



CONTENTS

N	П	Γ	R	О	D	U	C	Т	Ю	1	1	0	0	0	í	l	ĺ	l

WEDDING PLANNING 101 · · · 12

FINDING YOUR STYLE · · · 34

INVITATIONS, PAPER & STATIONERY ··· 74

DRESSES & ATTIRE ··· 82

FLOWERS, BOUQUETS & CENTERPIECES \cdots 106

CEREMONY & VOWS ··· 136

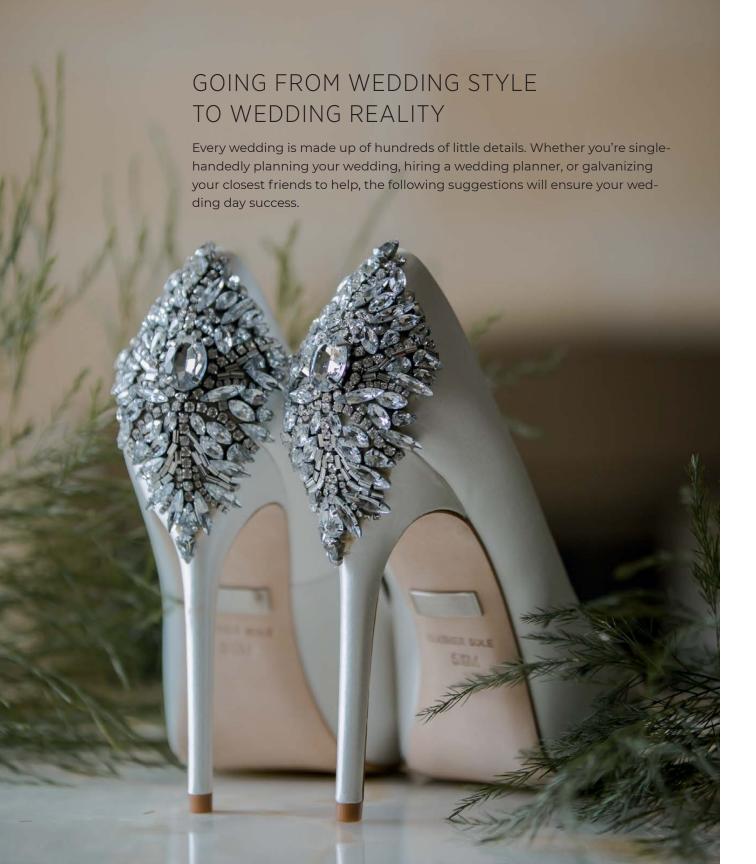
RECEPTION, DECOR & MORE $\cdots~144$

CAKES, DESSERTS & TREATS ··· 170

SEND-OFFS, HONEYMOONS & HAPPILY EVER AFTERS $\cdots~194$

RESOURCES ··· 204

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ··· 207



Get Organized

There are so many important details to keep track of when planning a wedding—being organized is the name of the game. Most couples opt for keeping most of their important wedding information in a spreadsheet or document that can be shared with all of the key players in the planning process (mother of the bride, groom, wedding planner, etc.). Keep track of the guest list, invoices, checklists, and vendor contracts in one online location so you can easily find what you need.

Create Inspiration Boards

Once you have a wedding style in mind you can look for images to support your vision. Having an inspiration board will be key when explaining your desired look to vendors. Pinterest is a popular way to save your ideas from a variety of online sources in one central location and one that can be easily shared with bridesmaids and vendors. But before you dive into this task, be sure to read my forewarning on page 34.

Look Back On Past Wedding Experiences

Take a few moments to think back on all of the weddings you have attended or played a role in. Make a list of what you liked about them and what you did not. Often times we focus on what we want our wedding to be but forget to think about what we don't want it to be. Having past wedding experiences in mind as you plan will help you find a balance between what is a dream wedding and what is reality.

Research Vendors

All good weddings are created with the help of amazing professional vendors. Making a list of potential vendors and reaching out to them will get the ball rolling on who you'll consider working with and if their ideas, prices, and availability match yours.

