

# MODERN ROMANTIC WEDDINGS

*is the perfect stress-free guide to planning  
your one-of-a-kind celebration.*

In her fourth book, trusted wedding resource Maggie Lord guides couples through every step of the process in an easy-to-read format. Plenty of Q&As and lists (such as Five Traditions to Skip, Simple Ways to Save Money, and Dos and Don'ts of the Planning Process), inspiring photography of real-life weddings, and helpful advice where no detail goes unnoticed, will empower you and your partner to plan a wedding celebration as unique as you are.

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MODERN ROMANTIC WEDDINGS



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## GOING FROM WEDDING STYLE TO WEDDING REALITY

Every wedding is made up of hundreds of little details. Whether you're single-handedly planning your wedding, hiring a wedding planner, or galvanizing your closest friends to help, the following suggestions will ensure your wedding day success.



### 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.



## THE NUMBER OF GUESTS

The number of guests you want to have at your wedding is as personal a choice as what style of dress you want to wear. Many times the venue will influence the guest count based on the number of people it can accommodate. If you want to have your wedding on a beach, this space allows you to create a guest list count as high as you choose since the space is unlimited; if you are considering a venue like a barn or dining room, the number of guests you can invite will go down. Couples get very creative when working on how they can achieve their guest list number. Many couples decide they will eliminate

inviting coworkers (which often makes the guest list spike) or they might decide that not every guest will be given an automatic plus-one for the event.

If your parents would like to invite friends of theirs, and your budget and venue allows for that, a good rule of thumb many couples work with is to assign a set number of guests each set of parents can invite and a separate number of guests for the bride and groom to invite. This will allow each family to share in the big day with the people who are important to them but also allows the couple to feel as if they get to control the number of guests in total.

You might have a rough number in your head but there is a good chance that number will change once you get the list of who you and your partner's family would like to invite. It is also good to at least have a rough idea of how many guests you might invite when looking at venues so you know if your picture-perfect venue can accommodate your guest list.





## A WEDDING TIMELINE

When it comes to creating a timeline for your wedding, the best thing you can do is build in extra time. Whether you have six months or eighteen months to plan, try to tackle as much as possible in the earlier phases so you won't be as stressed when you get close to your wedding day.

Here is a sample of a timeline for a twelve-month engagement. Make it your own by adding and subtracting where you see fit.



## 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

### 3 MONTHS

- Order wedding cake or desserts
- Order favors and decor items
- Book hair and makeup appointments
- Send out invitations

### 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

### 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

### 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



# FINDING YOUR STYLE

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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.

