.
 - Attire** Get the groom's attire and have it checked for last-minute fittings.
 - Catering** Confirm the final costs and menu with your caterer.
 - Transport** Call the limousine company and confirm your transportation.
 - Licence** Give your licence to your officiant so he or she can perform the ceremony legally.
 - Wedding favours** Choose the person who will give out the wedding favours to the guests.
 - Rentals** Make a friend or family member responsible for returning any rental items after the wedding.
 - Cheques** Write any cheques that need to be handed out on the wedding day.
 - Honeymoon** If going on a trip, start packing. You will be too busy for the rest of the week.
- Wedding day**
 - Rings** Give the rings to your best man.
 - Cheques** Give your best man the cheques that need to be handed out to the providers.
 - Gifts** Give the gifts to the parents and attendants.
 - Enjoy your day! You deserve it!**
- After the wedding**
 - Notes** Mail or email the thank-you notes for those who purchased gifts for you.
 - Providers** Send thank-you letters to your providers as well.
 - Dress** If you are keeping your dress, have it cleaned and prepared for preservation. You may also have it cleaned and bring it back to the store if you are selling it used.