

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO START PLANNING YOUR WEDDING

You said, “Yes!”

Congratulations! You no longer have to catch any bouquets while dancing to ‘*Single Ladies*.’ The day the love of your life proposes is genuinely one of the most beautiful moments you can experience. There are tears of joy and excitement, phone calls to loved ones to share the news, and a rose-colored view of life and the future. But once the dust settles and the ring is sized, reality kicks in--“Have you guys picked a date yet?” “So, when is the big day?” “Is it a Spring wedding? A Summer wedding?”--the questions start pouring in, and it’s time to make a plan.

Step One: Planning the First Steps

There’s so much that needs to be done after the proposal that you may not even know where to start, but don’t worry, we’ve got you covered! If you’re struggling to figure out your first move, take a look at the [top 10 things you need to do right away](#) (and yes, figuring out the wedding budget is one of those). One of the first things you’ll want to do is announce your engagement to your family and friends—you don’t want them all finding out about it from some third party, so you’d better get right on it! Here’s some advice on [how to announce the big news](#).

In all your excitement, it may be easy to forget about the minor details, but trust me, taking good care of that pretty new ring of yours is nothing insignificant! Here are some must-have tips on [how to protect that brand-new piece of bling--And](#) don’t forget, your man needs a ring, too! Here are [7 Tips for Buying your groom’s wedding band](#).

Now, those are just a few of the basics, but we’re just getting started!

Type A ladies – this is the moment you’ve been waiting for. Time to brush off those Excel skills and get to work on the wedding budget—but if Excel and you just don’t click, we’ve also got you covered with two super handy planning timelines!

Whether you've got [12 months](#) or [6 months](#) to plan your dream wedding, these planners are going to become your new best friend. Naturally, they come complete with boxes to check off each time you accomplish a planning milestone—and there is nothing more satisfying than that!

Your wedding day has a million moving parts, so if you're looking for more ways to stay exceptionally organized during the planning period, this [printable wedding day timeline](#) should be your planner or maid of honor's biggest supporter on the big day.

Want to read up on some more tips and tricks to plan a no-sweat wedding? We highly recommend these [wedding planning books](#) as well! P.S. This is the stage where you find a [wedding venue](#). So, get to searching!

Step Two: Figuring Out the Wedding Theme

A theme is more than just what color your bridesmaids will wear. The theme sets the whole tone and mood for the wedding—and it doesn't start *at* the wedding and on the day of. It starts months ahead, from the invitations to the programs, the registry website, and the place settings. Here's a handy guide on [how to choose your wedding colors](#). And if you are still on the fence, we have [hundreds of color combo inspiration boards](#) to peruse until you find *the one!*

Step Three: Creating Wedding Invitations

One of my favorite wedding details to look out for is the [Save the Date](#). I think it's so important to notify your loved ones early enough about your wedding plans so they can actually *save the date!* This is also your guests' first glimpse into your wedding vibe (see above), so be thoughtful about font and color.

After you've finalized your guest list, the next step is sending out the wedding invitations. Details are so important – here is [everything you want to include on your wedding invites](#).

Step Four: Pick Out Your Cake

Your wedding cake is a massive part of your wedding day and picking it out can be one of the most fun parts of the planning process! Still, you'll want to be sure to make the right decision. Your cake should be perfect for you *and* your partner. And as stunning as it may be, you'll want to make sure it tastes just as beautiful as it looks!

If possible, consider your guests' dietary restrictions when deciding which cake to go with. Are many of your guests vegan, or do they have a gluten-free diet? Maybe there are some diabetics who need sugar-free options or people with peanut allergies.

At the end of the day, it's your cake and your decision, but if you can accommodate your guests' needs while still finding a cake that exceeds your expectations, that's even better!

Either way, take your time selecting the right cake designer or pastry chef for you and take even more time performing taste tests. You'll remember every detail of your special day—including how wonderful the cake was!

Step Five: Booking Your Dream Team

It's essential to make sure you have the right professionals around to help out on your wedding day. You'll need to hire a photographer and videographer that you can trust to capture your extraordinary day, hairstylists and makeup artists, a caterer, a florist, and a DJ. At this stage, you should decide whether you want a live band to play at your wedding as well!

Make sure to take your time and decide who to hire very carefully—these are the professionals who are going to play a major part in making sure your wedding day is as seamless and stress-free as possible.

Step Six: Practice and Prepare

Another critical step to ensure your big day goes smoothly is practicing for it! You'll want to host a rehearsal dinner, which will help you figure out any possible issues with seating arrangements and allow your appointed friends and family members to practice their speeches.

Around this time, you should also be figuring out and finalizing transportation and accommodation for your guests. The last thing you need on your wedding day is one of your loved ones getting lost on the way to venue or finding out that they don't have a place to stay after the festivities.

Step Seven: Wedding Dress Shopping

Equal parts exciting and stressful, choosing your wedding dresses is undoubtedly one of the biggest moments of the wedding planning process. For most of us, it's a moment and a look we've been envisioning our whole lives. First things first – you have to determine the right silhouette for your gown. And be sure to avoid these common mistakes when you're shopping for the dress. When trying out different styles, make sure you consider veil lengths in the overall look. And if you're based in NYC, these are hands down the best bridal salons to visit!

Step Eight: Don't Forget Your Vows

Wedding planning is...A lot. Things can get pretty chaotic, and it can be challenging to find even a moment to breathe. With your mind constantly working in overdrive, it can be easy to forget things from time to time, too—but *make sure* you don't allow creating your wedding vows to slip your mind!

Your vows are one of the most important, and not to mention notable, parts of the whole wedding. Standing in front of all the people you love the most, looking into your partner's eyes, and expressing your deepest feelings for them right before you officially tie the knot—it's immensely romantic and may be the most memorable moment of the wedding for the two of you. So, it's important to make sure it's memorable for the *right* reason.

You don't want to stand at the altar stammering over your words as you attempt to wing it. Be sure to come prepared! Carve out some time to work on writing your vows, and consider hiring a professional to help you with them if you find it difficult to express yourself with words.

Step Nine: Don't Forget your Bridal Party Either

As most of us know, being in a bridal party is just as much a pain in the ass as it is an honor. So, make sure to be thoughtful when it comes to thinking about your friends and family who will be spending quite a lot of time and money adoring you over the next year. A lovely thing you can do right away is give them a nice gift when asking them to stand up on your big day. We love these Will You Be My Bridesmaid Ideas. And don't forget the gents – here are some Will You Be My Groomsmen Ideas. It's important to clearly establish Bridal Party Roles so that everyone knows their place – this eliminates a lot of drama ahead of time, trust us.

Now, you should have everything you need to get started in the epic story of planning your wedding. But it doesn't stop there--we have so much more inspiration to help you along your journey to the aisle. Check out our posts on the best in bridal fashion, draw inspiration from Real Weddings, and all the details in between. Happy planning!