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Creating a Wedding Day Schedule



Wedding days can be hectic. In fact, many couples note after tying the knot that their wedding days were so busy that the ceremonies and receptions were over before they knew it.

Creating a wedding day schedule can seem like a daunting task. Couples tend to have lots of things to do before saying “I do,” and organizing everything so ceremonies begin on time can seem as puzzling as a brain teaser. But certain scheduling strategies can help couples ensure they look their best and make it to the altar on time.

Start with the ceremony

Couples can establish a framework for their wedding day schedule by working back from the ceremony. Once the ceremony time is set, couples who plan to take photos before their ceremonies can then work with their photographers to determine how much time they will need for photos and where they want to take the photos. Bridal parties may need transportation to the photo session, so determining when and where to take photos before the ceremony gives couples an idea of when to arrange for pickup.

Confirm when the wedding venue is open to the wedding party. Before booking hair and makeup appointments, couples should confirm when they will be able to access their wedding venue. Brides may want to get their

hair and makeup done at the ceremony sight, but that may only be possible if the venue opens early for the wedding party. If it does not, then brides must account for transportation time to the ceremony sight when making their wedding day schedules.

Determine how much time is needed for hair and makeup

Weddings that feature large bridal parties will require more time for hair and makeup than ceremonies with small bridal parties. Grooms and groomsmen often take care of their own hair, though some grooms might want to schedule hot shaves for themselves and their groomsmen. Grooms should ask groomsmen if they want a hot shave and then work with their barbers to determine how much time it will take to tend to all participants. Brides with large bridal parties may need to book more than two hair and makeup artists so everyone can get done on time. Wedding hair and makeup sessions can last several hours for large bridal parties, so brides should schedule their sessions early if their parties are big.

Make lunch arrangements

Some couples choose to tie the knot and host their receptions at the same venue. In such instances, if brides are getting their hair and makeup done at the venue, ask the venue representative if lunch can be provided to the bridal party. Some venues

may include small lunch buffets in their reception costs, while others might charge extra. Confirm the availability and costs, and if it's unavailable or too expensive, then arrange for lunch to be delivered. Either way, couples should not skip lunch, as it may be their only chance to eat until after the ceremony.

Distribute your schedule to one another and the bridal party

Once the wedding day schedule has been devised, couples should share it with each other and their wedding parties. Grooms'

wedding day to-do lists might not be as extensive as brides', but grooms should still be kept in the loop regarding the schedule so they can help if anyone has questions or if something goes awry. Sharing the schedule with the wedding party decreases the chances of someone being late or missing an appointment.

Couples can solve the riddle of scheduling their wedding days by working backwards and asking their vendors to cooperate in laying out the day's events.



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Choosing a Wedding Reception Menu

Weddings are memorable for a host of reasons. While couples remember their weddings because they mark the day they officially tied the knot, guests may remember weddings for other reasons, including the food served at the reception.

Some wedding venues are known for their stunning landscapes, while others build their reputations on unique interiors that provide unforgettable ambiance. But regardless of where weddings take place, guests are liable to discuss the food served at the reception. Guests might rave about the escargot or complain that the fish was flaky, but couples who choose reception menus wisely can go a long way toward ensuring there are more compliments than complaints once the dinner bell rings.

Don't zero in on specialties

According to The Knot 2017 Real Weddings Study, a survey of nearly 13,000 brides and grooms who tied the knot in 2017, the average wedding hosted 136 guests. While couples might be tempted by specialty dishes when choosing their wedding menus, couples who are hosting dozens, if not hundreds, of guests should keep things simple.

Consider potential allergies

In regard to entrées, make sure guests with food allergies can choose something that won't make them sick. According to Food Allergy Research & Education®, an organization devoted to improving the quality of life of individuals with food allergies, some common foods cause the majority of allergic reactions. Peanuts, soy,

sesame, and shellfish are among the most common food allergies, according to FARE®. FARE also notes that allergies to wheat, milk and eggs are common in children. While such foods can still be served at wedding receptions, make sure to also include foods that are unlikely to trigger allergic reactions. Couples can even ask guests to inform them of any food allergies.

