



Reception Timeline

RECEPTION TIMELINE: A BASIC GUIDE TO WHAT HAPPENS WHEN

This is just a sample wedding reception timeline. The final timeline will be dictated on your allowed time reserved for the reception area. Other activities may also alter your timeline such as family performances, bridal party performances, lion dances etc. Having a timeline will help the day run more smoothly especially when there seems to never be enough time for the things you want to do. Appoint a wedding coordinator to ensure that the timeline is met and enjoy yourselves instead of worrying about time. Let someone else do that for you. This is your day.

00:00 | **THE COCKTAIL HOUR**

The newlyweds often are the first to leave the ceremony, heading off (with photographer and bridal party) for pictures together before the partying gets under way. If you are in a crunch for time, do not hesitate to leave the ceremony scene without greeting any of your guests. This usually ends up taking a lot of time and energy. If you haven't taken your formal pictures before the ceremony (some couples like to wait until the ceremony to see each other for the first time), taking pictures after the ceremony is a great time to do it. Your guests will head to the reception site for cocktails. If the reception is at another location and travel is required for your guests, make sure that you account for the time loss during the travel time. Cocktails will kick off your reception and will last for at least an hour.

00:30 | **GREETING LINE**

Don't forget: Greeting your guests is essential! It's customary for the couple, along with their parents and the bridal party, to form a receiving line outside the reception site to greet guests and thanking them for attending your special day. Many couples these days are opting for this pre-reception receiving line, rather than going from table to table during dinner.

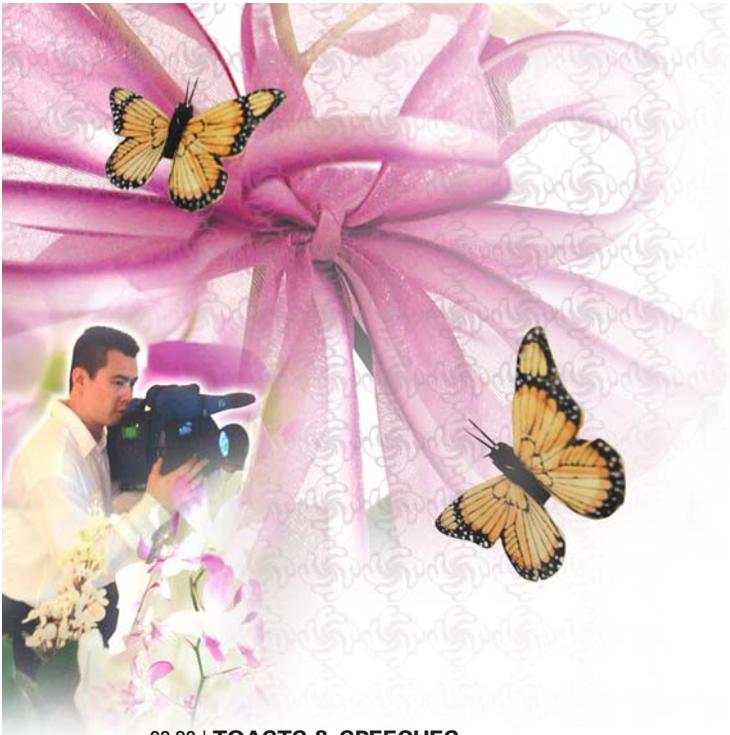
01:00 | **NEWLYWEDS' ARRIVAL**

Here's the part where the bride and groom make their grand entrance. The coordinator usually will make sure guests are seated before the emcee alerts them to your imminent arrival. Generally, both sets of parents and the wedding party are introduced, followed by the announcement and introduction to the bridal party. The couple will then make their grand entrance after the bridal party has made their way to their seats.

01:20 | **INVOCATION/MEAL TIME**

Depending on your culture, this is the time to bless the food. Ask a family member or friend before hand to come up during this time to say a few words.

If you're having a seated meal, the band will play subdued, conversation-friendly background music as the wait staff makes the rounds. If you're having a buffet, your emcee or bandleader will dictate how the rotation will work by calling each table when it's time to head to the front of the line. This is a good time for the bride and groom to relax and enjoy their first meal together.



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02:30 | TOASTS & SPEECHES

Often, the couple will ask a close friend to offer a toast to the couple from the guests. This person will then give a speech on how he/she knows the couple and finally thanking them on behalf of all the other guests with a toast. A family member, often a parent of the bride and groom, will say a blessing (depending on the families' faiths). Then, since toasting signifies a transition in the course of an event, the mother and father of the bride will thank guests for attending. (Can you say BANZAI!?)

The best man and the maid of honor will usually give a short speech about the bride and groom and how they met each other. Speeches can also consist of childhood memories or just good luck and good blessings for the newlyweds.

02:45 | SLIDE SHOW

A time to share your love story, with your family and friends.

03:00 | CEREMONY HIGHLIGHTS

Did a relative or friend miss your wedding ceremony? Did the ceremony fly by so fast it was a blur? Never fear because you can re-live one of the most important moments in your life by including your ceremony highlights with your video presentation.

03:05 | CAKE CUTTING

Cutting the cake can either be a very special event or a very messy one! Be prepared to have more than your share of the cake (on your face). Usually, the banquet captain will assist the couple and guide them through the cake cutting ceremony since this is something that very few couples practice during their rehearsal. Also, please specify to the banquet manager if you want the cake to be evenly distributed to your guests or have them wrap it up for yourselves. It is also customary to keep a piece of the cake in your freezer and save it until your first anniversary.

03:20 | BOUQUET/GARTER TOSS

Once the cake is cut, it's time to toss the bouquet and garter belt. Usually the garter belt will have some money in it to help persuade the single men to come up. Pictures are usually taken with the bride and person that caught the bouquet, groom and the person who caught the garter belt, and then the person that caught the garter belt and the person that caught the bouquet together. Brides note: a separate throwaway bouquet can be ordered through your florist if you would like to keep your wedding bouquet as a memento.

03:45 | BRIDE AND GROOM THANK YOU SPEECH

This is the time to thank everyone for coming and also thank everyone who has helped with your wedding. It takes a lot of people to make this wedding happen, so try not to forget anyone. They all deserve recognition for the amount of time and energy they have given to you. Also, do not forget to mention the people that had to travel to attend your wedding. People spend thousands of dollars trying to make it to your wedding. The least you can do is recognize and thank all of them.



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03:55 | **FIRST DANCE**

End your wedding on a high note and choose a dance song that symbolizes your future together. Don't forget the money dance! Certain cultures have what is called a money dance. This event has the bride and groom dancing together while people form a line and place money on either the bride or groom.

04:00 | **PARTY TIME**

Time to let loose onto the dance floor. Just remember that when the dancing begins, your guests will use this time as an opportunity to leave. It might be a good time to go around thanking your guests for coming and celebrating your special day with you.

05:00 | **FINAL FAREWELL**

Time to leave the reception area. Certain banquet halls have strict rules on leaving the place clean and also having the guests leave on time. Please point out a helper in advance to coordinate the cleaning and escorting the guests out. Time to head to the honeymoon suite!