

The Ultimate Wedding Planning Checklist

Congratulations! You've decided to tie the knot. Now that was the easy part. From this day until the day of your wedding, you will be busy planning for what may be the most important day of your life!

Good news for you is you don't have to go into planning your wedding blindly. Catering by Windows can provide you with the experience and expertise to guide you through many of your difficult decisions. Below you will find the ultimate wedding checklist to help you make sure you don't forget anything.

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...

- Choose/hire individual who will perform your wedding
- Interview/Choose photographer and then book him/her
- Interview/Choose Florist and then book him/her
- Interview/Choose caterer and then book them

Ten to Twelve Months in Advance

- Decide how large/small wedding party will be
- Choose/order wedding dress and veil
- 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

- First meeting with minister/officiant
- Begin writing vows
- Choose ceremony music (prelude, processional, solos, recessional, postlude, etc.)
- Choose attendants and ask if they'll accept the position

- ❑ Begin looking for bridesmaid dresses
- ❑ Pick out tuxedos for groom and groomsmen/ushers/fathers
- ❑ Choose/reserve desired location for rehearsal dinner
- ❑ Look for and reserve block of rooms at nearby hotel for out-of-town guests
- ❑ Choose invitations
- ❑ Make first draft of invite list
- ❑ 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

Four to Six Months in Advance

- ❑ Choose prose/poetry/scripture readings for ceremony
- ❑ Choose readers for ceremony and ask if they'll accept the position
- ❑ Buy/make favors to give guests, if desired
- ❑ Order bridesmaid dresses
- ❑ Hire limousine driver or arrange other transportation to/from ceremony and reception
- ❑ 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, candelabras, etc)
- ❑ Meet with caterer to choose flavor(s) and style of wedding cake
- ❑ 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

Two to Four Months in Advance

- ❑ First wedding gown fitting
- ❑ Buy disposable cameras
- ❑ Determine wedding band inscriptions
- ❑ Choose reception food with caterer
- ❑ Determine seating arrangement at reception if it's a sit-down dinner
- ❑ Determine how attendants will process and stand at ceremony
- ❑ Choose reception music (1st dance, father/daughter dance, mother/son dance etc.)
- ❑ Finalize vows and memorize (if necessary)
- ❑ Bride buy gifts for bridesmaids, parents, fiancée, personal attendant
- ❑ Groom buy gifts for groomsmen, parents, fiancée, ushers
- ❑ Finalize invite list and get addresses of all people on invite list
- ❑ Order invitations
- ❑ Set date with fiancée to get marriage license

Two Months in Advance

- ❑ Book rooms for out-of-town attendants at hotel
- ❑ Go over rough draft of duties with all involved in wedding

- ❑ 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
- ❑ Get wedding bands inscribed
- ❑ Get final order of prelude and processional music from organist
- ❑ Call to inform all people who need to be at rehearsal
- ❑ Buy guest book and pen
- ❑ Obtain marriage certificate
- ❑ Last meeting with minister/officiant
- ❑ Make itinerary of wedding day for all involved
- ❑ Buy stamps for invitations, response cards, and some to get started on thank-you notes
- ❑ Ensure formalwear shop has all tuxedo measurements

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

- ❑ Address/mail wedding invitations

One Month in Advance

- ❑ 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 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.
- ❑ Ensure band/DJ has equipment/music needed to play your chosen reception music
- ❑ Pick up wedding bands
- ❑ Confirm honeymoon reservations
- ❑ Record gifts as you receive them and send thank-you notes
- ❑ Inform car/home/renter's insurance of marriage (discounted rates may apply)

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 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/them map
- ❑ Mail directions to limousine driver and confirm times
- ❑ Meet with rehearsal dinner caterers for final details
- ❑ Final wedding gown fitting
- ❑ Confirm hotel reservations for wedding night

One Week in Advance

- ❑ Pack for honeymoon
- ❑ Fill out first page of guest book
- ❑ Take marriage certificate to minister/officiant
- ❑ Give final guest count to reception facility and/or caterer

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
- ❑ 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