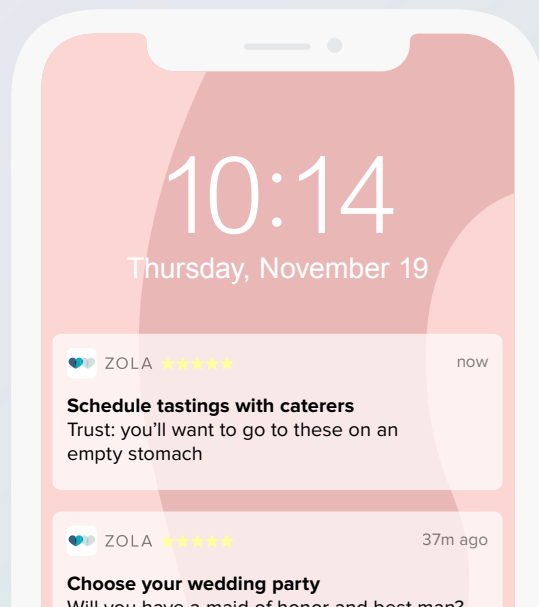


How to Plan Your Wedding

...in a few (or so!) steps. Don't worry, you got this.



PS. Download the Zola app
to keep your checklist with you all the time.



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Getting Started

Congratulations—you're engaged! It's time to dip your toes into the world of wedding planning. Here's where to start.

○ Take a look around Zola and get familiar with your checklist.

Don't worry—this timeline is not meant to stress you out! It's possible to plan an amazing wedding in just a few months. We're here to make sure you know about the little details and to help you make your wedding dreams come true.

○ Celebrate your engagement!

Forgive us for not surprising you at your engagement. We hope this wedding checklist makes up for it.

○ **Decide where you'll get married.**

While tradition says to get married in your hometown, you may have different hometowns or prefer to get married close to where you currently live. If you're willing to travel, picking a place in the middle of you and your guests may be a good option.

○ **Start building your guest list.**

EASY AT ZOLA

At this point, jot down every name that comes to mind even if you may have to pare down your list later on. Our **guest list tool** allows you to import an existing list, add names directly, or send your guests a link so they can add themselves. Once you have your guest list, you'll be able to use free addressing on **Save the Dates** and **Invitations**, and our online RSVP tool. You can even message your guests with any important updates.

○ **Create a wedding-specific email address.**

Keep all of your correspondence with vendors and guests in one convenient place with an email address that both you and your spouse-to-be have access to.

○ **Start a budget document to update throughout the planning process.**

We recommend using Google Sheets: It's easy to share and edit on the go. Make a column for your goal figures and a column for actuals. Know that your goals may shift based on what you value (flowers and decor, for instance, or food and wine, or all of the above).

○ **Plan your engagement party.**

Totally optional, but this is an ideal time to plan a joyful celebration with friends and family. Guests like to give gifts, so we recommend **starting your registry** and adding a few things before the party invites go out.

○ **Find your wedding planning community.**

Want some candid advice that's not from your family? Join an online forum full of couples going through the same planning process. Get inspiration, share your photos, ask for feedback, and more.

○ **Gather wedding inspiration and be ready to show it to vendors.**

Many vendors will ask to see either digital references or a binder of images to understand the vision you have for your wedding. Pinterest and Instagram are great (and convenient!) places to find imagery and ideas.

○ **Time to look at venues!** EASY AT ZOLA

We recommend seeing at least three venues. The more you visit, the more confident you'll feel in knowing what's out there when you make your final choice.

11-12 Months Out

OK, getting a hang of this thing yet? We know there's a lot to do, but we got this.

○ **Book your wedding ceremony and reception venues.**

Double check that both locations can hold the number of guests you'd like to invite. Before booking, find out if the venue requires you use only their approved vendors. If not, find out if there are any requirements for outside vendors.

○ **Choose your wedding party.**

Will you have a maid of honor and best man? What about bridesmaids and groomsmen? Flower girl? Ushers? Discuss what you want with your partner, then invite your nearest and dearest to join you and yours.

