

Ultimate Wedding Planning Checklist

A comprehensive timeline resource from [Inspire Me Photography]

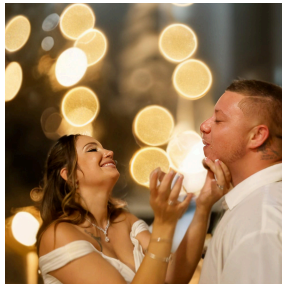


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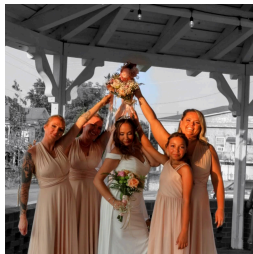
How to Use This Checklist

This comprehensive wedding planning checklist breaks down all the major tasks involved in planning your wedding by timeline. While every wedding is unique, this guide covers the essential elements that apply to most celebrations.

Tips for success:

- Mark tasks as "Complete," "In Progress," or "Delegate To" (specify who)
- Schedule specific days to work on wedding planning tasks
- Customize this list by adding your own specific tasks or removing those that don't apply
- Share this document with anyone helping you plan
- Set calendar reminders for important deadlines and appointments
- Consider hiring a day-of coordinator if a full wedding planner isn't in your budget

Remember that beautiful wedding photography begins with thoughtful planning. As photographers, we've noticed that well-organized weddings tend to produce the most stunning, authentic imagery because the couple is relaxed and fully present in each moment.



12+ Months Before

Dream & Envision

- ☐ Discuss wedding vision, size, and style preferences with partner
- ☐ Create wedding Pinterest board or inspiration folder
- ☐ Determine if you'll work with a wedding planner
- ☐ Discuss preferred season and potential dates
- ☐ Start researching venues aligned with your vision

Budget Planning

- ☐ Determine total wedding budget
- ☐ Discuss financial contributions from families
- ☐ Research average costs in your area
- ☐ Create preliminary budget breakdown by category
- ☐ Set up wedding-specific savings account

Guest List & Wedding Party

- ☐ Create preliminary guest list
- ☐ Decide on wedding party size
- ☐ Choose wedding party members

- ☐ Ask wedding party members to be part of your day

Venue & Date

- ☐ Research ceremony locations
- ☐ Research reception venues
- ☐ Schedule venue tours
- ☐ Select ceremony and reception venues
- ☐ Set official wedding date
- ☐ Put down deposits to secure date
- ☐ Create wedding website

Key Vendors

- ☐ Research and book wedding planner (if using)
- ☐ Begin researching photographers
- ☐ Begin researching videographers
- ☐ Research caterers (if not provided by venue)

Attire Beginnings

- ☐ Start browsing wedding attire styles
- ☐ Research bridal shops in your area
- ☐ Schedule initial dress browsing appointments

9-12 Months Before

Vendors

- ☐ Research and book photographer
- ☐ Research and book videographer
- ☐ Research and book caterer (if not provided by venue)
- ☐ Research and book band or DJ
- ☐ Research florists
- ☐ Research cake bakers
- ☐ Research transportation options

Attire

- ☐ Shop for wedding dress
- ☐ Purchase wedding dress
- ☐ Research bridesmaid dresses

- ☐ Research suits/tuxedos

Communication

- ☐ Create wedding email address for vendor communication
- ☐ Set up digital organization system for contracts and receipts
- ☐ Send save-the-dates
- ☐ Develop wedding website content

Accommodation & Travel

- ☐ Research hotel room blocks for guests
- ☐ Research transportation between venues
- ☐ Research rehearsal dinner venues
- ☐ Begin researching honeymoon destinations



6-9 Months Before

Vendors

- ☐ Book officiant
- ☐ Book florist
- ☐ Book cake baker
- ☐ Book ceremony musicians
- ☐ Book reception entertainment (DJ/band)
- ☐ Research and book lighting specialists (if needed)
- ☐ Research and book videographer (if not already done)

Attire & Rings

- ☐ Choose bridesmaid dresses
- ☐ Shop for wedding bands
- ☐ Purchase wedding bands
- ☐ Schedule first dress fitting

Guest Experience

- ☐ Reserve hotel room blocks
- ☐ Update wedding website with accommodation information
- ☐ Research welcome bag ideas
- ☐ Begin planning rehearsal dinner
- ☐ Research wedding favors

Planning Details

- ☐ Create preliminary day-of timeline
- ☐ Begin compiling list of photos you want
- ☐ Start planning ceremony structure
- ☐ Discuss ceremony readings and music
- ☐ Register for gifts