Put A Planning Timeline Together

Just as every wedding is different so is every timeline. While some couples leave themselves a year or more to plan, others only have a few months. Creating your own timeline will help you nail down what needs to happen and when. Craft your timeline and then decide what the most time-sensitive detail is. Tackling the items that need to happen first might help you to relax on other details, and affords you the ability to focus on one task at a time. Turn the page for a suggested wedding planning timeline.



"I am so visual so I relied heavily on Instagram and Pinterest. The two platforms really allowed me to quickly curate specific looks and themes from which to draw inspiration. More than one element of my wedding day, my bridal shower, and my bachelorette was inspired by those apps!"

-Rachel (Bride)



If you are hosting your ceremony at a place of worship, you'll need to coordinate the date with an opening there and at your reception venue, so the earlier you can start to plan your dates, the better. Also, some places of worship request specific paperwork or even pre-marriage classes in addition to the marriage licences, so you will need to know what is required of you ahead of time and plan for that as well.

A wedding where the majority of the guests will have to travel no matter the location is a destination wedding. For example, I planned my own wedding in a small Midwestern town where my family has a summer house. All of our guests needed to travel from out of town, so allowing extra time for guests to plan for details, like how to get there and where to stay, was key. If this is the case for you, get those save-the-dates out to your guests at least nine months before your wedding; if international travel is involved, twelve months is preferred.

VENUE IDEAS

Small inns and bed & breakfasts

Historical sites and famous houses

Museums and art galleries

College clubs and university venues

Gardens and arboretums

Retail spaces like bookstores or antiques stores

Large resorts

Farms and barns

Vineyards and breweries

Restaurants

Beach clubs

State Parks

Houses and estates for rent via online sites such as Airbnb or VRBO



How do we determine how formal (or informal) the ceremony and reception should be?



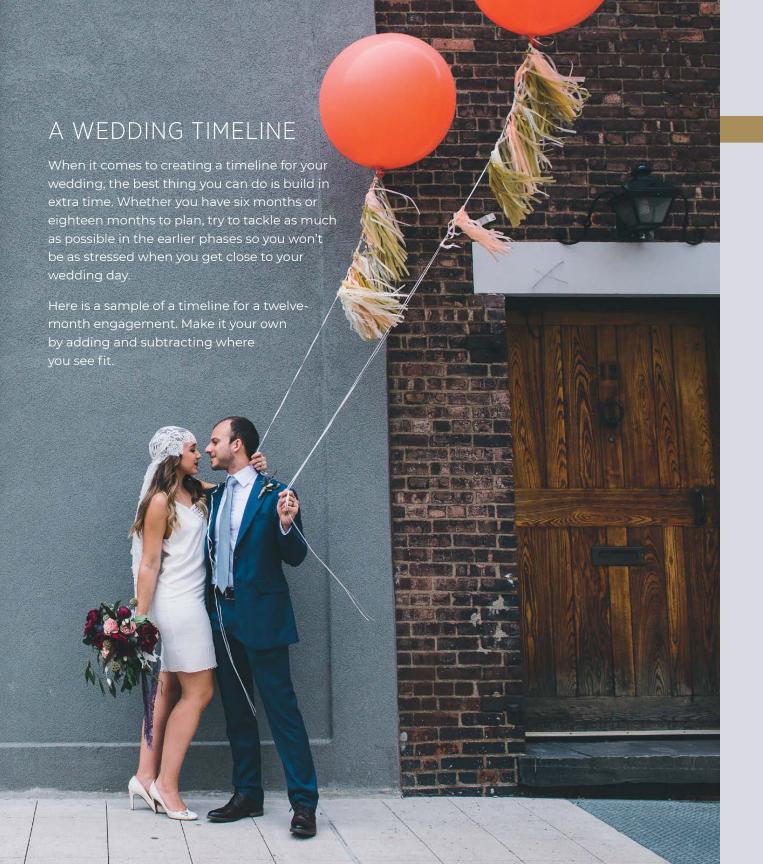
You might have been dreaming of a black tie event and your fiancé might be thinking more along the lines of a simple backyard affair. Make sure you are on the same page when it comes to how formal you would like your wedding day to be. The formality will impact the type of venues, services, and vendors you select. There are no rules to follow about how formal or informal a wedding should be, even given the venue you select. You as the couple get to create your own rules and set the tone for how formal or informal you want the day to be. Many couples choose to host a formal event in an interesting, less traditionally formal location (such as a garden or lakeside resort). On the flip side, some couples host an informal event at a tented reception on the grounds of an estate. The power you have as the wedding couple allows you to decide on the formality of the event and to create a vibe all your own.



