

Wedding Checklist

At Least One Year in Advance

First decide on the basics...

- Choose wedding date
- Decide type of wedding desired (traditional, big/small, etc.)
- Determine what religion the service will be performed in, if any
- Decide time of wedding and reception
- Choose desired location for wedding ceremony
- Choose desired location for reception
- Set wedding budget and decide how wedding will be financed

Then hire the individuals from whom you will need their services on the wedding day...

- See if ceremony and reception locations are available and book them
- Choose/hire individual who will perform your wedding ceremony if this is not included with your choice of ceremony site
- Interview/Choose photographer and then book him/her
- Interview/Choose Videographer and then book him/her
- Interview/Choose Florist and then book him/her
- Interview/Choose Baker (for cake) and then book him/her
- Decide type of music desired for reception, if any
- Interview/Choose Band/DJ for reception and then book him/her/them
- Choose reception format: buffet or sit-down dinner etc.
- Interview/Choose caterer and then book him/her/them

Ten to Twelve Months in Advance

- Ensure home/renter's insurance covers engagement ring or buy additional jewelry insurance
- Determine a color scheme for the wedding/reception if desired
- Decide if all/part/any of vows will be written by bride/groom
- Decide how large/small wedding party will be
- Choose/order wedding dress and veil
- Buy wedding shoes
- Buy undergarments for wedding attire (need prior to fittings)
- Begin looking at invitations
- Set honeymoon budget
- Announce engagement to friends and family
- Put engagement announcement in local paper

Six to Ten Months in Advance

- Decide if unity candle ceremony is desired
- First meeting with minister/officiant
- Begin writing vows
- Choose ceremony music (prelude, processional, solos, recessional, postlude, etc.)
- Choose and hire soloist(s) for ceremony/reception/rehearsal dinner
- Choose attendants and ask if they'll accept the position
- Begin looking for bridesmaid dresses
- Pick out tuxes for groom and groomsmen/ushers/fathers
- Choose/book desired location for rehearsal dinner
- Look for and book (reserve) block of rooms at nearby hotel for out-of-town guests
- Choose invitations
- Decide if programs and/or personalized napkins will be purchased and select them
- Make first draft of invite list
- Get directions to church, from church to reception, and from church to rehearsal dinner
- Make list of attractions/things to do (in town where wedding is) to include with directions
- Plan honeymoon and book all lodgings/transportation/event tickets
- Check passports/visas
- Discuss if a bridal registry is desired and what items would be on it
- Choose china/crystal/flatware/cookware patterns for bridal registry if desired

Four to Six Months in Advance

- Make appointment for bridal portrait
- Make hair/nail appointment for bridal portrait
- Choose prose/poetry/scripture readings for ceremony
- Choose readers for ceremony and ask if they'll accept the position
- Ask minister if it matters which version of the Bible (King James, Good News, etc.) you use for the scripture reading
- Find out from minister if flower girl can drop flower petals on floor in sanctuary
- Find out from reception hall if guests can throw birdseed or rice
- Decide how you want your exit at the reception/ceremony (guests throwing birdseed, etc. or just a casual exit?)
- Buy/make favors to give guests, if desired
- Buy/make centerpieces for guest tables at reception
- Order bridesmaid dresses
- Hire limo driver or arrange other transportation to/from ceremony and reception
- Buy wedding attire accessories such as gloves, earrings, necklace, purse, shoes, cufflinks, etc.
- Pick out/order wedding bands
- Select reception decorations such as candles, flowers, balloons, arches, etc.
- Meet with florist to choose amount and type of flowers for ceremony and reception and any other accessories (ex. pew bows, candleabras, etc)
- Ask mothers if they want to wear a flower corsage or carry a single flower instead and inform florist
- Decide if roses will be given to the mothers at the end of/during the ceremony
- Buy/make basket for flower girl
- Buy/make pillow for ringbearer
- Meet with baker to choose flavor(s) and style of wedding cake
- Decide if a groom's cake is desired; if so, choose flavor and style and inform baker
- Make/print directions and map for ceremony and reception to include with all wedding invitations
- Make/print maps to rehearsal dinner to include with rehearsal dinner invitations and send to groom's mom (if his parents are hosting rehearsal dinner)
- Make 2nd draft of invite list
- Register gift preferences with one or more bridal registries at nearby and/or nationwide store
- Get measurements from groom/ushers/fathers/groomsmen for tuxedos