Honeymoon

- ☐ Decide on honeymoon destination
- ☐ Check passport expiration dates
- ☐ Research honeymoon accommodations
- ☐ Research airfare

4-6 Months Before

Attire

- ☐ Choose groom's and groomsmen's attire
- ☐ Order groom's and groomsmen's attire
- ☐ Select flower girl/ring bearer attire
- ☐ Shop for wedding accessories (veil, jewelry, etc.)
- ☐ Purchase wedding day accessories
- ☐ Schedule second dress fitting

Food & Drink

- ☐ Schedule catering tasting
- ☐ Select menu
- ☐ Decide on bar service and drinks
- ☐ Schedule cake tasting
- ☐ Design and order cake

Guest Communication

- ☐ Order invitations and response cards
- ☐ Develop invitation wording
- ☐ Research ceremony programs

Planning Details

- ☐ Book rehearsal dinner venue
- ☐ Create rehearsal dinner guest list
- ☐ Plan welcome party (if applicable)
- ☐ Book honeymoon flights
- ☐ Book honeymoon accommodations
- ☐ Begin researching day-of timeline



3-4 Months Before

Ceremony

- ☐ Meet with officiant to plan ceremony
- ☐ Choose ceremony readings
- ☐ Choose ceremony music
- ☐ Purchase unity ceremony items (if applicable)
- ☐ Confirm ceremony musicians

Attire & Beauty

- ☐ Purchase undergarments for dress
- ☐ Schedule hair and makeup trials
- ☐ Research day-of hairstyles
- ☐ Purchase wedding day emergency kit items
- ☐ Order wedding favors

Documentation

- ☐ Research name change requirements (if applicable)
- ☐ Research marriage license requirements
- ☐ Address wedding invitations
- ☐ Finalize guest list

Details

- ☐ Order or make table numbers
- ☐ Plan seating chart logistics
- ☐ Purchase guest book
- ☐ Order thank you cards
- ☐ Finalize wedding party gifts

2-3 Months Before

Invitations & RSVPs

- ☐ Mail invitations
- ☐ Create system for tracking RSVPs
- ☐ Begin tracking RSVPs as they arrive
- ☐ Follow up with non-responsive guests

Final Meetings

- ☐ Meet with photographer to discuss specific shots
- ☐ Meet with videographer to discuss coverage
- ☐ Meet with band/DJ to discuss playlist
- ☐ Finalize florals with florist
- ☐ Finalize menu with caterer

Attire

- ☐ Schedule final dress fitting
- ☐ Ensure wedding party has ordered attire
- ☐ Purchase wedding shoes
- ☐ Break in wedding shoes

Ceremony

- ☐ Write vows (if personal vows)
- ☐ Purchase ring bearer accessories
- ☐ Purchase flower girl accessories

- ☐ Order ceremony programs

Reception

- ☐ Finalize reception menu
- ☐ Finalize reception timeline
- ☐ Choose reception music/songs for special dances
- ☐ Plan reception activities (bouquet toss, etc.)

Travel

- ☐ Book wedding night accommodation
- ☐ Arrange transportation to/from ceremony and reception
- ☐ Arrange airport transportation for honeymoon
- ☐ Begin packing list for honeymoon



1-2 Months Before

Final Arrangements

- ☐ Create seating chart
- ☐ Finalize rehearsal dinner details
- ☐ Purchase rehearsal dinner attire
- ☐ Finalize shot list for photographer
- ☐ Confirm timeline with all vendors
- ☐ Send wedding day timeline to wedding party

Beauty & Health

- ☐ Schedule pre-wedding haircut/color
- ☐ Schedule manicure and pedicure
- ☐ Schedule massage or relaxation treatment
- ☐ Confirm hair and makeup appointments

Wedding Ceremony

- ☐ Finalize ceremony details with officiant
- ☐ Confirm readings with readers
- ☐ Prepare ceremony and reception room layouts
- ☐ Purchase guest book pens
- ☐ Prepare welcome bags for out-of-town guests

Documentation

- ☐ Apply for marriage license
- ☐ Confirm name change documents (if applicable)
- ☐ Make list of places for name change (if applicable)
- ☐ Get final head count from RSVPs
- ☐ Give final guest count to caterer/venue

Honeymoon

- ☐ Confirm all honeymoon reservations
- ☐ Make copies of important documents for honeymoon
- ☐ Arrange for pet/plant care while away
- ☐ Purchase honeymoon attire and necessities

