

12-Month Wedding Checklist

Planning your wedding should be a fun and low stress activity. Many couples get overwhelmed in the planning process and may begin to bicker or stress throughout the process. People tend to look at the planning process as one big giant endeavor instead of individual tasks.

This 12-month wedding checklist is a guide to ensure an easier and much more enjoyable planning process that you and your partner can partake in together. Yes, it is ideal to have a year to plan an entire wedding, but it is definitely possible to do it in a much shorter duration.

If you only have 3 or 6 months to plan, it is still very possible. All you'll need to do is prioritize the activities from 12 months to 6 months out into one or two months. The final months and weeks will fall into place accordingly. You'll see that this guide has the planning process spaced out to activities you should be concentrating on in two-month intervals. Meaning, even if you get caught up or fall behind in some months, you'll technically have 2 months to complete these tasks. That being said, at 12 and 10 months out from your wedding day, you'll want to secure your venue and vendors. In the wedding industry, many of these individuals are booked over a year in advance so your choices and options may be more limited.

Having photographed over 700 weddings, I have seen all of the back-end planning that wedding planners, DJ's, florists, videographers, cake decorators....all of your wedding professionals perform many times each year. If this is your first wedding, you'll quickly understand all of the moving parts of a wedding and just how much planning will go into your special day. That said, I have photographed many different "levels" of weddings in my career and couples that believe they can do it all themselves, usually have a somewhat chaotic wedding day.

So, trust in your vendors. Do the research on each vendor you plan on hiring and entrusting to make your wedding go as smoothly as possible. Some weddings go off perfectly, but expect an "oops" or an "uh-oh" on your actual wedding day. There is no possible way to guarantee a flawless wedding day, so my advice is to just roll with it. All the planning you and your wedding professionals have done will make that otherwise catastrophic event turn into just a little "oops" or "uh-oh".

One final piece of advice:

When you wake up on the day of your wedding, let it all go. You've spent the last many months planning, revising, rehearsing, tasting, meeting and pondering every decision you've made. The day you wake up, just trust the process and live in the moment. Your wedding day will seem to go by so fast, so enjoy it, don't stress over it ☺

Bill Rice

After the Engagement

- Pick a wedding date
- Set your budget
- Research wedding venues
- Hire a wedding planner
- Start researching vendors
- Take engagement photos
- Research honeymoon destinations

7 Months Out

- Confirm wedding party attire
- Create a gift registry
- Book accommodations for guests
- Book rehearsal dinner
- Plan Bachelor/Bachelorette parties
- Decide on best man and maid of honor
- Shop for shoes and accessories
- Purchase wedding dresses and suits

2 Months Out

- Send wedding invitations
- Apply for marriage license
- Review ceremony with officiant
- Finalize décor details
- Finalize wedding cake details
- Finalize floral arrangements
- Order gifts for wedding party

12 Months Out

- Book your venue
- Announce wedding
- Create a wedding website
- Make a guest list
- Book officiant/church
- Book photographer
- Book videographer
- Book catering
- Book florists
- Book entertainment
- Book bar if not included at venue
- Start looking for your dress
- Choose your colors for your wedding

6 Months Out

- Send out save the dates
- Order wedding cake
- Order favors
- Purchase wedding bands
- Create song list for ceremony and DJ
- Solidify the wedding menu
- Purchase wedding invitations
- Premarital counseling (religious ceremony)
- Evaluate wedding budget

1 Week Out

- Finalize seating plans
- Give final guest count to vendors
- Confirm again with vendors
- Have engagement rings cleaned
- Finalize vows and rehearse out loud
- Send out wedding schedule to wedding party
- Wedding rehearsal (could be done the day before wedding)

10 Months Out

- Shop for bridesmaid's dresses
- Shop for groomsmen's suits
- Shop for bride and bridesmaids robes/PJ's
- Find a seamstress
- Book transportation
- Book hair and makeup
- Book Honeymoon
- Design wedding invitations
- Book band or DJ

4 Months Out

- Meet with florist and confirm arrangements
- Book wedding night accommodations
- Hair and makeup test run

The Day Before

- Get a Mani and Pedi
- Write checks/organize tip envelopes
- Pack emergency bridal repair kit
- Pack suitcase for hotel
- Eat and drink normally
- Get a good night's sleep
- Have copies of permits
- Practice bustling your dress
- Verify all delivery times
- Have cash on you for tips, emergencies etc.
- Bring a nice wooden hanger for your wedding dress
- Don't drink too much the night before