

# COUNTDOWN TO YOUR WEDDING - THE ULTIMATE CHECKLIST!

Set your wedding date and the countdown begins! You can plan a wedding in just a few weeks if you're able to devote enough time to it, but for those of us with day jobs, it's easier to devote a whole year toward making sure everything is planned just the way you want it. Being organised is the key ingredient to planning a successful wedding.



## 12 months +

### Set the date

Start your wedding planning twelve months or more in advance to ensure you get to book the venues and suppliers of your choice at best prices. You may be constrained by the dates your chosen venue(s) can offer and it's worth knowing that you could save money by booking a mid-week wedding instead of a Saturday.

### Decide whether to plan your own wedding

Or enlist the help of a professional wedding planner.

### Send save-the-date cards

To make sure your guests don't book their summer holiday and miss your special day.

**Set your budget**

Make it realistic without going into debt and add in a contingency just in case.

**Draw up your guest list(s)**

Try to make it equal and keep both families happy. Have a separate evening reception guest list if you want some work colleagues or friends of the family to come but you don't know them well enough to invite them to the ceremony and the wedding breakfast.

**Book your venue(s)**

The sooner you book your venues, the easier everything else will be to plan. You'll need to book a venue for your ceremony (either a church, registry office or other licensed civil wedding venue) and a venue for your reception, for your wedding breakfast and disco or other after-dinner entertainment. Take into account seating capacity, room hire costs, catering options, indoor and outdoor settings for photographs. You could save thousands of pounds by booking out of season - many venues have fantastic winter wedding offers too.

**Appoint bridesmaids, a best man and ushers**

Choose from close friends and family who are nearby ideally and, ahem, thoroughly trustworthy!

**Book your photographer and videographer**

Find a photographer who offers the style of photos you are looking for (traditional, contemporary, reportage style or a combination), meet them personally, ask to see their portfolio and also a whole album from one wedding.

**Meet your minister/registrar**

They'll be able to answer all your questions about the ceremony, and help you find suitable readings and music.

**Book a DJ/band/entertainers**

You might want to book a DJ to dance the night away, or hire a live band or classical musicians for your reception. Some couples like to have a singer perform a live solo piece at their ceremony, others book magicians or celebrity lookalikes for their evening reception just to add a sense of fun!

**Book caterers if needed**

If the reception venue you have booked is not doing your catering then you'll need to consider hiring outside caterers or, if your budget is tight, catering the wedding with buffet party platters from your local supermarket.

**Book your cars**

You'll need to book one bridal car for you and your father, and you may also want to book a second or third car for your mother and bridesmaids. If you want to make it easier and fun for all your family and friends - book a bus! You could get some amazing wedding photos of you and your guests atop a vintage double decker bus!

**Book your florist**

And decide how many flowers you would like and where, or if you're on a tight budget, invest in everlasting silk flowers that can be sold on after the wedding. A combination of real and silk flowers can be just right.

**Book a toastmaster**

You might think you don't need a toastmaster or master of ceremonies, or be worried that having one will make your wedding day feel too formal. They're worth their weight in gold for ensuring everything goes to plan at the right time, in the right place and with the right people.

**Book your honeymoon**

Book it in your maiden name and use your existing passport, then change all your documents to your married name when you return.

**Take out wedding insurance**

It's not costly and could save you thousands if a supplier suddenly lets you down. It's worth it just for peace of mind!

**Decide what kind of wedding dress you want**

If you're having a couture bridal gown made for you then you'll need to start this process now. If you're ordering a designer dress then allow 4-6 months and if you're buying off-the-peg or second-hand, 4-6 weeks before should be fine for alterations if needed.

**Start your healthy eating diet and exercise programme**

Whether you want to lose weight or simply tone up for your wedding day and honeymoon, there is no better time to start than now! Go to the gym together as a couple or go with a friend. You'll never have such amazing motivation to look good again!

*Notes:*

## 6 months +

### *A note about DIY*

If you're planning to DIY some aspects of your wedding – such as making your own invitations, table centres, cake or favours, then you will also need to build in time for practice as well as production - just to be on the safe side! Now is the time to start!

#### **Order/make your wedding invitations**

Don't forget all the other wedding stationery including: orders of service, place cards and thank you cards

#### **Order the wedding cake**

Or cupcakes or 'cheese cake', or have your wedding cake home made.

#### **Buy your wedding shoes and accessories**

Get your shoes in good time for your first dress fitting, and your tiara and veil in time for your make up and hair trial. Choose what jewellery you will wear too.