2-4 Weeks Before

Final Confirmations

- ☐ Confirm all vendor arrangements and arrival times
- ☐ Create vendor tip envelopes
- ☐ Make final payments to vendors
- ☐ Send final timeline to all vendors
- ☐ Delegate day-of tasks to wedding party/family
- ☐ Break in wedding shoes

Personal Items

- ☐ Write thank you speech
- ☐ Pick up wedding rings
- ☐ Pick up wedding attire
- ☐ Assemble welcome bags
- ☐ Purchase gifts for wedding party
- ☐ Purchase gifts for parents

- ☐ Purchase gift for each other

Last Details

- ☐ Final dress fitting with shoes and accessories
- ☐ Practice first dance
- ☐ Write and print vows (if writing your own)
- ☐ Finalize seating chart
- ☐ Print escort cards or seating chart display
- ☐ Deliver welcome bags to hotel



1 Week Before

Final Preparations

- ☐ Confirm honeymoon details
- ☐ Pack for honeymoon
- ☐ Pack for wedding night
- ☐ Prepare payment envelopes for vendors
- ☐ Prepare wedding day emergency kit
- ☐ Get cash for tips and last-minute needs
- ☐ Pick up wedding dress/attire

Beauty

- ☐ Get haircut/color touch-up
- ☐ Get facial (not too close to wedding day)
- ☐ Get manicure and pedicure
- ☐ Try on complete wedding outfit

Logistics

- ☐ Provide final guest count to caterer
- ☐ Confirm parking arrangements for guests
- ☐ Drop off items at reception venue

- ☐ Give wedding rings to best man/maid of honor
- ☐ Assign someone to collect gifts at reception
- ☐ Assign someone to return rental items
- ☐ Confirm honeymoon departure transportation

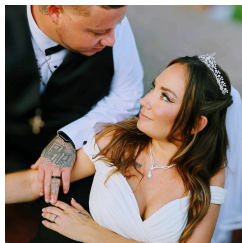
Day Before Wedding

Preparation

- ☐ Drop off welcome bags at hotel
- ☐ Deliver final payments/tips to wedding planner to distribute
- ☐ Rehearse ceremony with wedding party and officiant
- ☐ Give gifts to wedding party and parents at rehearsal dinner
- ☐ Pack wedding day emergency kit
- ☐ Prepare wedding attire, accessories, and undergarments
- ☐ Confirm transportation for wedding day
- ☐ Print final copy of timeline and vendor contacts

Self-Care

- ☐ Drink plenty of water
- ☐ Get manicure touch-up if needed
- ☐ Pack overnight bag for wedding night
- ☐ Prepare wedding day schedule for getting ready
- ☐ Charge phone and camera batteries
- ☐ Get to bed early!



Wedding Day

Morning Preparation

- ☐ Eat breakfast

- ☐ Drink water throughout the day
- ☐ Give wedding bands to best man/maid of honor
- ☐ Exchange gifts with soon-to-be spouse
- ☐ Give wedding party gifts
- ☐ Give parents their gifts

Getting Ready

- ☐ Hair and makeup
- ☐ Put on wedding attire and accessories
- ☐ Take "getting ready" photos
- ☐ Have "first look" (if doing one)
- ☐ Bride/wedding party photos
- ☐ Groom/wedding party photos

Ceremony & Reception

- ☐ Arrive at ceremony site
- ☐ Handle marriage license signing
- ☐ Enjoy ceremony
- ☐ Take post-ceremony photos
- ☐ Arrive at reception
- ☐ Enjoy cocktail hour (if possible)
- ☐ Grand entrance
- ☐ First dance
- ☐ Enjoy meal
- ☐ Cake cutting
- ☐ Bouquet and garter toss (if doing)
- ☐ Dance and celebrate!
- ☐ Grand exit

End of Night

- ☐ Ensure gifts and personal items are collected
- ☐ Ensure marriage license is in safe keeping
- ☐ Change into going-away outfit
- ☐ Depart for wedding night location

After the Wedding

Immediate

- ☐ Return any rental items
- ☐ Ensure wedding dress is properly stored/preserved
- ☐ Open gifts (if not done before honeymoon)
- ☐ Enjoy honeymoon!

Within Two Weeks

- ☐ Send thank you notes for gifts
- ☐ Return any unwanted gifts
- ☐ Write vendor reviews
- ☐ Submit name change documents (if applicable)
- ☐ Select photos for wedding album

Within Two Months

- ☐ Complete name change process (if applicable)
- ☐ Add spouse to insurance and financial accounts
- ☐ Update will and financial paperwork
- ☐ Write thank you notes for any late gifts
- ☐ Approve wedding album design
- ☐ Order prints of favorite photos
- ☐ Create and share online photo album with guests

