

Wedding Planning Timeline

12-7 Months Before the Wedding Day

Determine your wedding budget – this should include an amount that you definitely will not consider going over.

Start the guest list and establish a range of guests to attend. You will need to know this number in order to select a venue. It is helpful to create a spreadsheet now with names and addresses and then columns for future tasks to mark when save the dates and invitations are sent, record RSVPs and gifts received and thank you cards sent.

Select your wedding party. Especially if some will come from out of town – this allows them ample time to start planning their travel and to help you!

Hire a planner who will have insights and relationships with vendors and venues.

Reserve your date and venue(s)

Book your officiant.

Hire a photographer and videographer. Set a date for engagement photos.

Hire DJ/band/ceremony musicians/ entertainment

Go to tastings and hire a caterer (if needed)

Purchase a wedding dress. You can purchase accessories closer to your wedding day (veil, shoes, undergarments, jewelry, etc)

Reserve blocks of hotel rooms for out of town guests. These can be at different hotels that reflect different price points so all budgets are accounted for.

Register for gifts

7-6 Months Before

Order invitations. Your guest list should be solidified by now so you know how many to purchase. Custom invitations, calligraphy envelopes, etc can take months to prepare. These are not mailed until 12 weeks before the wedding though so if you're ordering something simple this can wait until 4-5 months before the wedding.

Take care of any honeymoon-related travel requirements – passport updates, shots, travel plans, etc.

Purchase bridesmaid dresses. If you're not buying off the rack, these can take months to be ordered and then will need to be altered.

Plan the ceremony with your officiant.



Send save-the-date cards to your guest list. These can include engagement photos.

Book any rentals such as chairs & tables, lighting, portable restrooms, arch, etc.

Book a florist.

Book wedding day transportation – limo, town car, horse & carriage, Ferrari (why not?)

Compose a wedding weekend timeline including detailed wedding day ceremony and reception items (toasts, 1st dance, cake cutting, etc)

5-4 Months Before

Book venues for complementary wedding events such as rehearsal dinners, morning-after brunch, bachelor & bachelorette parties, bridesmaid luncheons, etc

Go to cake tastings (yum!) and select a cake vendor.

Purchase wedding accessories, especially shoes, and bring them to your dress fittings.

Schedule hair & make-up appointments.

3 Months Before

Work with your DJ/Band to select music for ceremony & reception

Finalize your menu. This can include creating a signature drink.

Finalize your flowers.

Order favors and items for welcome baskets.

Rent grooms and groomsmen attire

Finalize the ceremony details. Who will be participating? Finalize reception details. Who will be giving toasts?

Design & print programs and menu cards. Design escort cards, but don't print yet.

Purchase your wedding rings.

2 Months Before

Review your vendor contracts, tie up any loose ends and send your timeline to vendors for feedback.

Meet with your photographer, preferably at your venues, and discuss any important shots you want to ensure he takes.



Mail your invitations! Woohoo! Select a RSVP date of 4 weeks prior to your wedding. Start marking RSVPs received on your guest spreadsheet.

1 Month – 1 Week Before

Get your marriage license.

Finalize your dress fittings.

Confirm times with all vendors.

Assign seating (now that you have your RSVPs) and print escort cards.

Purchase bridesmaid and groomsmen gifts. (Usually presented at the rehearsal dinner or bridesmaid lunch)

Write your vows.

Have your hair cut & colored, start a skin care routine

Assign wedding day tasks such as gift collector, vendor payer, dress bustle-er, cake topper collector, guest book attendant, etc. Your wedding planner will do these things for you.

Provide a wedding weekend timeline and directions to all venues to family and wedding party.

Pick up your dress.

Purchase a guest book and pens.

Write checks for final payments for all vendors.

Send the final guest count to your venues and caterer. (usually due 72 hours prior to the event date)

Wear your shoes to scuff the bottoms to prevent slipping and break them in to prevent blisters.

Assemble welcome baskets and favors

Pack for your honeymoon.

The week of your wedding you should be done with the planning and ready to relax and enjoy the celebration with friends and family!

