

~ 18 Month Wedding Planning Calendar ~

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Six to Eighteen Months

- Tell your family and friends that You're Engaged! Traditionally, the bride's parents come first, followed by the groom's parents, then your families, and finally your friends.
- Plan a small get-together for your families and closest friends. Your parents, if they have not yet met, should be introduced as soon as possible after your announcement. An engagement party, usually thrown by parents or family, can provide the perfect occasion for sharing your joy with others.
- Arrange for a sit-down get-together with your parents to discuss tentative dates, locations, estimates of the number of guests, and for what services and arrangements, if any, your parents are willing to pay. Discuss monetary limitations for the services your parents are willing to pay to avoid future problems.
- Talk to your religious mentor about your impending nuptials. Discuss dates, costs, pre-marital requirements, flexibility in writing your own vows, and the involvement of others in your ceremony. If you're hiring an inter-faith or nonsectarian officiant, select one that reflects well on your personal styles.
- Select your attendants soon after formalizing your wedding date. When asking your family and friends to be a part of your wedding celebration, make them aware of their cost responsibilities for clothing, travel and accommodations *before* they commit.
- After discussing monetary arrangements with your parents, set a budget. Determine what you want to spend on your entire wedding and allocate your funds accordingly. If you're hiring a wedding consultant, you should do this now. He or she can help you budget your expenses.
- Book your reception venue. This may be your most costly expense, so visit several sites, comparing site costs and packages offered. A down-payment will be required, so be sure of your choice at the time of booking. If your wedding will be outdoors, contact tent and equipment rental companies at this time.
- Many other vendors may need to be booked up to a year in advance. These include photographers, videographers, DJs or musicians, caterers, and consultants. Don't be afraid to ask for references.
- After booking a photographer, have your engagement portraits taken.
- Select one or more stores for bridal registries and register your gift selections.
- Shop for your wedding gown and veil and the attendants' gowns as soon as seasonal selections are available. Discuss costs for fittings and alterations before you purchase! Ask your gown vendors for material swatches; you may need them for shoe-dyeing, floral selection, and even your limousine vendor.

Four to Six Months

- Select your speakers, seating ushers, gift bearers, flower girl, and ring bearer, and ask for their participation in your ceremony. Make them aware of any responsibilities you wish them to fulfill.
- Make your wedding night and honeymoon plans and travel arrangements. If traveling out-of-country, check requirements for inoculations and make sure you have a valid passport.
- Arrange for a formalwear vendor and notify groomsmen of those arrangements. Initial fittings should be done now. The best man may take responsibility for overseeing the groomsmen's attire.
- Finalize your guest list. Make a list of out-of-town guests who may need special accommodations and reserve enough rooms for your guests at one or two hotels near your reception venue.
- Select and order invitations and coordinating notes, stationery, matches, and napkins. Your invitations should be a reflection of the style and tone of your wedding. Compare costs for printing, type selections, and matching accessories, such as printed matchbooks, placecards and napkins.
- Interview and select a florist. If your florist is not familiar with your religious venue, check with your officiant for any restrictions. Many churches no longer allow petal drops.

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- Make floral arrangements. Consult with your florist regarding seasonal selections, ceremony and reception pieces, corsages, boutonnieres, and gift roses. If your florist is not familiar with your religious venue, check with your officiant for any restrictions. Many churches no longer allow petal drops.
- Book your limousine or alternate transportation needs for the ceremony and reception. Decide who will travel with you prior to booking so you won't need to upgrade to a larger vehicle later.

Three Months

- Meet with your baker and make selections for your wedding cake. If you're having a sweet table or fruit & cheese table at your reception, discuss pastry options. Ask about deliver and set-up fees.
- Purchase your wedding rings. If having your rings custom designed, you may want to do this earlier than three months prior. Check with your jeweler for design options and timeframes for ordering and delivery.
- Make arrangements for the purchase and dyeing, if necessary, of the bride's and attendant's shoes.
- Purchase other ceremony and reception items, such as the cake top, cake knife and server, ring pillow, unity candle, toasting flutes, guestbook and guest table centerpieces and favors.
- If your wedding is outdoors or your caterer or reception venue is not providing bartending or liquor arrangements, you should contact staffing services and liquor vendors now.

Two Months

- Mail your invitations six weeks before the wedding date with an RSVP date no later than two weeks before the wedding date. You may want to investigate telephone or internet RSVP options in replacement of RSVP cards. If using RSVP cards, pre-stamp the envelopes for your guests.
- If the bride's, groom's or attendants gifts will require etching or engraving, you should purchase them now and arrange for delivery. Jewelry or accessories to be worn on your wedding day makes a nice gift.
- Confirm delivery of the bridesmaids' gowns to your local vendor and arrange for fittings. Your maid of honor may take on this responsibility for you, acting as a go-between for the vendor and bridesmaids.
- Meet with your ceremony officiant to plan the details of your ceremony and finalize vows. You may need to have music selections, vows and even attire approved in some religious venues.

