

# A “First-Look” vs. a Traditional Wedding; the Pros and Cons of Each!

Throughout history, a bride and groom seeing each other before the ceremony was considered “bad luck”. However, in modern times, it’s now a common practice to do what is called a “first-look” prior to your vows taking place.

## There’s one main reason for this....**Time!**

More time for photos, more time with your guests, more time to relax and more time to have fun.

Everything in a wedding takes weeks and even months of preparation. There are so many moving parts to a wedding and everyone needs to do their job to make your day a success. The planning of your wedding involves multiple different vendors to come together and respect everyone’s **time**. If something is late, we all need to adjust our schedules, and that time lost is not something we can get back. The flowers need to be on time, ceremony needs to be on time, the photographer needs time to work with the bride and groom and the kitchen staff needs to time the dinner being ready at a predetermined time.

That all being said, as a photographer, I want to give you the absolute most and diverse range of photographs from your day. To do this, I need time.

Many brides and grooms are forgoing the traditional approach to their weddings, and by doing a first look, it allows the photographer and videographer to get ‘*most*’ of their photos done prior to your ceremony taking place. The main bulk of photos done prior to the ceremony will be the actual “first-look”, the bride with her bridesmaids, the groom with his groomsmen, the entire wedding party together and the bride and groom together for some romantic pics. I will set up a first look where we will plan the details prior. Many brides like to walk up to their grooms, who will have their back turned. The bride could tap the groom on the shoulder and turn to see you for the first time. This is usually a very emotional situation and many couple like to “get it out of the way” and have it to be private rather than seeing each other for the first time if you were to walk down the aisle.

If you were to do your photos prior to the ceremony, that means the only photos we need to get through after the ceremony are the ones with your family members, usually at the ceremony location. This means you will get to join your own cocktail hour! More time with your guests!

Your wedding day will seem like a whirlwind! You will be going nonstop from the time you put your dress on, to the conclusion of your reception. Your time with guests will seem very limited in retrospect. Below I outline several benefits of doing a “first-look” vs. the “traditional” approach.

I never want to try and push anyone into doing a “first-look”. This is your wedding and I want it to go exactly the way you’ve envisioned it. I would estimate that 80% of the weddings I photograph involve doing the photos prior to the ceremony. However, understand that doing a traditional approach might make your wedding day seem a little rushed and a tad more stressful.

## Benefits of a “First-Look” approach:

1. More time with your photographer means you get more photos.
2. More time means multiple locations for photos, yielding a more diverse collection.
3. More time for photos means a much more relaxed and spaced-out pace for the day.
4. A first look often quells the wedding jitters, taking some of the apprehension away.
5. A first look is a very emotional experience. Seeing each other in a private moment will be much more intimate and relaxed.
6. A first look allows for some flexibility in the schedule in case of the typical wedding “oops” or “uh-oh”.
7. You will get to join approx. 75% of your cocktail hour; having more TIME to spend with your guests! You’ve paid for your cocktail hour; you may as well enjoy it!
8. It allows the photographer to photograph all of the details of the ballroom before guests are invited in.
9. It allows the photographer to get more group photos and more candid photos of you and your guests.

When you start your wedding planning process with your photographer and/or coordinator, it’s best to have discussed with your significant other whether or not you are doing a first look. This way we can design your day of itinerary around this decision.

## Cons of a “First-Look” approach:

1. You’ll need to start hair and makeup a little bit earlier; by 1 hour or so.
2. You will need to start doing photos a little earlier. This time could cost you an extra coverage time with your photographer and videographer. As stated above; about 1 hour.
3. Your break tradition of seeing each other down the aisle at the ceremony. This could be something you’ve envisioned about your wedding and the thought of changing it can be disheartening.
4. You may need to fix/reapply makeup. After doing a few hours of photos, you might want a quick refresh before the ceremony!
5. You won’t have exchanged rings yet. Simple fix; put them on for the photos and give them back to the best man prior to the ceremony.

Now that you know the ins and outs of a “First-Look”, what scenario do you see yourselves doing?

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