

YOUR WEDDING PLANNING TIMELINE

our guide to planning your dream wedding

UP TO A YEAR OUT

date: ___ / ___ / ___

MUSTS

- Pick a date!
- Work out a budget: Determine what you have to spend and how much you can designate to certain aspects of your wedding.
- Pick your wedding party: As soon as all your friends see your gorgeous ring they will be dying to know who made the cut!
- Choose and reserve your wedding and reception venue(s): Remember to ask about liability insurance.
- Start making a guest list: This will give you plenty of time to make edits as the rest of your planning process proceeds. If you've already chosen your venue it can help determine how many guests you're able to invite.
- Book your officiant—that is—the person performing the wedding ceremony.
- Research photographers, bands, florists, and caterers: Keep track of your searches and contact information.
- Insure your engagement ring: Although nothing can replace the sentiment of your engagement ring, there is peace of mind in knowing that you can get your money back if something happens to it. Call your existing insurance provider to add the ring to your policy.

MAYBES

- Start a wedding binder or Pinterest board: Clip or pin ideas for inspiration.
- Think about having an engagement party: Remember that anyone invited to this party normally gets a wedding invite as well. These parties are usually hosted by parents of either the bride or the groom.
- Hire a wedding planner: Wedding planners make the entire wedding planning process a whole lot easier. From the biggest decisions to the tiniest detail, they will be able to help you every step of the way from concept to completion.
- Look into pre-marital counseling: Counseling does not mean you have problems. Pre-marital counseling is helpful in building a foundation for a life together. It's a great way to invest in your marriage before ever saying "I do."

EIGHT MONTHS TO GO

date: ___ / ___ / ___

MUSTS

- Hire a photographer and/or videographer: At this point, you'll want to secure the people you want for the dates you want. Be sure to schedule a date for engagement photos; these can be used for your save the dates.
- Secure the entertainment: If you're wanting a live band or a DJ, get them nailed down for your wedding date and begin compiling a list of songs that you would like played at the reception (including first dance songs, and other songs for particular moments of the wedding).
- Explore catering options: Most caterers will offer tastings to let you sample their food items. Consider guest preferences and options for those with dietary restrictions as you plan the menu.
- Purchase the dress: The average wedding dress takes 7—8 months to come in after you purchase it. Allow extra time for fittings and alterations as it gets closer to your wedding day.
- Choose a dress for your bridesmaids: Bridesmaid dresses can also take a while to come in after purchasing so allow plenty of time for arrival and last minute alterations. Remember, the more friends you have, the more time you should set aside to make sure each dress comes in or is altered correctly.
- Reserve block rooms for your out-of-town guests: Most hotels give special rates for wedding guests if you choose to reserve block rooms. Nevertheless, give your guests options by selecting at least two hotels in different price ranges. Make sure both are generally close to your wedding venue.
- Register for gifts: Again, choose a couple of different places to accommodate guests of all budgets.

MAYBES

- Start (or continue) a healthy diet and exercise regimen: You want to be healthy and glowing on your big day!
- Create your wedding website: Your wedding website can be a great way to stay organized while keeping your friends and family informed about wedding details as they develop.
- Send "Save the Date" cards.
- Submit your engagement photo to your local paper for an engagement announcement.

SIX MONTHS TO GO

date: ___ / ___ / ___

MUSTS

- Select and purchase invitations: Allow time for addressing—this can be time-consuming. Make sure to include a deadline for when all accepted invitations must be returned.
- Start planning a honeymoon: Contact a local travel agent for the best destination deals. Consider signing up for a honeymoon registry, this allows your family and friends to send a monetary gift that will help you pay for your honeymoon trip.
- Meet with your wedding officiant to go over the ceremony and confirm details. Consider placement of important documents and pacing of ceremony events.
- Book a florist: Before you go, have your color palette already selected and try to go in with

an idea of what types of flowers you want. What you end up with should be a combination of what you like and the professional's opinion. Be aware that flowers can be expensive (and seasonal) so go in with a budget!