One Month

- Make arrangements for the rehearsal dinner and personally invite family, attendants and close friends.
- Publish your wedding announcement in the appropriate newspapers.
- Finalize arrangements with your photographer focusing on times and locations for pre-ceremony photographs with the bridal party and groom's party, post-ceremony photographs if at an alternate outside location, and reception time. Make sure your photographer has accurate addresses.
- Finalize arrangements with your videographer, limousine company, and florist. Make sure your florist is aware of the time and address scheduled for pre-ceremony bridal party and groom's party photographs so that the bouquets and corsages can be delivered beforehand.
- Obtain your marriage license from County Clerk's Office in the county in which you will be married.
- Purchase attendant gifts if you have not already done so.

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- Purchase attendant gifts if you have not already done so.
- Make appointments with salons for pre-wedding hair consultation, manicure, pedicure, morning-of-wedding hair preparation, make-up consultant, and other waxing and skin care needs.
- Purchase clothing, luggage and other honeymoon needs; confirm honeymoon travel arrangements.
- Prepare seating arrangements and placecards for reception dinner as final RSVPs arrive.

One to Two Weeks

- Confirm final guestlist and discuss final arrangements with reception venue host. Deliver necessities such as toasting flutes, centerpieces, favors, cake knife and server, and envelope cage or well.
- Meet with gown alterationist for final fitting. Arrange for pick-up of gown and veil.
- Make arrangements for gown preservation to be done while on your honeymoon.
- Purchase undergarments and hosiery to complete your bridal ensemble. Don't forget the extra hose!
- Attend salon and pre-wedding hair appointments. Make sure to bring your veil!
- Coordinate final fittings for groom's and attendants tuxedos, if the best man is not doing this for you. Make arrangements for pick-up of groom's tuxedo, as well as for its return while on your honeymoon.
- Deliver cake top to baker and confirm delivery and set-up of your wedding cake and sweet table items.
- Purchase clothing for your rehearsal dinner, if necessary.

The Day Before

- Prepare attendants' gifts to be delivered at the rehearsal dinner.
- Complete packing for your honeymoon. Don't forget to pack camera, film, swimwear, bath items, comfortable shoes, and your carry-on bag, complete with reading materials and snacks for the flight. You may even wish to bring the thank-you notes which can be written during the flight.
- Make a checklist of wedding day things to remember and to be done. This may help to budget your time on the morning of your wedding and to ease feelings of forgetfulness as you prepare for the ceremony. If staying away from home on the night before your wedding, prepare your overnight bag.
- Deliver gratuity envelopes to best man at the rehearsal.
- Deliver the marriage license, unity candle, and wedding programs to the officiator at the rehearsal.
- Prepare pre-wedding refreshments for your attendants, family and close friends that will be present during the pre-ceremony photography session. Simple items like cheeses, lunchmeats, chips and dips, fruits, rolls, pastries, and finger sandwiches are perfect snacking items for your guests.

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- If you'll be hosting an intimate gift-opening tea or luncheon the day after your wedding, arrange for someone to deliver your wedding gifts to that location after the reception. You may even want to arrange for pieces of your wedding cake to be reserved for this get-together as an added touch.
- Confirm wedding day details with attendants, including times and places to meet for pre-wedding photographs and items to be brought to the ceremony. Entrust each of your attendants with an item for which they can be responsible, such as bringing your make-up bag, house keys, etc... to the ceremony.
- Arrange for your post-reception transportation to the wedding-night location and for either pick-up the morning after or the delivery of your car. If leaving for your honeymoon from this location, be sure to place your luggage in the trunk now.

Your Wedding Day!

- Bride and bridesmaids attend hair and make-up appointments early, leaving plenty of time for travel and dressing before the photographer arrives. Wear button-front shirts to avoid mussing hair upon changing into your gowns. Don't forget to bring the bride's veil and bridesmaids' headpieces to the salon.
- Ask family and friends that will be present for the pre-ceremony photographs to set-up the refreshments while you are at the hair salon. When you return, make sure to eat something prior to dressing.
- Dress before the photographer arrives. The bride should place her engagement ring on her right hand *after* pre-ceremony photographs are taken.
- Leave for the church or other ceremony venue with plenty of time to spare for life's little surprises, like traffic jams, flat tires, and out-of-the-way errands for forgotten items.
- Relax and enjoy the your day. It goes quicker than you think and you don't want to miss a moment.