

12+ Months Before (or ASAP)

- Meet, call, or e-mail important friends and family with the big news. Parents of the bride traditionally come first.
- Envision your overall wedding. (Use the worksheet on pages 10–11.)
- Draw up your wedding budget with help from your families. (Use the worksheet on page 14.)
- Choose several options for date and time. (See page 10.)
- Ask close friends and relatives to be members of the wedding party. (See Chapter 3.)
- Hire your wedding consultant.
- Decide on your wedding size and start drawing up the initial guest list. (See pages 188–92.)
- Start researching ceremony and reception sites. (See Chapters 4 and 5.)
- Book any vendors you have already decided upon or are completely focused on—after you make sure they suit your budget.
- Book your ceremony and reception locations. (See pages 41 and 53.)
- If the priest, minister, or rabbi at a house of worship isn't marrying you, choose and book an officiant. (See page 37.)
- Make a Web page to announce your wedding. (Go to www.TheKnot.com.) You may also choose to announce your engagement in the newspapers.
- Have an engagement party (optional). (You may want to register for gifts beforehand; see Chapter 8.)

8–10 Months Before (By date: ____/____/____)

- Bride: Start envisioning and shopping for your dress. (See Chapter 6.)
- Envision your wedding food; start researching and interviewing caterers. (See Chapter 7.)
- Start researching and interviewing photographers and videographers. (See Chapters 11 and 12.)
- Envision your wedding entertainment; start researching and interviewing reception bands or DJs. (See Chapter 9.)
- Picture your floral decor; start researching and interviewing florists. (See Chapter 14.)
- If you're marrying during a tourist or holiday season or having a destination wedding, send a save-the-date card to guests.

- If you'll have many out-of-town guests, research and reserve accommodations. (See page 28.)
- Book your caterer. (See pages 76–77.)
- Bride: Order your wedding dress. (See page 62.)
- Register for gifts. (See Chapter 8.)
- If you'll need to rent anything for your ceremony or reception (chairs, tables, tent, and so on), contact a rental company.
- Book your photographer. (See page 118.)
- Book your videographer. (See page 126.)
- Book your reception band or DJ. (See page 97.)
- Book your florist. (See pages 142–43.)

6–8 Months Before (By date: ____/____/____)

- Decide on your menu.
- Book your ceremony musicians. (See page 96.)
- Start shopping for bridesmaids' dresses. (See Chapter 10.)
- Finalize flower ideas with florist.
- Start planning your honeymoon. (See Chapter 13.)
- Order the bridesmaids' dresses. (See page 106.)
- Start working on your songlists for the ceremony (page 90) and reception (pages 90–91).

4–6 Months Before (By date: ____/____/____)

- Attend prewedding counseling (if required).
- Start shopping for invitations. (See Chapter 15.)
- Groom: Start shopping for your and the groomsmen's formalwear. (See Chapter 17.)
- If necessary, get passports for your honeymoon.
- Start shopping for wedding rings. (See page 42.)
- Envision your wedding cake; start researching and interviewing cake designers. (See Chapter 16.)

3 Months Before (By date: ____/____/____)

- Finalize your guest list.
- Order your invitations. (See pages 150–151.)
- Order your wedding cake. (See page 158.)
- Order your wedding rings.
- Hire a calligrapher if you want your invitations professionally addressed.
- Attend your shower (may be earlier, depending on when your hosts decide to have it).
- Groom: Rent the men's formalwear. (See page 165.)
- Hire limousines/other cars for transport on wedding day. (See Chapter 18.)

2 Months Before (By date: ____/____/____)

- Mail your invitations.
- If you'll say original vows, write them.
- Purchase gifts for parents, attendants, and each other.
- Find and meet with a makeup artist for a trial run or get a makeover at a department-store counter and purchase any products you need.
- Make an appointment with your hairstylist to try out big-day dos.

1 Month Before (By date: ____/____/____)

- Bride: Have your final wedding dress fitting. Bring your maid of honor along so she can learn how to bustle your dress. Have the dress pressed and bring it home.
- Call all bridesmaids to make sure they have their gowns ready for the wedding (or that they're in the process of having alterations done).
- Before your florist places your order, be sure that you're happy with all the flowers and arrangements you've chosen; make last-minute adjustments.
- If you want a groom's cake and/or other pastries or desserts, talk to your cake designer to discuss your additions.
- If you want a wedding program (and you didn't order a printed one with your invitations), write it, format it on your computer, and make copies for all your guests.
- Order or plan in-room welcome baskets—fruit, chocolate, bottled water, and other treats, plus a welcome note and an additional copy of directions to the sites—for out-of-town guests' hotel rooms.