MAGGIE'S TIP: Many clubs and certain institutions require jackets for men and could prohibit such clothing as jeans, sneakers, or sandals so be sure to research these specifics.

16





SUGGESTED WEDDING TIMELINE

12 MONTHS

Select your wedding party

Determine a budget

Make a guest list

Book a venue

Shop for dresses and possibly order

Hire a wedding coordinator or planner

9 MONTHS

Send out save-the-dates

Hire a wedding photographer and videographer

Book your caterer

Set up your wedding registry

Book your band or DJ

6 MONTHS

Book the honeymoon

Order invitations

Purchase wedding rings

Book the florist

Book the rehearsal dinner location

Book your ceremony officiant

Request a room block at hotels near the wedding

3 MONTHS

Order wedding cake or desserts

Order favors and decor items

Book hair and makeup appointments

Send out invitations

1 MONTH OR LESS

Follow up with guests who haven't met your RSVP deadline

Finalize the seating chart

Book a hair and makeup trial appointment

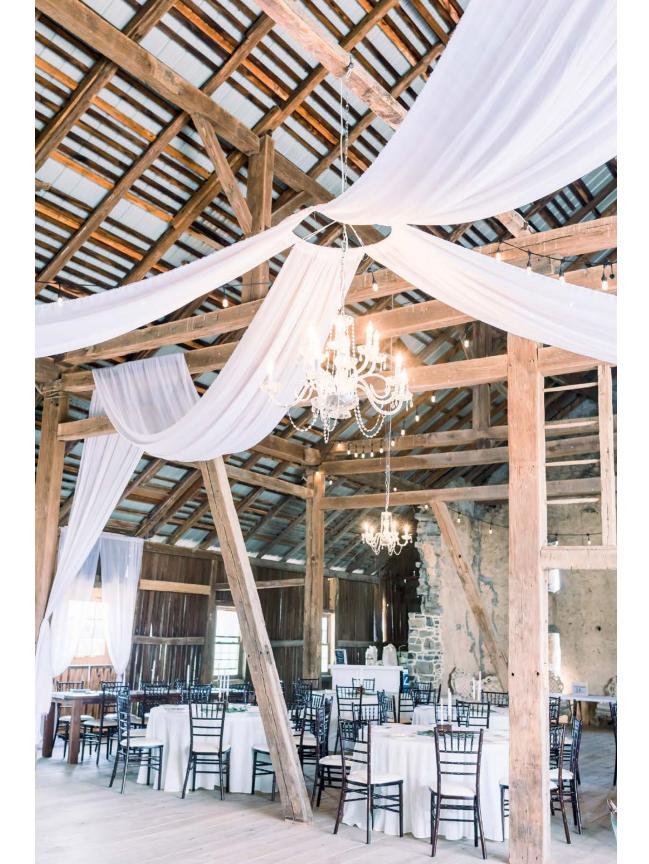
Secure your marriage license

FINDING YOUR STYLE

Boho, rustic, modern, minimalist, romantic, classic...
these are all wedding styles that might work for your
big day. When first developing your wedding style it is
best to stay away from popular social media sites and
wedding blogs *until* you have a defined idea about
what your wedding day should look like.

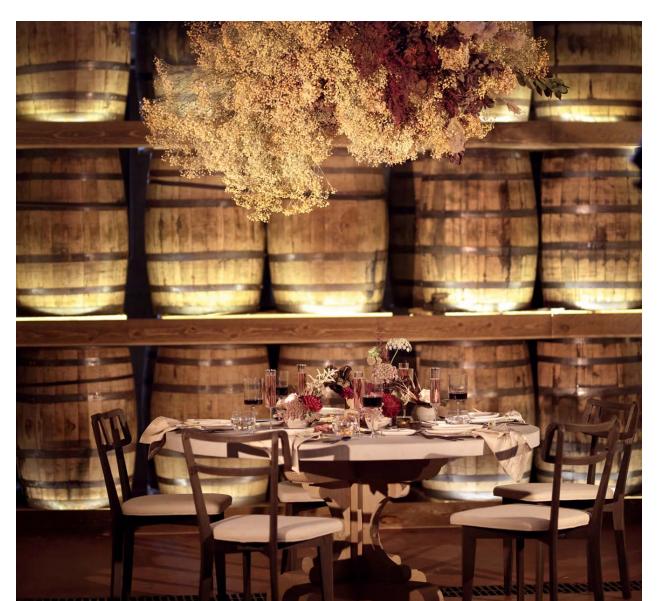
It is too easy to become inundated, and consequently overwhelmed, with ideas and styles when browsing online. Instead, begin by coming up with a list of words to define your big day which remain true to who you and your fiancé are as a couple. From there, slowly add images to your descriptions. On the next few pages there are a variety of wedding styles described and suggestions for how you can achieve their look in a cohesive way.