○ **Research wedding vendors.**

We're talking entertainment, caterers, florists, photographers, everything. It's time to get an idea of who will help create your wedding day vision. Browse pre-screened vendors on Zola and start compiling lists for outreach.

○ **Schedule tastings with caterers.**

Trust: you'll want to go to these on an empty stomach.

○ **Decide who's hosting (and paying).**

For any wedding, it's crucial to have the budget talk as early as possible. It's an old tradition for the groom's family to host the wedding, though many modern couples are making it work in a way that's a bit more equally-distributed.

○ **Schedule appointments to try on wedding attire.**

Pull several inspiration photos and bring them with you to your appointments. It'll help to focus your session.

○ **Decide if you'll book hair and makeup for your various wedding events.**

Engagement shoot? Bridal shower? Wedding day? Enjoy one less thing to worry about and pamper yourself if you'd like!

○ **Think about who you might want to officiate your wedding.**

Your officiant can be a mutual friend of you and your spouse-to-be, a family member, or a religious figure. Whoever feels right to you and your fiancé. Just make sure they're certified in the state you're getting married in.

○ **Take some engagement photos.**

If you end up doing a shoot, try a few locations and outfits for some variation. We know you'll both look great.

○ **Start building your wedding website.**

EASY AT ZOLA

A website is the easiest way to communicate all your wedding details to guests, from your schedule to travel, accommodations, dress code, and more. You can customize **Zola's free, beautiful website templates** with all this info in minutes, plus add fun photos, share your registry, and let guests RSVP online.

○ **Book accommodations for your guests.**

Couples often reserve rooms with different bed sizes, so guests have options. Once you secure your hotel blocks, you can easily share where-to-stay details on your wedding website or message all your guests with our free guest list manager.

○ **Book your wedding photographer.**

Ask the photographer if you can provide a shot list so you capture every moment. Work on your save the dates.

○ **Work on your save the dates.** EASY AT ZOLA

Set the tone for your big day with a beautiful design that shows off your style. At Zola, **we have tons of options for every couple, plus digital and magnet save the dates**, too. You can easily customize any of our designs with your photo, wedding details, and more. Plus, get a free sample pack anytime to touch and feel our paper in person.

8-10 Months Out

You're on a roll. Still a ways to go, but this is fun, right?

○ **Meet with your officiant.**

Discuss the structure of your ceremony and any readings you'd like to include.

○ **Book your band and/or DJ.**

This may seem ahead of schedule, but the good ones always go early, so we recommend finalizing your entertainment now. Once you choose your music, you'll likely be tasked with coming up with a list of must-hear songs, another list of absolutely-do-not-play songs, and a list of nice-to-hear-but-not-necessary songs.

○ **Start your Zola registry.** EASY AT ZOLA

Couples typically start their registry and add gifts to it 8-10 months before their wedding. This time frame makes it easy for guests to get engagement party and bridal shower gifts, too. At Zola, we have classic and unique wedding gifts, gift cards, and honeymoon funds (all in one place!). We recommend adding a mix of everything to give guests more options.

○ **Try on wedding gowns, dresses, or suits.**

It's helpful to have multiple undergarments and shoes options so you're ready to try on any option. Voguing is encouraged.

○ **Research invitation options.** EASY AT ZOLA

Send printed invites or digital ones—the choice is yours! If you go printed, now's a good time to think about enclosure cards, RSVP cards, and any other wedding paper you might need. Want to save time? You can **complete your entire invitation suite at Zola**, plus get matching programs, menus, even thank you cards for guests.

○ **Think about your wedding hashtag.**

Make this as direct or as creative as you'd like—just try to make it easy to memorize so that your guests use it correctly throughout the weekend. While not necessary, a wedding hashtag is a great way to quickly find all of the photos your family and friends take.

5-8 Months Out

This is the part where you have to juggle a few things at once. You're finalizing some details (invitations! attire!) and still planning others (registry! reception!). It's all coming together.

○ **Research hair stylists, then book a test run.**

You can go with different hair stylists and makeup artists or find someone who can do both. Ask about availability to help with your bridal party, too.

○ **Continue working on your wedding website.**

Consider all the things your guests may text you to ask about: directions, accommodations, dress code, and more. Then add that info to your site. We also recommend suggesting a few activities for your guests to do while in town and integrating your Zola registry so guests have everything they need in one convenient place.