Don't hesitate to offer a favorite food

While specialty entrées might not be a great choice, especially at large receptions where lots of mouths must be fed, a couple who has a favorite food that's symbolic of their relationship should not hesitate to offer it during the cocktail hour. For example, a couple who met in Thailand may want to offer a favorite Thai dish.

Offer an elaborate dessert

The last bite guests will take is dessert, so couples who want their guests to go home raving about the food may want to offer something special after the entrées have been taken away. Some guests may not indulge, but those who do might end their nights thinking about the delicious dessert they enjoyed as the festivities drew to a close. If the dessert is especially unique, offer something more traditional alongside it for more hesitant guests.

Choosing a wedding menu should be fun. Menus should reflect not only couples' tastes but also include some popular foods so no one goes home hungry.

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Get Schooled on Wedding Terminology

Couples about to embark on their wedding journeys will likely learn a thing or two about party planning once their engagements are over and they are newly married. Wedding planning can seem overwhelming and a tad confusing at times, but a crash course in wedding terminology can help couples make more informed choices along the way.

Blusher

A short, single-layer veil that covers the bride's face before the ceremony.

Boutonnière

A single flower bud worn by the men in the bridal party.

Canapés

Bite-sized appetizers served during the cocktail hour of a reception.

Civil ceremony

A marriage ceremony conducted by a council official or justice of the peace at a municipal location rather than in a house of worship.

Cocktail hour

Typically an hour-long interlude between the wedding ceremony and the main dinner of the reception. Guests have time to arrive and mingle before being seated.

Corkage fee

A fee some establishments charge to allow guests to bring their own wine.

Dais

A podium or platform raised from the floor where the bride and groom are seated.

Deposit

A percentage of the total cost of service given to a vendor to secure a date for their services.

Dragées

Round, small edible balls of sugar that appear on wedding cakes.

Escort (seating) cards

Printed cards that direct reception guests to their seats.

Fondant

A sweet, pliable product used to decoratively cover layered cakes. It can be used in lieu of straight buttercream.

Handle wrap

Ribbon or fabric that wraps around the stems of a bouquet the bride and wedding party carries.

Maid/matron of honor

The title given to the woman who assists the bride and stands closest to her at the altar. "Maids" are those who are unmarried, while "matrons" are women who are.

Master of ceremonies

An individual who will work with the DJ or band to announce the various components of the wedding reception.

Nosegay

A small bouquet or flower arrangement typically given to the mothers of the bride and groom before the ceremony.

Processional/Recessional

Musical pieces that mark the entrance and exit from the wedding ceremony.

Receiving line

A line of the key people in the wedding who welcome and greet guests.

Stationery

All of the paper products used at the wedding, including invitations, programs and enclosures.

Tablescape

A word that describes the multiple components of centerpiece designs.

Learning some basic wedding terminology can simplify wedding planning.



How to Build Your Wedding Budget

Couples engaged to be married have a lot on their plates as they begin planning their weddings. Whereas tradition once demanded parents of the bride pay for a couples wedding, nowadays more and more engaged couples are completely or partially financing their own nuptials. That means prospective brides and grooms must develop wedding budgets that won't ensure their first act as Mr. and Mrs. is paying down debt.

In its Real Weddings Study, online bridal resource

The Knot found that many couples still receive substantial financial support from their parents to pay for their weddings. The survey found that, on average, the bride's parents contributed 44 percent of the overall wedding budget, while couples financed 43 percent (the remaining 13 percent was financed by the groom's parents and additional sources). Couples who hope to follow that formula or pay for their weddings on their own can heed the following tips to build wedding budgets that won't break

the bank but will still ensure a day to remember forever.

Examine your collective finances

Few couples know the details of each other's finances before getting engaged. While some may still hesitate to share their personal financial information upon getting engaged, an open and honest discussion and examination of each persons finances is the only way to develop a realistic wedding budget that both partners can live with. Once couples know what they can contribute, they can then consult their parents to determine if their mothers and fathers are intending to contribute.

Develop a preliminary guest list

A preliminary guest list can give couples an idea of how large and expensive their weddings will be. According to the Real Weddings Study, the average cost per wedding guest is \$237. While that cost can vary greatly depending on geography and other factors, couples should keep that figure in mind when drafting their guest lists. If need be, keep costs down by trimming the guest list so it includes only close family members and friends.

