



The 12-Month Wedding Planning *Checklist*

Every task, in the right order, at the right time — so you always know exactly what to do next. No panic, no 2 a.m. "did we forget the...?" moments.

HOW TO USE THIS

Work phase by phase, not all at once. Each phase covers a window of your countdown — finish the current phase before worrying about the next. Tick the boxes as you go; momentum is the whole point.

PLANNING WITH A PARTNER

Print two copies or share one. Every task here is written for a couple, not a solo planner — divide the list by who cares most about each item, and revisit the split monthly.

★ **Short engagement?** If your date is under 6 months away, do the starred items first, in order — they're the bookings that disappear fastest.

Adapt freely. Eloping, skipping a wedding party, no favors? Cross it out. This is a map, not a rulebook — the only required item is showing up.

01	The Foundation	12+ months out
02	Lock the Big Five	9–11 months out
03	Build the Day	6–8 months out
04	The Details	4–5 months out
05	Make It Official	2–3 months out
06	The Final Stretch	The last month
07	Week Of, Day Of & After	Showtime

The Foundation

Three decisions drive everything else: budget, guest count, venue. Make these first and every later choice gets easier.

- Celebrate. You're engaged — take two weeks before planning anything
- ★ Set your total budget and agree who's contributing what
- ★ Draft a rough guest count — it drives nearly every cost
- Pick your top three priorities as a couple (food? photos? party?)
- Choose a season, or two to three candidate dates
- Set up one planning system — app or spreadsheet, not sticky notes
- Create a dedicated wedding email for all vendor contact
- ★ Research and tour venues — popular ones book 12–18 months out
- ★ Book your venue and lock in your date
- Decide on a planner or day-of coordinator, and hire if using
- Start a private inspiration board — define your style and palette
- Consider wedding insurance once deposits start going out

Budget reality: venue + catering typically consume 40–50% of your total budget. Set those numbers before you fall in love with anything else.

Guest count before venue. Touring venues before you know your headcount is how couples end up paying for 60 empty seats — or cutting cousins in month nine.

Lock the Big Five

Photographer, caterer, entertainment, officiant, attire. The best vendors book a year out — this phase is a booking sprint.

- ★ Book your photographer (and videographer, if having one)
- ★ Book your caterer, if not included with the venue
- ★ Book entertainment — band, DJ, or both
- Book your officiant and discuss the ceremony you want
- Choose your wedding party and actually ask them
- ★ Start attire shopping — gowns take 6–9 months with alterations
- Launch your wedding website and collect guest addresses digitally
- Block hotel rooms for out-of-town guests
- Send save-the-dates (8–10 months out; earlier for destination)
- Book an engagement shoot — it doubles as a photographer trial run

Read every contract twice. Payment schedule, overtime rates, cancellation terms, and exactly who shows up on the day. "The team" is not a name.

Budget reality: photography + video usually run 10–15% of total. It's the only purchase that appreciates — the cake will be gone by 10 p.m.

Build the Day

The big anchors are booked. Now you fill in everything guests will see, taste, ride in, and dance to.

- Book your florist and share your palette and inspiration board
- Book hair and makeup artists
- Order wedding attire and schedule fittings
- Choose and order wedding party attire
- Book transportation — for you, and guests if needed
- Book rentals: tables, chairs, linens, lighting, dance floor
- ★ Plan the honeymoon — check passports and book time off work
- Build your gift registry (yes, people genuinely want one)
- Order invitations and any custom stationery
- Shape the ceremony with your officiant — readings, rituals, vows
- Book the rehearsal dinner venue
- Schedule pre-wedding events — shower, parties, welcome drinks

Passport check, today. Renewals can take months, and the name on your ticket must match your passport — book honeymoon travel in your current legal name.

Budget reality: flowers run 8-10% on average. In-season, locally grown stems can halve that without anyone noticing the difference.

The Details

Tastings, fittings, and the small decisions that make the day feel like yours. This is the fun part — schedule it like it is.

- Do your menu tasting and finalize food and bar selections
- Order the cake — after a tasting, obviously
- Buy your wedding bands
- First attire fitting
- Finalize honeymoon bookings and travel insurance
- Confirm wedding party attire is ordered and on schedule
- Arrange childcare or kids' entertainment, if children are invited
- Decide on favors and welcome bags — or confidently skip them
- Start drafting vows and choose ceremony music
- Decide: phones-out celebration or unplugged ceremony?

Permission to skip. Favors, matching robes, champagne walls — if a task exists only because you saw it online, it's optional. Guests remember food, music, and how you looked at each other.

Budget reality: this phase is where "small" spends snowball. Track every deposit in one place — surprise overspend almost never comes from the big vendors.

Make It Official

Invitations out, license sorted, run sheet drafted. The day starts becoming real on paper.

- ★ Send invitations 8-10 weeks out; set RSVPs due 4 weeks before
- ★ Apply for your marriage license — check your region's validity window
- Write your vows (start now; future-you will be busy)
- Hair and makeup trial — photograph the results in daylight
- Lock the reception playlist and the do-not-play list
- Draft the day-of run sheet with your venue, DJ, and photographer
- Give the photographer a short must-have shot list and key people
- Order signage, menus, and place cards
- Start the seating chart as RSVPs arrive — don't wait for the last one
- Confirm honeymoon documents, visas, and arrangements

The seating chart is diplomacy, not decor. Do it in drafts as RSVPs land. Doing it in one sitting the week before is how feuds get seated together.

Budget reality: build a buffer of 5-10% for the final month — last fittings, extra rentals, and gratuities always cost more than the plan says.

The Final Stretch

Confirm everything, pay everyone, delegate ruthlessly. Your only day-of job is getting married.

- Chase missing RSVPs — you will have to, so plan for it
- ★ Give the final guest count to your caterer and venue
- Finalize the seating chart and print it
- Final fitting — and break in your shoes at home
- ★ Share one master timeline with every vendor and the wedding party
- Confirm vendor arrival times, meals, and parking
- Make final payments; prepare labeled gratuity envelopes
- Appoint a day-of point person who is not you or your partner
- Pack the emergency kit — sewing kit, stain pen, painkillers, snacks
- Write thank-you notes for gifts that have already arrived
- Confirm rehearsal time and dinner details with everyone involved
- Set aside cash for day-of incidentals

Week Of, Day Of & After

Everything is decided. This week is logistics, sleep, and handing the plan to the people you hired to run it.

THE WEEK OF

- Final venue walkthrough; confirm setup and floor plan
- Deliver décor, guest book, and signage to the venue
- Pick up attire and steam everything
- Rehearse the ceremony with the full wedding party
- Hand the marriage license to your officiant
- Sleep, hydrate, eat — boring advice that works

AFTER THE WEDDING

- Return rentals and retrieve anything left at the venue
- Review your vendors — it's how the good ones get found
- Preserve or clean your attire

THE DAY OF

- Eat a real breakfast — the day is long and dinner is late
- Build 30 minutes of buffer into every part of the morning
- Hand your phone to a member of the wedding party
- Take five minutes alone together as a couple — on purpose
- Let go of the plan. Whatever happens now is the wedding
- Send thank-you cards within three months
- Handle legal name changes, if either of you is changing
- Order your album while the photos still make you cry



FROM THE MAKERS OF THIS CHECKLIST

Planning a wedding is ~300 decisions.
WeddingFlow keeps every one in one place.

Budget tracker, guest list, vendor manager, task timeline, seating chart, day-of schedule and more — 14 planning tools in one beautifully simple app. No subscriptions, no ads, yours forever.

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