Three to Four Months in Advance

- Confirm bridal portrait appointment
- Confirm hair/nail appointments for bridal portrait
- Determine how many disposable cameras should be purchased, if any
- Write/choose disposable camera poems if desired
- First wedding gown fitting
- Sign up to donate ceremony centerpiece to flowers for Sunday's service, if desired
- Buy/make birdseed roses/birdseed packets/bubbles/etc.
- Decide on living arrangement once married

Two to Four Months in Advance

- Choose soloist's song(s) and get soloist's approval to perform them
- Mail/take music to soloist
- Buy disposable cameras
- Get bridal portrait taken
- Determine wedding band inscriptions
- Choose reception food
- Design program layout (or have a printer do it)
- Determine reception layout (i.e. how many tables, chairs, etc.)
- Determine seating arrangement at reception if it's a sit-down dinner
- Determine seating arrangement at rehearsal dinner with groom's mother if desired
- Determine who will put suitcases in limo at reception
- Determine how attendants will process and stand at ceremony
- Choose reception music (1st dance, father/daughter dance, mother/son dance etc.)
- Find out if smoking is allowed at reception hall and how to prevent it if desired
- Make rough draft of list of duties of all involved (Mistress of Ceremonies, etc.)
- Finalize vows and memorize (if necessary)
- Make sure flower girl dress is purchased
- Make sure the mother's dresses are purchased and are complimentary
- Determine length of bridesmaid dresses
- Determine hose color and shoes for bridesmaids
- Bride buy gifts for bridesmaids, parents, fiance, personal attendant
- Groom buy gifts for groomsmen, parents, fiance, ushers
- Buy gifts with fiance for Mistress of Ceremonies, Host/Hostess, soloist, guest book attendant, etc.
- Schedule bride's hair appointment
- Schedule nail appointment
- Finalize invite list
- Get addresses of all people on invite list
- Ask groom's mother if she wants rehearsal dinner invitations and/or place cards matching invitations
- Order invitations
- Order programs
- Order monogrammed napkins for reception if desired
- Reserve rental items: candelabra, linens, canopy, tables/chairs, etc.
- Set date with fiance to get marriage license (check restrictions on how long it's valid prior to wedding)
- Get blood tests/physicals for marriage certificate if required
- Get any immunizations you will need for the honeymoon

Two Months in Advance

- Schedule groom's hair appointment
- Give soloist's music to organist (if he/she is accompanying)
- Book rooms for out-of-town attendants at hotel
- Go over rough draft of duties with all involved in wedding
- Choose one person to whom the groomsmen can return their tuxes, and have that person return the tuxes to the rental place if desired
- Determine who will return the groom's tuxedo to the rental place
- Determine order/timing of events at reception (cake-cutting, garter toss, etc.)
- Second wedding gown fitting
- Buy honeymoon clothes and going away outfit if necessary
- Buy/decide on rehearsal/rehearsal dinner outfit
- Put invitation to wedding ceremony in church newsletter
- Determine the "something borrowed, ...blue, ...old, and ...new" to wear on wedding day
- Acquire six pence for shoe
- Get wedding bands inscribed
- Get final order of prelude and processional music from organist
- Hire babysitter to watch any children during wedding ceremony
- Call to inform all people who need to be at rehearsal
- Buy guest book and pen
- Obtain marriage certificate
- Last meeting with minister/officiant
- Determine where bride and attendants will get dressed (at home/hotel or ceremony site?)
- Determine where groom and attendants will get dressed (at hotel or ceremony site?)
- Buy/make throw and keepsake garters
- Buy wrapping paper for attendant, etc. gifts
- Make itinerary of wedding day for all involved
- Choose songs for video (background music for intro/pre-wedding)
- Buy stamps for invitations, response cards, and some to get started on thank-you notes
- Ensure formal-wear shop has all tuxedo measurements
- Give addresses of rehearsal guests to groom's mother if she is mailing rehearsal invites