Don't count on gifts

Many couples justify runaway wedding budgets by telling themselves that they will ultimately get the money back via wedding gifts. While many guests will

give financial gifts, counting on such windfalls is a recipe for accruing debt. Do not build potential wedding gifts into your wedding budget. If you do so and your expectations fall short, you could be facing considerable debt upon returning home from your honeymoon.

Gather quotes

Where couples get married will have a great impact on how much money they will spend on their weddings. For example, the Real Weddings Study found that the average wedding in Manhattan cost couples slightly more than \$82,000, while the average Alaskan wedding cost just over \$17,000. Venues within the same city can vary greatly with regard to pricing and offerings as well, so couples should give themselves ample time to gather quotes and find an affordable venue they like.

Build extra costs into your budget

When determining a budget you can live with, remember to include a little extra for unforeseen costs. Weddings are large undertakings, and it's reasonable to expect some unforeseen costs to arise. Building such costs into your initial budget will make these unforeseen circumstances that much easier to handle.

Budgets can help couples stay on track and avoid debt as they plan their weddings.

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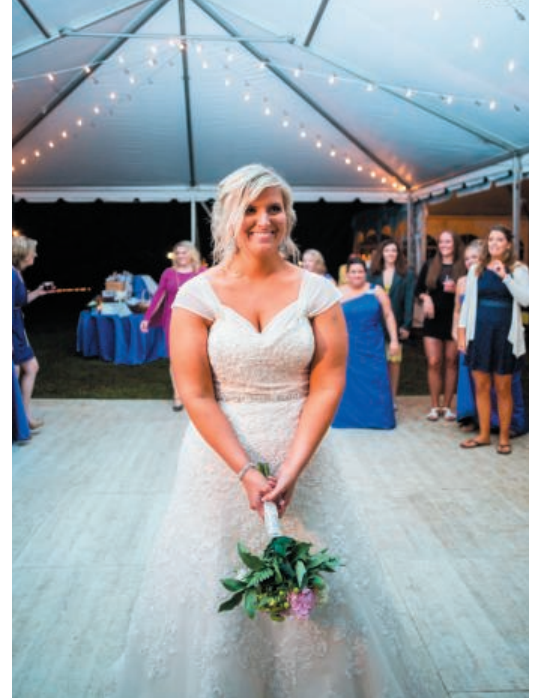
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Get the Most Out of Bridal Shows & Wedding Events



Recently engaged couples may be excited to get a jump on wedding planning. Bridal shows can be a great way for couples to meet and familiarize themselves with local wedding professionals, all the while introducing themselves to the terminology of wedding planning.

Though they're a great source of information, contacts and samples, bridal shows also can be a bit overwhelming. Learning how to maximize time spent at shows can help couples plan their weddings as efficiently as possible.

Pre-register

Pre-registering for bridal events saves time at check-in, and doing so may make you eligible for discounted tickets.

Start small

If the idea of large crowds is unappealing, attend the more intimate, boutique shows that are often held at local reception halls and restaurants

instead of the larger installations at convention centers and hotels.

Scout out vendors

Check the bridal show's website for lists of exhibitors and see if your desired vendors are on the list. But even if they're not, keep an open mind and use the show as a chance to compare offerings. If an event map is available, marking off must-visit booths can help save time.

Come prepared

Chances are each vendor is going to ask couples for information so that they can follow up with a phone call or email with more detailed offerings and estimates. Couples attending the show can expediate the process by coming equipped with labels that feature their names, contact information and wedding date. They can then stick the labels on sign-in sheets or use them like business cards.

Dress comfortably

Bridal expos involve a lot of walking and roaming around. Wear comfortable clothing and shoes. Consider a backpack or hands-free bag so you are not weighed down when collecting the swag and other handouts throughout the day.

Ask questions

When face-to-face with vendors, rely on their expertise but don't hesitate to ask questions concerning themes, colors, recommendations for honeymoon locations, invitation paper suggestions, and much more.

Stay for the fashion show

Many shows will offer a runway experience to present the latest gown and tuxedo offerings. This can be an entertaining way for couples to formulate their wedding styles.

Wedding shows introduce couples to vendors and set them on the path to making decisions regarding the planning of their weddings.