○ **Meet with florists.**

Don't forget to bring your inspiration boards to your appointments.

○ **Look for a makeup artist and schedule a trial.**

You can go with different hair stylists and makeup artists or find someone who can do both. Ask about their availability to help with your bridal party,

too. You should have a trial to help save time on the big day and settle on your hair and makeup look beforehand. It's a great way to figure out exactly what you want.

○ **Say yes to the wedding gown, dress, or suit.**

Try it on one last time to make sure you've found the one. Then before you leave, inquire about the fitting schedule and pricing for alteration (unless it's a perfect fit!).

○ **Start researching bakers and schedule tastings.**

Just like for caterers, you'll want to go to these appointments on an empty stomach, too. Don't forget to bring your inspiration board.

○ **Send your save the dates.**

More and more couples are saving time (and \$\$!) by sending their save their dates online. Whether you go printed or digital, don't forget to clearly write your wedding website's address, so guests can keep track of your wedding details.

○ **Pick out the wedding party's attire.**

EASY AT ZOLA

Remind the wedding party to schedule their fittings, too (they sneak up on you). Want to save time? Our **Wedding Boutique** has all you need for every moment of your big day, all in one place. Browse bridesmaids dresses, jewelry, party favors, and more from today's best wedding brands.

○ **Having an outdoor wedding? Create a plan B in case of bad weather.**

It's better to over-prepare for this sort of scenario. You and your fiancé will have enough to worry about the day-of!

○ **Research and book your videographer.**

Look at each videographer's reel to see if their aesthetic appeals to you. Capturing footage at your wedding can be quite intimate, so meet with your favorites to find out if it's a good personality match, too.

○ **Finalize your florist and flowers.**

Bouquets, boutonnieres and arrangements, oh my!

○ **Add gifts to your Zola registry.**

If you're having a shower, you can always direct guests to your wedding registry. Don't forget to add a few unexpected gifts, like a wine subscription, fitness classes, or movie tickets.

○ **Start thinking about where you'd like to honeymoon!**

Remember: Your honeymoon is about what you will enjoy doing together most. It isn't about what pictures you'll be able to post on Instagram.

3-5 Months Out

Decision time! This is when you should make the majority of your bookings.

○ **Choose your invitation design.**

It's always a good idea to test the paper, printing, and colors before sending your invitations. Looking for a beautiful design? We have hundreds of options for every wedding style, from classic to bohemian and everything in between. You can also get a free sample pack anytime to touch and feel our paper and see a collection of our favorite designs in person.

○ **Book your baker.**

Make sure there's a cake delivery plan in place. Find out if your baker expects a tip upon delivery, too. We bet it'll be delicious.

○ **Book your wedding day hair stylist.**

Ask your stylist for any tips to prepare. Most recommend washing your hair the day before the wedding and avoiding any big hair decisions in the months leading up to it.

○ **Book your wedding day makeup artist.**

When you're booking, make sure they'll be available at your wedding location and find someone who makes you feel good. Look for a makeup artist who will start you off in a great mood.

○ **Decide if you'd like to book musicians for your ceremony.**

Live music always adds a personal touch.

○ **Book your honeymoon!**

If you plan on going away right after the wedding, it's ideal to have all honeymoon flights and hotels booked by now. Be sure to ask the hotel if they offer any complimentary honeymoon package—you never know!

○ **Book your rehearsal dinner venue.**

You can order paper invitations for this event or send an evite by messaging all of the guests from your Zola guest list. Your guests can even RSVP to your rehearsal dinner on your wedding website.

○ **Order your wedding invitations.**

Just like the save the dates the general rule of thumb is one invitation per household. But order 10-15% more envelopes in case of addressing mistakes. You can export a file with all of your guests' addresses to hand off to your calligrapher or paper service.

○ **Book the venues for additional events during the weekend.**

A wedding weekend can include a welcome gathering of some kind, a rehearsal dinner, the ceremony and reception, and a farewell breakfast. It can be a lot to manage so you can use Zola's events, guest messaging, and online RSVP to manage it all. Don't forget you'll also need to organize any menus or decor for these events, too.