- Arrange transportation: Think about how you will be getting place to place—from airport to hotel to ceremony/reception venue. Also consider whether or not you and your spouse will want special vehicles that require in-advance booking.

MAYBES

- Develop a working schedule for the wedding day that you can share with those involved.
- Look into dance classes.

FOUR MONTHS TO GO

date: ___ / ___ / ___

MUSTS

- Book a rehearsal dinner venue: You'll want to discuss who will cover what expenses here.
- Visit bakeries: Begin sampling and tasting cakes so you have an idea of what you like. We doubt we need to give you too much of a push to get this task taken care of. #Yum
- Begin dress fittings: Be sure to have your wedding-day shoes with you as you will need these to make accurate alterations.
- Order groom and groomsmen clothing, and schedule fittings.
- Schedule hair and make-up professionals. Think about having them come to you at your wedding location. Have a sample hair and make-up trial done so that you can determine the palette and style you want for your big day.

- Begin thinking about first dance songs. Choose a song that has a special meaning to you and your fiancé.

MAYBES

- Think about cultural traditions from either family to include in the festivities. Ask your parents what traditions are important to them and why. You don't have to implement all the traditions that people voice, but it is special to know what matters to them and why.
- Look into wedding insurance.

THREE MONTHS TO GO

date: ___ / ___ / ___

MUSTS

- Finalize menu and flowers.
- Order wedding favors or wedding party gifts.
- Plan toasts and readings: Who is doing what?
- Print wedding programs.
- Purchase wedding rings.
- Send your wedding day schedule to the vendors so you can all be on the same page.

MAYBES

- Print reception menus.
- Begin thinking about merging bank accounts, adding your spouse-to-be to your health insurance, etc.

TWO MONTHS TO GO

date: ___ / ___ / ___

MUSTS

- Take bridal portraits and discuss wedding photography preferences with your photographer.
- Make sure your band or DJ has your music preferences. Look over the sample playlists they have created for your day and revise as needed.
- Mail out your invitations and await the replies.

- Submit a wedding announcement to your local paper.
- Enjoy shower(s) and/or bachelor(ette) parties. Usually the wedding party takes the lead on these occasions.

ONE MONTH TO GO

date: ___ / ___ / ___

MUSTS

- Keep up with RSVPs and your guest list. Tally up the number of guests that have RSVP'd already and begin to send those numbers to your wedding coordinator or vendors.
- Get a marriage license. These are usually available at your County Clerk's office.
- Go to your last dress fitting! Remember your wedding shoes and undergarments.
- Send rehearsal dinner invitations. This is usually an event hosted by the groom's family, but if you're doing it yourself, you'll need to make sure this happens.
- Confirm times for all vendors.
- Buy thoughtful gifts for the wedding party and close family members.
- Pick out wedding day jewelry.
- Get your hair cut and colored. Don't do anything too drastic or new if you're unsure how it will turn out!
- Write thank you notes for shower gifts.

MAYBES

- Assign reception seating.
- Write vows, if not using traditional ones.
- Plan a bridesmaid luncheon or brunch.

WEEK OF THE WEDDING

date: ___ / ___ / ___

MUSTS

- Touch base with vendors and wedding party about times and places; give a final head count.
- Make a reservation for a pedicure, manicure, waxing, etc.
- Send final numbers to caterer/venue owner.
- Wear your wedding shoes for a few hours each day to break them in.
- Don't forget to pack for the honeymoon!

MAYBES

- Schedule a facial and/or massage to ensure you are relaxed and feeling fresh for your wedding. Be sure not to do something harsh that may leave you with reddened skin! This goes for eyebrows, too.
- Make and deliver gift baskets for out-of-town guests.
- Have your something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue all together.
- Plan one last romantic date with your fiancé before you say "I do"!