#### **Book your make-up artist and hairdresser**

Speak to several to find the one that's right for you, then book a hair and make up trial complete with your tiara and veil if possible.

#### **Buy your bridesmaids' dresses, suits for the groom, best man, ushers and any flower girls or page boys.**

#### **Book the honeymoon suite**

And ask for some rose petals to be scattered on the bed....!

*Notes:*

## 3 months +

**Have your wedding dress altered**

And then don't lose any more weight!

**Start having regular facials**

To ensure your skin is healthy and glowing on your wedding day. Think of all those wedding photos!

**Buy your wedding rings**

Make sure they are both the right size and that your wedding ring will sit comfortably alongside your engagement ring if you plan to wear them together.

**Send your wedding invitations**

Traditionally they are sent out 6-12 weeks before the wedding but you can send them sooner if you prefer. Include information for your guests on overnight accommodation, transport, parking and any dress code if appropriate. Include reply cards to ensure they all RSVP and ask your guests if they have any specific dietary requirements.

**Order your venue décor and table decorations**

Including wedding favours and table centrepieces

**Decide on a gift list**

Make it available to all your wedding guests (through your invitations) and your wedding website if you have one.

**Choose wedding music and readings**

Your minister/registrar will be able to advise further.

**Buy gifts for the best man, ushers and bridesmaids**

And bouquets of flowers for the mothers of the bride and groom.

**Arrange to have any vaccinations done**

If required for your honeymoon.

**Start to plan your hen and stag parties**

With the help of your best man and chief bridesmaid respectively.

*Notes:*

# 1 month before

**Arrange for a final fitting of your wedding dress**

And bring along your mum, sister or best friend too!

**Reconfirm the wedding arrangements with all your suppliers**

Speak to them personally and make sure you have confirmation of dates, places and times in writing from them.

**Have your last nights of freedom!**

And don't do anything you wouldn't want him/her to do...

**Finalise the seating plan**

And make your table planner.

**Arrange the wedding rehearsal**

A few days before is ideal and you could make an evening of it by inviting all your bridal party along to dinner afterwards too. It's a good opportunity for them to all get together just before the big day.

**Contact any guests who have not replied to your invitation**

The venue and the caterers will need to know final numbers at least 1-2 weeks before.

**Arrange a date to pick up any hired suits**

And make a note of when they need to be returned – give that honour to your best man.

**Write the wedding speeches**

Write them from the heart, and then practice, practice, practice...

**Have a facial to ensure your skin is glowing**

And stay calm and unstressed knowing everything is in order. Stress free = spot free.

*Notes:*

# 1 week before

**Have your hair trimmed and/or coloured**

Then you'll know it's looking its best for your 'up do' or curls on the big day, but only do as planned in your hair trials - this is not the time to experiment with a new colour or drastic style changes!

**Have the wedding rehearsal**

This will help you know where to stand and when to speak and will prepare you so you don't feel nervous on the day.

**Pack for your honeymoon**

You're going on the holiday of a lifetime!

**Wear in your wedding shoes**

Don't wear them outside, but do wear them around the house to make sure they're comfy on the day.

**Create a wedding emergency kit**

Include make up, a compact mirror and powder, lipstick, tissues etc – anything you think you might need on the day. Ask your chief bridesmaid to carry it for you.

**Order your foreign currency for your honeymoon**

And make any other last minute arrangements.

**Buy ivory bridal brollies**

If the weather ahead looks rainy!

**Have your beauty treatments**

Go for pre-wedding and honeymoon waxing or fake tanning in good time before the big day. Get eyebrows shaped and anything else that needs attention done the week before, not the day before.

**Find your 'something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue'**

Ask your mother or grandmother for something old, the rest is easy.

**Hand over the supplier list of contacts to a designated person**

Give the list of all the wedding suppliers involved in your wedding day with their contact details and times they are meant to arrive, in case they need to be contacted, to your best man and/or chief bridesmaid and then do not give it another thought!

*Notes:*

## The day before

**Have the day off to relax**

Don't go to work, spend the day with friends or family and don't do anything too exhausting.

**Have your nails manicured**

Book it for the afternoon to avoid chips and breaks.

**Try to get an early night**

You're getting married in the morning!

**And, just one final word of advice...**

On your wedding day, the one thing you should try to keep in mind is that it's not the end of your wedding planning, it's the beginning of your marriage. So whatever may happen on the day, your marriage is what really matters most, and that's why it will be a wonderful day you'll remember for the rest of your life!

*Notes:*

For more inspiration, ideas and planning advice visit [www.confetti.co.uk](http://www.confetti.co.uk)