One to One-and-a-Half Months in Advance

- Address/mail wedding invitations

One Month in Advance

- Ask florist if you can keep/buy unity candles if he/she is providing them
- Order flower arrangements for rehearsal dinner tables if desired
- Find out if reception caterers will make a basket of food for you to take to your hotel after reception
- Determine who will be in the limo (i.e. just newlyweds or attendants/parents too??)
- Determine when items needed at reception (toasting glasses, etc.) will be taken there
- Show final program to minister and organist to check for accuracy
- Box and wrap all gifts for attendants, etc.
- Decide if gown will be preserved and where
- Decide if bouquet will be preserved and make arrangements
- Figure out how to affix six pence to shoe
- Print disposable camera poems
- Ensure band/DJ has equipment/music needed to play your chosen reception music
- Ensure groom's mom has addressed/mailed rehearsal dinner invitations if his parents are hosting it
- Pick up wedding bands
- Ensure home/renter's insurance covers wedding bands or buy additional jewelry insurance
- Confirm honeymoon reservations
- Check registries to make sure shower gifts and/or early wedding gifts have been marked off as purchased
- Record gifts as you receive them and send thank-you notes
- Open joint checking and savings accounts
- Change beneficiary to fiancé for will and life insurance policy
- Inform car/home/renter's insurance of marriage (discounted rates may apply)
- Make list of all places with whom bride needs to change name and submit changes

Two Weeks in Advance

- Final meeting with florist - overview and give him/her map to ceremony and reception sites
- Final meeting with reception hall/caterer - overview and tell them names of florist, band or DJ, and baker (just in case!)
- Final meeting with videographer - overview, give him/her music and map
- Final meeting with photographer - tell him/her about any specific pictures you want, choose album style and color, and give him/her map
- Final conversation with band - overview of times & special songs, mail him/her/their map
- Mail directions to limo driver and confirm times
- Meet with rehearsal dinner caterers for final details
- Print programs
- Print rehearsal dinner maps (extras in case guests forget map that came with dinner invite)
- Finalize and print list of duties for each person involved
- Print itinerary of wedding day (copies for all at rehearsal)
- Print readings and spare copies
- Confirm nail/hair appointments
- Print list of reception dances for MC/band/DJ
- Final wedding gown fitting
- Affix poems to disposable cameras
- Confirm hotel reservations for wedding night
- Confirm hotel reservations for attendants
- Determine personal wedding morning itinerary (time to wake up, ... time to leave for church, etc.)
- Groom's hair appointment
- Submit wedding announcement to local newspaper for publishing day or weekend of wedding
- Move belongings to new home

One Week in Advance

- Make bride's emergency kit
- Pack for honeymoon
- Get traveler's checks for honeymoon; exchange money to foreign currency now if desired
- Fill out first page of guest book
- Buy spare hose
- Fill birdseed roses
- Remind attendants about rehearsal time
- Take marriage certificate to minister/officiant
- Give best man the clergyman's fee (if to be paid day of ceremony, otherwise pay this week)
- Finish centerpieces for guest tables at reception if it's a last minute duty (i.e. need fresh flowers, etc.)
- Give final guest count to reception facility and/or caterer
- Remind groom/fathers/ushers/groomsmen to pick up tuxedos on day before wedding
- Ensure delivery of flower arrangements for wedding rehearsal dinner have been made

Day Before Wedding

- Pick up wedding gown and veil
- Pick up tux
- Take favors, disposable cameras, centerpieces, cake knife and server, toasting glasses, CD's, and birdseed roses to reception hall
- Nail appointment
- Give mom lipstick to keep in purse on wedding day for bride (or prepare bride's purse)
- Rehearsal and rehearsal dinner

Morning of Wedding

- Bride's hair appointment
- Give groom's wedding band to Maid of Honor and bride's wedding band to Best Man prior to ceremony
- Relax and let it all sink in!!
- Leave yourself off the things to do list today if there are any remaining items. You need to relax and enjoy the whole day, and in the long run, you won't remember the little things.