

Wedding Checklist (Here Comes the Guide Version)

10 – 12 Months Before

- Work out your budget and establish your top priorities — where to save/where to splurge.
- Find Ideas. Start browsing bridal blogs and magazines to identify your wedding style and color palette.
- Compile your preliminary guest list (you'll need that guest count!).
- Choose your wedding party - who do you want by your side at the altar?
- Find a Venue for your ceremony and reception, and reserve your date.
- Do you need wedding insurance? It's something to think about. Check with your venue about liability insurance and consider other options, like cancellation insurance.
- Now that you have a date, tell everyone to save it! For destination weddings or weddings around a holiday, consider sending out Save-the-Date cards or emails. Or create your own wedding website, and let your invitees know about it.
- Find a Dress and begin assembling the perfect accessories. Need inspiration? Visit a bridal fair.
- Find a Service. Assemble an all-star vendor team. We'd start with Caterer, Photographer/Videographer and Officiant
- Already feeling overwhelmed? Consider hiring a Wedding Coordinator.
- Another way to minimize stress: Start dreaming up your honeymoon...

6 – 9 Months Before

- Continue researching, interviewing and booking vendors (and when you hire one make sure to put everything in writing!)
- Decide on arrangements with your Floral Designer.
- Do a tasting and choose your wedding cake with your Cake Designer.
- Hire the DJ/Entertainment for your ceremony, cocktail hour and reception.
- Discuss the style and wording of your wedding invitations with a Stationer.
- Create your gift registry (and don't forget to update your wedding website!).
- Arrange hotel room blocks for out-of-town guests and book your own suite for the wedding night.
- Shop for bridesmaid/flower girl dresses and give your attendants clear instructions on how to place their orders.
- Arrange and book any necessary transportation.
- Go over bridal shower/bachelorette details and the guest list with your Maid of Honor/hostess.

3 – 5 Months Before

- Book the rehearsal and rehearsal dinner location(s). If you're including entertainment or specialty details like a groom's cake, now's the time to lock in these elements.
- Put together your rehearsal dinner guest list.
- Make childcare arrangements for your guests' kids.
- Reserve all necessary party rentals and linens.
- Order wedding favors for your guests.
- Shop for and reserve men's formalwear.
- Finalize the guest list. Get everyone's mailing address.
- Finalize the invitation wording. Confirm your invitation text with the Stationer, and consider additional stationery (programs, menu cards, place cards, thank-you cards, etc.). Schedule a pickup date for your invites.
- Finalize the ceremony readings and vows.
- Finalize the menu, beverage and catering details.
- Finalize the timeline of the reception formalities.
- Do a Makeup & Hair trial and book your stylists. While you're at it, come up with your own beauty and fitness regimen to be camera-ready for the big day.
- Shop for and purchase your wedding rings.
- Finalize honeymoon plans and obtain all necessary documents (are you sure your passports are up to date?).

6–8 Weeks Before

- You're getting close... Mail out those invitations! Have a game plan for recording the RSVPs and meal choices.
- Touch base with your vendors to confirm date, deposits and details.
- Start researching marriage license requirements and name-change paperwork.
- Begin your dress fittings. Be sure to buy the appropriate undergarments beforehand.
- So you think you can't dance? Consider taking a dance lesson with your fiancé - a good way to break in your bridal shoes!
- Give the wedding party a nudge - make sure they've ordered all necessary attire.
- Write thank-you cards for shower gifts and any early wedding gifts received.

3 - 5 Weeks Before

- Send out rehearsal dinner invitations. If your get-together will be informal, feel free to send an Evite. Finalize and confirm wedding vows and readings with your Officiant.
- Finalize and confirm shot list with your Photographer/Videographer.
- Finalize and confirm song list for ceremony, cocktail hour and reception with your DJ and/or Band/Musicians. Finalize and confirm timeline for the reception and who's giving the toasts.
- Finalize and confirm wedding night and honeymoon accommodations.
- Obtain marriage license and complete name-change documents, if applicable.
- Pick up your wedding rings and proofread any engraving!
- If you're the traditional type, do you have something old, new, borrowed and blue?
- Purchase your guest book, toasting flutes, cake servers, unity candle, and all that good stuff.
- Have your final dress fitting. Bring your shoes and accessories for the full impact.
- Sigh. Hunt down whoever hasn't RSVP'd yet.

1 - 2 Weeks Before

- Give your caterer/venue the final guest count.
- Arrange seating and create the seating chart and/or place cards.
- Pick up your gown. Swoon.
- Confirm arrival times and finalize the wedding timeline with vendors and the wedding party — make sure your MOH has a copy, too.
- Put together your own Bridal Emergency Kit.
- Speaking of emergencies: Check the weather report, and if things look iffy contact your venue to make sure a contingency plan is in place.
- Start packing for your honeymoon. (See "weather report" above.)
- In desperate need of a facial or massage? Now's the time to squeeze one in.

The Day Before

- Make sure all wedding-day items are packed/laid out and ready to go! (Don't forget the rings and marriage license!)
- Figure out tips and final payments for vendors. Put them in clearly marked envelopes and give them to the Best Man or another person you trust to hand out at the reception.
- Assign someone to pack up your gifts/belongings after the reception (don't forget the top tier of your cake!).
- Thank your BFF for agreeing to return your groom's tux and other rental items the day after the wedding.
- Enjoy a mani-pedi.
- Attend the rehearsal and dinner. Now's the time to give out wedding party gifts.
- Try to go to bed early...you need your beauty sleep tonight.

The Wedding Day

- Allow plenty of time for the bride beautification process.
- Do the rounds at your wedding—greet everyone and thank them for coming.
- Take a deep breath. Stop to appreciate your new spouse and the day that you spent so much time planning!

After the Honeymoon

- Write and send thank-you cards. (Don't procrastinate!)
- Complete your registry and exchange any unwanted or duplicate gifts.
- Have your wedding dress cleaned and preserved by a reputable company.
- Keep in touch with your Photographer/Videographer to work on albums, DVDs, etc.
- Enjoy wedded bliss...

The folks over at Here Comes The Guide (www.HereComesTheGuide.com) published this helpful Wedding Planning checklist that we're posting here to make sure it's always available.