

Wedding Planning Checklist

BY OURSTORIA | [OURSTORIA.APP](#)

A month-by-month checklist for planning your wedding, from the first budget talk to the thank-you cards. Tick each item as you go, and start from the section that matches how much time you have.

Start Here: Three Decisions

- ☐ **Budget** — how much you'll spend and who is contributing
 - ☐ **Guest count** — a rough number is enough to start looking at venues
 - ☐ **Season or date** — popular Saturdays from May to October book up first
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12+ Months Before

- ☐ Set the budget and agree on who contributes
- ☐ Draft the guest list
- ☐ Pick a season and 2–3 possible dates
- ☐ Tour venues and book one — the date is yours only after the deposit
- ☐ Decide on a wedding planner and hire one if you want help
- ☐ Set up one shared spreadsheet or app for budget, guests, and vendors

10–11 Months Before

- ☐ Book the photographer and videographer — watch full films and galleries, not just highlights, and ask how they deliver
- ☐ Book the caterer (if the venue doesn't include one)
- ☐ Choose the officiant
- ☐ Ask your wedding party
- ☐ Build the wedding website

8–9 Months Before

- ☐ Choose and order the dress — ordering and alterations take months
- ☐ Book the DJ or band
- ☐ Send save-the-dates, especially for a destination wedding or many out-of-town guests
- ☐ Reserve a hotel room block for guests
- ☐ Set up your registry

6–7 Months Before

- ☐ Order the cake or desserts
- ☐ Book the florist
- ☐ Arrange transportation for the couple, wedding party, and guests if venues are far apart
- ☐ Choose attire for the groom and the wedding party
- ☐ Plan the honeymoon and check passport expiration dates

4–5 Months Before

- ☐ Order invitations
- ☐ Book hair and makeup trials
- ☐ Buy the rings
- ☐ Go over the ceremony script with the officiant
- ☐ Plan the rehearsal dinner

3 Months Before

- ☐ Finalize the menu and do the tasting
- ☐ Decide the order of the day with your photographer and videographer — first look or not
- ☐ Order rentals: tables, chairs, linens, lighting (if the venue doesn't provide them)
- ☐ Buy shoes and accessories — you'll need them for fittings

2 Months Before

- ☐ Mail invitations — 6–8 weeks before the wedding
- ☐ First dress fitting
- ☐ Write your vows, if you're writing your own
- ☐ Agree on the playlist: processional, first dance, parent dances

1 Month Before

- ☐ Get the marriage license — rules and validity depend on your state
- ☐ Write the wedding day timeline and send it to every vendor
- ☐ Give the photographer your family photo list
- ☐ Final dress fitting
- ☐ Confirm arrival times and contacts for every vendor

2 Weeks Before

- ☐ Collect RSVPs and call anyone who hasn't replied
- ☐ Make the seating chart
- ☐ Give the caterer and venue the final headcount
- ☐ Prepare envelopes with final payments and tips for vendors

Final Week

- ☐ Send the final timeline to vendors and the wedding party
- ☐ Pack bags for the wedding day and the honeymoon
- ☐ Pick someone to collect gifts and belongings after the reception
- ☐ Ceremony rehearsal and rehearsal dinner
- ☐ Get a good night's sleep before the wedding

After the Wedding

- ☐ Send thank-you cards
- ☐ Leave reviews for your vendors
- ☐ When the film and photos arrive, download the originals and keep a backup
- ☐ Share the gallery link with family who couldn't attend

When to Book Vendors

VENDOR	WHEN TO BOOK
Venue	12+ months before
Wedding planner	12+ months before
Photographer and videographer	10–12 months before
Caterer	10–11 months before
Officiant	10–11 months before
DJ or band	8–9 months before
Florist	6–7 months before
Cake	6–7 months before
Hair and makeup	4–6 months before
Rentals	3 months before

For a Saturday in peak season, book at the earlier end of each range.

Planning in 6 Months?

- ☐ **6 months:** budget, guests, venue, photographer, videographer, caterer, officiant — all in the first 3–4 weeks; choose a dress that's available off the rack
- ☐ **5 months:** music, florist, cake, save-the-dates, website
- ☐ **4 months:** invitations, attire, rings, transportation, hotel block
- ☐ **3 months:** menu and tasting, order of the day, makeup trial, rentals
- ☐ **2 months:** mail invitations, vows, playlist, fittings
- ☐ **Final month:** marriage license, day-of timeline, seating chart, final confirmations

Vendor Contacts

VENDOR	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL	DEPOSIT PAID	BALANCE DUE
Venue					
Planner					
Photographer					
Videographer					
Caterer					
Officiant					
DJ / Band					
Florist					
Cake					
Hair & makeup					
Transportation					
Rentals					

For the wedding day itself: minute-by-minute timelines for 2, 3, 4, and 5 PM ceremonies, with and without a first look — ourstoria.app/tools/timeline-template

This checklist is provided free by OurStoria. OurStoria is a delivery platform for wedding videographers and photographers: private online galleries with 4K streaming and original-quality downloads.

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