○ **Book your group transportation.**

Shuttles, buses, limos... make sure they're all ready for the big day.

2 Months Out

The final stretch begins.

○ **Address and send your invitations.**

We recommend mailing your invites no later than six weeks before your wedding date. Need addressing help? Add your guests to our guest list manager, and we'll format all your addresses for you (and help collect

missing info, too). Then, you can easily export your list for your stationer. Want to save even more time? Create invitations at Zola, and we'll address all your envelopes for free.

○ **Pick out wedding bands.**

It's a piece you'll both wear every day, so take your time selecting the best ones for you two.

○ **Start organizing a welcome bag for guests.**

While this isn't a requirement, guests love to be surprised with snacks, activity recommendations, and a note from the couple when they check in to their hotel.

○ **Buy bridal accessories.**

Shoes, jewelry, undergarments... now's the time to complete the look. Bridal alert: Attend first fitting. Don't forget: You have multiple fittings. So if it's not perfect today, it WILL be!

○ **Start collecting RSVPs.**

If you're collecting physical cards, we recommend tracking RSVPs in a spreadsheet. Simply make a column with all of your guests' names and then note their response. Want to save time? Let guests RSVP online via your wedding website at Zola, and our free guest list manager will automatically record their responses (plus meal choices, plus ones, and more).

○ **Confirm date, time, and location with all vendors.**

Make sure they know where to show up and when.

○ **Think about gifts for your wedding party.**

Couples frequently gift these at the rehearsal dinner. Sometimes the gift is something the wedding party can wear or use the day of the wedding.

○ **Meet with your officiant and start thinking about your vows.**

Discuss how you'd like the ceremony to go and any passages, readings, or performances you'd like to be said. This is also good time to begin thinking about whether or not you and your fiancé would like to write your own vows.

1 Month Out

Home stretch. It's confirm, finalize, and get ready to get married season.

○ **Assemble RSVPs.**

If you need to remind guests to respond, we recommend waiting one to two weeks after your RSVP deadline to do so. Then you can reach out to guests with a polite phone call, email, or text. Our guest list manager makes it easy to check on your RSVPs anytime and message guests who haven't informed you of their plans yet.

○ **Confirm menus for all events.**

While you're at it, consider showing guests your meal options on gorgeous menu cards that match your invitation suite.

○ **Create seating chart and start organizing it.**

While you can't really assign seats until you have most of your RSVPs, you can at least start thinking about the layout of the reception room and generally where you'd like certain friends and family to be.

○ **Order paper goods for the big day.**

Think ceremony programs, menu cards, table numbers, escort cards, and place cards.

○ **Bridal alert: attend second fitting.**

We know you'll look great.

○ **Order thank-you cards.**

Nothing beats a handwritten thank you. Make sure to complete them within 3 months of the big day.

○ **Apply for and get your marriage license.**

Research the laws of the specific state where you're having your wedding before applying. Then go get it!

○ **Develop a wedding day timeline.**

When it comes to this list, there's no such thing as too much information.

Include each vendor's ETA along with their contact information and assign family or wedding party members to help with certain tasks. Then print it out when finished and send it to all of your vendors.

☐ **Confirm the shot list with your photographer.**

Try to think of every variation you want, so that you reserve enough time on the big day.

☐ **Finalize wedding payments for all vendors.**

Pro Tip: Leave some cash aside for vendors' tips and mark each bundle with who it's going to. A family member or someone in your wedding party can help take care of this for you.

☐ **Confirm the run of show for your ceremony.**

Touch base with your wedding officiant and any other people involved in the service. You'll be able to make some changes during your rehearsal, too.

Wedding Day and Beyond

Congratulations! You made it, you're married, you're done with your checklist. That was easy.

☐ **Get married!!!!**

Our biggest and most heartfelt congratulations to you and yours! Cut up a rug for us.

☐ **Celebrate!**

It's all happening.

☐ **Relaxxx**

Ahhh... now you can breathe. You did it!

☐ **Enjoy life as newlyweds.**

Thank you for letting us be part of your wedding. Keep in touch!