

Wedding Timetable

Following is a suggested timetable for planning your wedding. Even if you decide to hire a professional wedding planner, this timetable may be useful to help determine the order in which things need to be done. Obviously, timetables will vary depending on size of wedding and personal priorities; therefore, this is intended as a rough guideline, not as a list of what you **must** do. The list also assumes that, once you start planning your wedding, you can determine any additional steps as you go along. For example, after ordering your wedding dress, it is assumed that you and the wedding shop will coordinate any necessary fittings together. With the need for modification in mind, we hope the following timetable will help you plan your special day.

Time of Engagement

- Inform your parents of the happy news.
- Purchase or make a wedding organizer. Think about whether you will want it as a keepsake, as this may influence what kind of organizer to have. At a bare minimum, you should have an organized way to keep track of appointments, payments, etc. and a system for tracking invitations, gifts and thank-you notes.
- Notify close friends and relatives – unless you plan to have an engagement party.
- Have an engagement photo taken and submit announcements to publications at the appropriate times. There may be specific guidelines regarding how far in advance of the wedding that announcements can be published.
- Keep up with thank-you notes as you receive gifts. The best time to write a note is immediately after opening the gift. Unless you receive hundreds of gifts in one day or are still on your honeymoon, it should never take more than six weeks to send thank-you notes.

9-12 Months before Wedding

- Determine what you and your families want at your wedding. How many guests? Sit-down dinner or buffet? An outdoor setting? Live music? Dancing? Alcohol?
- Determine the style and time of day of the wedding. If money is an issue, you can adjust the time of day so the reception will be more economical. For example, if you do not have the reception during a standard meal time, you can serve hors d'oeuvres or cake rather than a meal.
- Select a wedding date. (This may need to be done in conjunction with determining the availability of selected ceremony/reception sites.)
- Decide on a budget and how the wedding will be financed. If parents are helping, find out what costs they are willing to cover and how they want to handle payment. It may be helpful to do some research about wedding costs in your area before attempting to come up with a budget.
- **Select and reserve ceremony site. For a Garden wedding, call us a 309-686-3362 or the direct line for weddings and events, 309-681-3507.**
- **Select and reserve a reception site. The Peoria Zoo, adjacent to the Garden; has a wonderful banquet facility. Contact the Guest Services Manager at 309-681-3519 for more information.**
- Find a wedding officiant (priest, minister, rabbi, justice, etc.) Speak with him/her to determine if there are any requirements that must be met before marrying you and when they must be met. Set up a meeting to discuss the ceremony.
- Select wedding attendants (Maid of Honor, Best Man, bridesmaids, etc.)
- Select a photographer/videographer for your chosen date.
- If your reception site does not come with a caterer, secure catering arrangements.
- Select a florist.

6-9 Months before Wedding

- Select and order the bridal gown and accessories – or arrange for a seamstress.
- Make arrangements for music at your ceremony/reception. If working with a DJ, you may need to provide a music list or genre at some point.
- Select and order bridesmaids' dresses – or arrange for a seamstress to make them.
- Start working on guest lists. Typically, there are four: the bride's family's list, the groom's family's list, the bride's list and the groom's list.

4-6 Months before Wedding

- Order invitations and any other stationery you will need (such as thank you notes). Remember that stationery engraved with your married name cannot be used until after you are married, so you will also need stationery to use for gifts that arrive before the wedding.) Be sure to include RSVP (by a specified date) on your invitations in order to provide lead time and an accurate count of guests to your caterer, reception site and ceremony site.

- Plan the honeymoon (often arranged by the groom).
- Help the mothers, grand mothers, flower girls, etc. select their dresses.
- Plan the rehearsal dinner (often given by the groom's family).
- Register for gifts. Consider your lifestyle and the environment when selecting gifts and setting up a new home. For example, formal china may not be needed if you rarely put it to use – and you could even register for a tree to be planted at your new home.

2-4 Months before Wedding

- **Three months prior to your wedding date, the balance is due for your wedding at the Garden.**
- Select attire for the men in the wedding party.
- Purchase wedding rings and have them engraved.
- Find out what the legal requirements are for marriage in your state. Arrange for any necessary blood tests and decide when you will apply for the license.
- Obtain any passports/ immunizations you will need for the honeymoon.
- Make sure out-of-town guests will be appropriately lodged. You may want to reserve a block of rooms at a hotel (hotels will often give guests a reduced rate).

6-8 Weeks before Wedding

- Mail the invitations.
- Consult relevant newspapers for requirements on wedding announcements.
- Have a formal portrait taken in wedding gown for newspaper announcements.
- Purchase gifts for each other.
- Purchase gifts for attendants.
- Purchase a travel outfit and trousseau.
- Consult hairstylist about your hair for the wedding.
- Consult makeup person about wedding day makeup.

1-2 Weeks before Wedding

- Make final checks on everything: catering, honeymoon, photographer, videographer, florist, musicians, officiant, rehearsal, etc.
- Assign tasks for day of wedding: checking that all vendors have arrived, distributing flowers to attendants, etc., so you will not be overstressed yourself.
- Think about what you are going to take on the honeymoon; decide when you will pack.

1-3 Days before Wedding

- Make sure everyone arriving from out of town is met by someone, knows where everyone is staying, etc.
- Pack an “emergency kit” with things like spare hose, sewing supplies, aspirin, etc. to take with you to the wedding.
- Make sure the ring(s) and wedding license are taken to the ceremony site.
- Attend rehearsal and rehearsal dinner. You may choose to give gifts to attendants and each other at this event, or at a more private moment.
- Keep yourself and your fiancée well rested and healthy for the wedding.

The Big Day

- Allow everyone to complete tasks as assigned and enjoy yourself—it's YOUR day!