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How to Handle Rain on Your Wedding Day

Brides and grooms fear the prospects of rainy wedding days. But even couples who have contended with everything from a few drops to an all-out deluge on their wedding days look back fondly on the ceremonies and receptions. In fact, how couples handle any precipitation can affect how happy the festivities may be.

Have a rainy day game plan

Rain affects outdoor weddings more than any other type of ceremony or reception. If the goal is to exchange vows outdoors, work with the venue to make this possible with a tent or gazebo. However, if the weather is especially foul and windy, move it indoors.

Invest in golf umbrellas

Couples who live in notoriously damp climates can purchase golf umbrellas, which tend to be larger than the average umbrella, and keep them

stationed in decorated stands to ease transitions between wedding sites and keep everyone as dry as possible.

Wear waterproof cosmetics

Women in the bridal party, including the bride, can ask their makeup artists to use durable, waterproof products. This can help salvage beautifully composed looks should some drops begin to fall.

Know vendors' rain policies

Some live musicians will not play in damp weather. Florists may need to make accommodations for arrangements blowing in the wind. Couples need to understand what they're responsible for and what may be covered if a weather event occurs. Wedding insurance may help cover the costs of nonrefundable cancellations.

Move past it quickly

It is okay to get upset if the weather turns for the worse. But don't dwell on it. Guests will sense negative energy, and couples should set the tone of sticking it through despite a little adversity — which can be a good lesson for the marriage as well.

Embrace the rain

While a couple probably won't wish for rain, there are some benefits to overcast skies, say the wedding professionals at Brides magazine. Flowers are less likely to wilt in rainy conditions. In the absence of bright sunlight, outdoor photographs can really pop. Rain is romantic and may compel couples and their guests to cuddle close.

Don't let rain on a wedding day become a drag. With preparation and perspective, couples can handle rainy wedding days.

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___ ENTERTAINMENT

___ FAVORS

12% PHOTO & VIDEO _____

___ PHOTOGRAPHER

___ VIDEOGRAPHER

___ ENGAGEMENT PHOTOS

12% FLOWERS & DECOR _____

___ CEREMONY FLOWERS

___ RECEPTION FLOWERS

___ CENTERPIECES

___ BOUQUETS & BOUTONNIERES

3% MISCELLANEOUS _____

___ GIFTS

___ PARKING/TRANSPORTATION

___ CUSHION

3% CEREMONY _____

___ MARRIAGE LICENSE

___ OFFICIANT FEES

___ CEREMONY VENUE

___ CEREMONY MUSICIANS

12% ATTIRE _____

___ WEDDING DRESS

___ ALTERATIONS

___ TUXEDO

___ WEDDING RINGS

___ ACCESSORIES

___ HAIR & MAKEUP

8% PLANNER _____

___ WEDDING PLANNER

___ DAY-OF COORDINATION

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Live Wedding Music

Booking a live band for a wedding or another special event can be a great idea. The atmosphere live musicians can provide is unmatched. Live musicians offer a level of excitement that may not be met by other musical options. But some couples may find the prospect of booking live entertainment a bit challenging, especially if they've never hired musicians for an event before. Here are some tips to make the process go smoothly.

Get recommendations

Just like you might before booking other vendors, seek advice from friends or family members who have recently gotten hitched or had live performers at their events. They may have wonderful things to say about

particular bands or performers. Individuals also can consider a resource such as HireLiveMusicians.com, a global musician database that can help couples narrow down their options.

Decide on when the musicians play

Live musicians can entertain guests throughout the ceremony and reception, but the longer musicians play, the more they're likely to cost. Work with musicians to develop a schedule that suits your budget.

Discuss the theme

Make sure musicians understand the type of atmosphere you're hoping to create. A band that customarily plays swing or big-band era songs may not fit in at weddings with more modern themes.

Understand the fees

Musicians may have fees related to their agents, cartage (extra given to musicians who carry large equipment), mileage costs, travel time, lighting, and other factors that affect the overall price. Discuss these fees before signing any agreements.

Be sure the venue fits

Live musicians are great but not if the space is too small. Otherwise, the music can be too loud and overpowering, or the band will not have adequate space to set up. Consider these factors before making any decisions.



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