



YOUR STEP-BY-STEP WEDDING PLANNING GUIDE

CHECKLISTS AND IDEAS FOR PLANNING YOUR PERFECT WEDDING



REVOLUTION
ENTERTAINMENT INC

YOUR DAY

to dream

Your wedding day: a blank slate for you and your partner to create an unforgettable event that celebrates your love and marriage.

Recently engaged or somewhere further into the process, you've probably figured out that turning your dream into reality requires a lot of time and attention. Because whether you want a first-class soirée or a low-key gathering, there are countless decisions that need to be made along the way.

Budget. Guest list. Venue. Attendants. Décor. Flowers. Catering. Photography. Music. Transportation. Videography. Attire. Invitations. Cake. Honeymoon. And everything in between.

Before you turn into a stressed-out mess (read: Bridezilla), here's some advice to help you get started and stay organized throughout the process.



STEP 1: CONFIRM YOUR BUDGET

Before you can make any decisions (and before you get your hopes up about a wedding you can't afford), it's best to confirm your budget. Decide what you and your partner can reasonably save and set aside, and talk to both sets of parents about if, and how much, they are able to contribute.

STEP 2: DREAM IT

With your budget in mind, together, you and your fiancé need to discuss your ideal wedding. Intimate affair or all-night dance party? Swanky hotel ballroom or scenic outdoor locale? Hometown nuptials or destination wedding? And without choosing a firm date, you should at least have an idea of what month or season you'd like to get married.

STEP 3: MAKE A GUEST LIST

How many people do you want to share your special day with (and, alternately, how many relatives that you've never met will your mother-in-law want to invite;)? You and your fiancé should make a list, as well as both sets of parents. With your budget, style and guest list in mind, you're ready to find a venue and secure a date.

STEP 4: GET ORGANIZED

Over the next year leading up to your wedding, there will be many decisions to be made and costs to be tracked. You could use a notebook or an Excel worksheet to track your progress on your costs and wedding to-dos, or [download something like this budget tracking sheet](#).

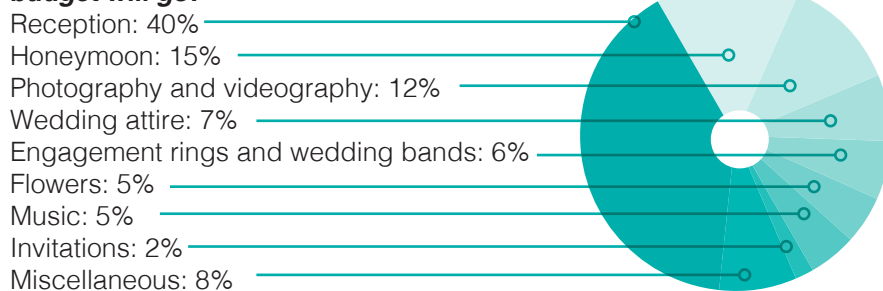
You may consider hiring a wedding co-ordinator to partially support or fully guide the process. Either way, it's important to find a system that works for you to stay organized and on budget.

YOUR BUDGET

breakdown

Only you and your partner can put a price tag on what your perfect wedding day is worth, but staying on budget and stress free is priceless.

Big or small, here's an average breakdown of where your wedding budget will go:



Here's a sample of how you could use a table to track your costs.

CATEGORY	BUDGET	VENDOR ESTIMATE	ACTUAL COST
Reception venue			
Catering			
Photography			
Music			
Décor			
Transportation			
Attire			

Remember that within each category, there are multiple items to be considered. [Check out this great worksheet](#) you can use to track all of your costs.



Money-saving tips

It's often the little things that add up and turn into unexpected costs. Here are a few tips to help keep you on budget.

SOMETHING BORROWED:

When it comes to décor items and accessories, consider borrowing from a friend or family member. Maybe your favourite aunt has a special piece of jewellery you've always admired, or you loved the centrepieces at a friend's recent wedding.

WHEN IN DEBT, DIY: invitations, decorations, dress alterations; these are all things that perhaps you or someone you know can help with, and will save the cost of getting a professional to do it. But don't assume people will do things for free. Tell them you'd consider it their wedding gift, or offer them a trade for something you can help them with.

SOCIAL MEDIA SCORES: It never hurts to put out an ad on a buy-and-sell or donation pages. Consider an "ISO" or even a "looking to borrow" ad for décor items. You'd be surprised at how many old wedding decorations are collecting dust in people's basements—just waiting to be repurposed into something fabulous.

AVOID IMPULSE BUYING: it's easy to get caught up with your bridesmaids' accessories or adding another fun element to the table decorations. Rely on your original list to keep things on track and limit last-minute, non-essential purchases.

YOUR MONTH-BY-MONTH

checklist

Unless you plan to elope or bypass most aspects of a traditional wedding, it usually takes at least six months to book your desired vendors and smoothly accomplish your dream wedding.

Here's a month-by-month checklist to help keep you on track.