Two Weeks & Counting

- Apply for a marriage license together in the town where you'll wed. (See page 43; you may need to go three weeks before.)
- Call guests who have not yet returned their invitation response cards.
- Deliver a must-take photo list to the photographer, including who should be in formal portraits. Determine when portraits will be shot (before or after the ceremony, or during the reception).
- Draw up and deliver to your DJ or bandleader a list of special song requests, and any songs you definitely want or *don't* want played.
- If needed, give your videographer a must-shoot list.
- Bride: Get one last prewedding haircut or trim and hair color touch-up.

1 Week Before

- Give the reception site and the caterer a final guest head count; include vendors, such as band members and the photographer, who will expect a meal. (Also, ask how many extra plates the caterer will prepare; that is, the plate count.)
- Supply the reception site manager with a list of requests from other vendors (such as a table for the DJ, setup space needed by the florist, and so on).
- Do the reception seating chart and write out place or table cards.
- Call professionals to confirm all arrangements and confirm a wedding-day (home or mobile) phone number for each:
 - Officiant ceremony site contact Phone: _____
 - Ceremony musicians Phone: _____
 - Reception site Phone: _____
 - Caterer Phone: _____
 - Florist Phone: _____
 - Photographer Phone: _____
 - Videographer Phone: _____
 - Cake designer/baker Phone: _____
 - Limousine or rental-car company Phone: _____
- Give the ceremony and reception site managers a schedule of vendor delivery and setup times, plus contact numbers.

- Groom: Get your hair trimmed.
- Attend bachelor/bachelorette parties.

2–3 Days Before

- Bride: If your dress still needs to be pressed or steamed, do this now.
- Groom: Go in for a final fitting and pick up your formalwear.
- Ask the best man to make sure all groomsmen go for fittings and pick up their outfits.
- Touch base with the ceremony and reception sites one more time.
- In preparation for the rehearsal, determine the order of bridesmaids and groomsmen in the processional and recessional.
- If the caterer will be arranging place cards, table cards, menu cards, or disposable cameras, hand them off.
- Reconfirm that the florist received your (correct) flower order (discuss any necessary last-minute substitutions) and knows where and when the flowers should be delivered. Should the personal flowers go to the ceremony site or to your home?
- Call the limousine or rental-car company to reconfirm locations and pickup times.
- Arrange for guests who will not rent cars to be picked up from the airport or train station. Ask local friends, attendants, or relatives to help.
- Put welcome baskets in out-of-town guests' hotel rooms (get attendants to help).
- Get a manicure and/or pedicure.

Day Before

- Make sure all wedding professionals have an emergency phone number to call on the day of the wedding.
- Write checks and/or talk to the wedding hosts (usually your parents, if not you) about final balances to be paid at the end of the reception.
- Meet your wedding party, ceremony readers, immediate family, and officiant at the ceremony site to rehearse the ceremony.
- Bring the unity candle, aisle runner, yarmulkes, or other ceremony accessories to the site, so you won't have to think about them on the wedding morning.
- Give your marriage license to your officiant.

- Attend your rehearsal dinner.
- Present attendants with their gifts at the rehearsal dinner (especially if they are accessories to be worn during the wedding).
- Get a good night's sleep!

Day Of

- Present parents (and each other) with gifts or at least a big hug and kiss.
- Give the best man and/or maid of honor your wedding bands.
- Give the best man the officiant's fee envelope, to be handed off after the ceremony.
- Hook up your reception site manager and your wedding consultant or maid of honor so they can deal with any questions or problems during the party.
- Assign a family member or attendant to be the photographer's contact.
- Remember to thoroughly enjoy yourselves at the reception.
- Arrange for someone to return rental supplies that didn't get sent back directly from the site the Monday after the wedding.
- Arrange for honor attendants to take your dress to the dry cleaner and tux to the rental shop the Monday after the wedding.

Postwedding

- If you were pleased by the work of your wedding vendors, send each a thank-you note (and a picture or two of their work, if possible).
- When you return from your honeymoon, make sure to call and thank each of your attendants one more time.
- Keep a gift log (see pages 193–97) and send out those thank-you notes as soon as possible.
- Log on to www.TheKnot.com and report what you loved most about your wedding and what, if anything, you'd do differently.
- Celebrate your one-month anniversary in style.