

Wedding 101

Complete Wedding Schedule

Below is a list of everything you will need to do to make your wedding a complete success, along with a time line when each task should be done. . Tasks in **pink** are for the bride, and tasks in **blue** are for the groom. Tasks in black can be done by either the bride or groom, preferably by both together (especially the 10-12 month tasks).

10 - 12 months before the wedding

- Announce your engagement to family and friends
- Arrange for both families to meet if they haven't already done so
- Have an engagement party (optional)
- Decide on the style and size of the wedding
 - Traditional or casual
 - Religious or non-religious
 - Decide whether to include ethnic traditions
- Set your wedding budget
- Start creating your guest list
- Set the wedding day and time
- Choose and book your wedding officiant
- Choose your maid of honor, bridesmaids, best man and groomsmen
- Choose and book your ceremony and reception locations
- Purchase wedding insurance (optional)
- Interview caterers and taste samples
- Interview florists
- Interview and audition musicians, bands, and/or DJs
- Interview photographers and/or videographers and review their portfolios

7 - 9 months before the wedding

- Shop for and order your wedding dress
- Shop for and order/purchase bridal accessories (veil, shoes, jewelry, etc.)
- Shop for and order bridesmaids dresses (should include bridesmaids, if possible)
- Select caterer and sign contract

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7 - 9 months before the wedding (continued)

- Select florist and sign contract
- Select musicians, band and/or DJ and sign contract
- Select photographer and/or videographer and sign contract
- Start planning your honeymoon
- Finalize the guest list
- Start making wedding favors (if you're making your own)
- If you're having an outdoor wedding , reserve rental equipment (such as tents, chairs, etc.)
- Meet with bakers and sample wedding cakes
- Start looking at wedding invitations
- Start thinking about the wording of your wedding invitations
- Start planning the rehearsal dinner

4 - 6 months before the wedding

- Join one or more bridal registries
- Select the baker for your wedding cake and sign contract
- Order your wedding invitations
- Book a block of hotel rooms for out-of-town guests
- Contact out-of-town guests about the wedding (prior to sending out invitations)
- Finalize dinner menu with caterer
- **Select flower girl's dress and pass details on to the parents**
- Purchase wedding guest favors
- Book the limousine or other wedding day transportation
- Book the rehearsal dinner site
- Book a calligrapher (if you're using one)
- **Start looking at tuxedos or other formal wear**
- **Book the honeymoon**
- **Book a hotel room for the wedding night**
- Book a photo session for engagement announcement in local newspapers
- Start thinking about wedding ceremony decorations
- **Buy bridal lingerie in time for first dress fitting**

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2 - 3 months before the wedding

- Give the photographer your list of photos you want taken
- Purchase your wedding rings
- Purchase maid/matron of honor and bridesmaids gifts
- Purchase best man and groomsmen gifts
- Purchase the groom's gift
- Purchase the bride's gifts
- Finalize tuxedo/formal attire and pass on rental/purchase details to groomsmen
- Finalize ring bearer attire and pass details on to the parents
- Send engagement announcement in local newspapers
- Schedule your dress fittings
- Make sure your maid/matron of honor and bridesmaids have purchased their accessories
- Book your hair and makeup appointments
- If you're changing your name, complete the proper documents
- If your state requires it, have blood tests done
- Talk to your maid/matron of honor about a bridal shower
- Address and send out wedding invitations (invitations should be mailed at 2-month mark)
- Purchase your accessories including shoes, cuff links, handkerchiefs, etc.
- Start writing wedding vows, especially if writing your own
- Decide on whether to light a unity candle or honor past loved ones during the ceremony
- Start working on wedding program

1 month before the wedding

- Order liquor and wine, if not provided by the caterer
- Confirm parking at the ceremony and reception locations
- Get your marriage license
- Finalize wedding vows
- Have your final dress fittings
- Finalize and print wedding program

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1 month before the wedding (continued)

- Finalize your music list with musicians, band and/or DJ
- Buy a guest book and pen
- Contact any guests who haven't replied to the invitation
- Write speeches for rehearsal and wedding dinners
- Attend your bridal shower
- Sent out thank-you cards for bridal shower gifts
- Send rehearsal dinner invitations, if necessary
- Do trial-runs of your hair and makeup
- Start working on the ceremony and reception seating plans
- Confirm honeymoon details and reservations
- Have your bachelor party
- Have your bachelorette party

1-2 weeks before the wedding

- Finalize seating plan and write place cards
- Create a seating chart to hang in the reception site
- Break in your wedding shoes by wearing them around the house
- Pick up your wedding dress
- Pick up wedding rings and check that the inscriptions are correct
- Pick up "something old", "something new", "something borrowed" and "something blue"
- Purchase a garter
- Plan your wedding day itinerary
- Plan your receiving line
- Leave your honeymoon travel plans and itinerary with a family member
- Confirm headcount with caterer, baker and liquor/wine provider
- Confirm details musicians, band, photographer, limousine, florist and any other vendors
- Confirm ceremony details with officiant

Day before the wedding

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- Get manicure and pedicure
- Pick up your tuxedo
- Decorate the ceremony and reception locations (if possible)
- Drop off wedding favors, guest book and seating chart at reception site
- Rehearse the ceremony with the officiant and wedding party
- Give your wedding party their gifts
- Enjoy the rehearsal dinner
- Get a good night's sleep!

Day of the wedding

- Take a relaxing bath or shower and enjoy the moment of solitude
- Have breakfast; you'll need your energy
- Give your partner their wedding gift
- Get dressed
- Relax and enjoy the day!