SIX TO TWELVE MONTHS AHEAD

- ☐ Set budget
- ☐ Hire wedding co-ordinator, if desired
- ☐ Compile guest list and organize addresses
- ☐ Book ceremony and reception venues and finalize wedding date
- ☐ Book officiant
- ☐ Book caterer
- ☐ Order wedding cake
- ☐ Order flowers and centrepieces
- ☐ Book DJ services or band
- ☐ Choose attendants
- ☐ Order dress and accessories, including veil and shoes
- ☐ Book photographer and videographer
- ☐ Plan and book honeymoon
- ☐ Send save-the-date cards, if using
- ☐ Set up wedding website, if desired

FOUR TO SIX MONTHS AHEAD

- ☐ Reserve rental equipment, such as lighting, tables, chairs and tents
- ☐ Arrange transportation for wedding day
- ☐ Order stationery, including invitations and thank-you notes
- ☐ Register for gifts
- ☐ Purchase wedding rings
- ☐ Purchase or reserve groom's attire
- ☐ Choose attendant's attire
- ☐ Choose favours
- ☐ Book a room for wedding night
- ☐ Reserve accommodations for out-of-town guests
- ☐ Choose gifts for wedding party

TWO TO FOUR MONTHS AHEAD

- ☐ Discuss details of menu with caterer
- ☐ Discuss service with officiant
- ☐ Choose readings for ceremony
- ☐ Write wedding vows, if desired
- ☐ Schedule ceremony rehearsal and rehearsal dinner
- ☐ Mail invitations eight weeks in advance of wedding date

ONE TO TWO MONTHS AHEAD

- ☐ Buy guest book
- ☐ Have programs printed
- ☐ Obtain marriage license
- ☐ Prepare necessary documents for name change, if desired
- ☐ Have final dress fitting with all accessories
- ☐ Try out make-up and hairstyle

TWO WEEKS AHEAD

- ☐ Begin seating plan and write down place cards
- ☐ Notify caterer of guest count
- ☐ Write toasts for rehearsal dinner and wedding reception
- ☐ Designate someone to look after your home while you're on your honeymoon
- ☐ Finalize seating plan
- ☐ Assign specific responsibilities, such as handing out corsages and boutonnieres, to members of your wedding party

ONE WEEK AHEAD

- ☐ Pick up dress or have it delivered
- ☐ Confirm details with caterer
- ☐ Confirm honeymoon details
- ☐ Update caterer with final guest and vendor meal counts

ONE OR TWO DAYS AHEAD

- ☐ Pack for honeymoon
- ☐ Confirm transportation
- ☐ Get manicure and pedicure
- ☐ Rehearse ceremony
- ☐ Hold rehearsal dinner – provide gifts for wedding party and parents
- ☐ Prepare tip and payment envelopes for officiant and vendors and make arrangements for someone to distribute them

THE WEDDING DAY

- ☐ Relax, and soak up every moment!

AFTER THE WEDDING AND HONEYMOON

- ☐ Complete name change, if desired
- ☐ Send thank-you cards

Adapted from http://images.marthastewart.com/images/content/web/pdfs/pdf3/wedding_workbook.pdf





YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS *to last a lifetime*

Wedding photography is a worthy investment, and one you should carefully consider. It's important to find a photographer that suits your personal aesthetic and is someone you and your partner feel comfortable around.

You'll need to consider how long you want their services for—from getting ready through to the last song of the night or somewhere in between. And you may require a second shooter to capture all the moments throughout the day.

When it comes to family portraits, it's important to put together a detailed list and designate a friend or relative to help the photographer locate people and to check off names as the photos are taken.

Here's a list to help you think through what you would consider a can't-miss photo op or what you feel isn't necessary to photograph on your big day.

PORTRAITS

- Bride
- Groom
- Bride and groom
- Groom with best man only
- Groom with groomsmen
- Bride with maid of honour only
- Bride with bridesmaids
- Ring bearer with flower girl
- Entire wedding party
- Bride with parents
- Groom with parents
- Bride with siblings only
- Groom with siblings only
- Bride and groom with bride's parents
- Bride and groom with bride's family
- Bride and groom with groom's parents
- Bride and groom with groom's family
- Bride and groom with both sets of parents
- Bride with extended family members
- Groom with extended family members



PRE-WEDDING

- Bride and attendants getting ready
- Groom and attendants getting ready
- Mother or maid of honour helping bride get ready
- Reception site being set up
- Bride leaving for ceremony
- Groom leaving for ceremony

CEREMONY

- Details – wedding programs, décor, aisle, chair decorations, signage
- Ushers escorting special guests. Special guests:
- Both sets of parents entering
- Groom walking down the aisle or awaiting bride
- Child attendants
- Bride walking down the aisle
- Wedding kiss
- Signing of the wedding certificate
- Guests throwing rice or flower petals
- Bride and groom's hands displaying rings

RECEPTION

- Friends signing guest book
- Guests at cocktail hour
- Reception site, set for dinner
- Details – seating cards, centrepieces, place settings, favours, wedding cake
- People giving toasts
- Bride and groom listening to toasts
- Group photos of guests at each table
- Bride and groom's first dance
- Bride dancing with her father
- Groom dancing with his mother
- Guests dancing
- Bride and groom cutting the cake
- Bride and groom departing

+ PRO TIP:

Leave a card on each table with a few photo ideas for guests to take with their camera phones, such as each couple at the table and some fun dance floor shots.

Adapted from: http://images.marthastewart.com/images/content/web/pdfs/pdf3/wedding_workbook.pdf





Your wedding day **SOUNDTRACK**

The right music can make or break your wedding. Similar to finding the right photographer, you also need to find a DJ or band that suits your wedding style and knows how to get your guests out on the dance floor.

Some other things to consider: will your bandleader or DJ also act as an emcee or make special announcements? Do you want them to take guest requests or only play the music you've selected? Are there songs you absolutely do not want to hear on your wedding day?

And here's a list to get you thinking about all the music you'll need to select for the special moments throughout your day.

Ceremony

Prelude _____
Processional _____
Ceremony _____
Recessional _____

Reception

Cocktail hour _____
Dinner music _____
Couple's first dance _____
Bride and father's first dance _____
Guests' first dance _____
Cake cutting _____
Bouquet toss _____
Garter toss _____
Other special requests _____
Last dance _____
Don't play list _____



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Your Wedding
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Kelowna | 778.748.1688

SASKATCHEWAN

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