LIGHTING & DRAPERY

You want a romantic mood and nothing can achieve that more easily than adding great lighting. Many venues have a lighting team they can call in to help you achieve your desired ambience. Some couples want a pop of color and some uplighting while others only want small white lights and perfectly placed candles. Whatever your lighting style may be, you should try to see the venue with the lighting you want before the big day if possible. Another way to dress up your reception space is with drapery. Think: long, flowing, white drapes or blush-toned drapery hanging from the ceiling. Working with drapes within your wedding colors can transform your space in no time.







Be open to new looks and styles

I once heard you should not say no to a dress until it's zipped and cinched, meaning: try it on and you might be surprised. Also, many styles can be altered so don't say no too early to a dress with or without straps since those details can be changed to fit your look.

Keep your wedding date, location, and weather in mind

Taking your wedding season, location, and possible weather into consideration is key when selecting a dress because it means you will be considering proper fabric and dress styles. Talk with your bridal shop about where and when the wedding is so they can help guide you.

Bring shoes

I know it might seem difficult to bring shoes since you don't know what style dress you will be wearing but bringing your own high heels (especially ones already broken in) will make you feel much more comfortable trying on and walking around in potential wedding dresses. You don't need the exact shoes you will be wearing until you get to the fitting stage of the game but if you know you want to rock flats, sneakers, or sandals on your wedding day then make sure to bring something similar when trying on dresses.

Find unique inspiration

Thanks to online tools like Instagram, Pinterest, and wedding sources like RusticWeddingChic.com, brides can find wedding dress styles in seconds, but think about other inspiration for your wedding day. Consider a red carpet look from a celebrity, your mother or grandmother's wedding dress, or a dress you already own that you love the fit of.

Know the dress lingo

There is an entire wedding dress language and it's important that you get familiar with the terms before you head into your shopping experience. Terms like A-line, sweetheart neckline, and cathedral length are just a few of the terms you should be familiar with. A simple online search will help you get schooled in this new language which you'll find helpful to know.

Understand it is a process

Walking into your first bridal dress appointment and walking out with the perfect dress might happen, but more often than not it doesn't. You might have to try on many more dresses and shop at several different locations before you find the outfit that makes you feel perfect. Accepting that dress shopping might be a longer process than you'd originally expected allows you to move through the process without the stress.

Get all the costs up front

When you plan a wedding you know you will be dealing with big cost, but no one ever wants to be surprised by smaller, add-on costs. When purchasing your dress get all the costs you will be responsible for with the dress in writing. Make sure you confirm what the cost will be for things such as shipping, alterations, cleaning, and extra material if needed.



5 PLACES TO FIND INSPIRATION

FOR YOUR WEDDING STATIONERY

1. Wedding location attractions and postcards

Spend some time digging into the location of where your wedding will take place. You might be lucky enough to find a symbol or saying that you want to include in your stationery suite. A quick online search of vintage postcards from the location can also add to the inspiration.

2. Wallpaper

From florals to stripes, wallpaper can be the ultimate source of inspiration for wedding invitations.

3. Fabric and textiles

Think tablecloths, vintage dresses, lace from your mother's wedding dress or ribbon—even the smallest piece of fabric can help create an entire stationery suite.

4. Your parents' wedding invitations

Pull your parents or grandparents wedding invitations out and study them closely. You might fall in love with the font, paper texture, or design.

5. Vintage magazines and books

Look at the colors, design layout, and paper style and you will find something that inspires you without question.

