

Just got engaged? Congratulations!

There are many steps to be taken from here until the wedding date and beyond, and it can be a challenge to remember everything.

We have created this list as a help to ensure you remember all the basics. Not everyone will complete every step, however. Go with what works for you, and let this serve as a guide more than a rules list. Enjoy, and happy wedding planning!



☑ **Engagement Announcements:** Once close family and friends have been notified, many couples choose to create announcements to share their happy news. This can range from taking out an engagement announcement in the local newspaper, to having a formal portrait taken and sending it out in special printed announcement cards to everyone they know.

☑ **Pick a Date:** Of course you must now pick a date for your actual wedding ceremony and reception, if you are having one. Considerations will include: time of year you'd like to get married and any weather concerns that engenders;

availability of church, hall, club or other locale for the setting; friends and family who may need to take time off to come from afar; and how long you need for planning purposes.

- ☑ **Invitations:** Once you have a wedding date picked, you can go ahead and choose your invitations. Of course this will involve you and your fiancé(e) creating and narrowing down a guest list. Your parents may get involved in this process as well, and your budget may also play a key role in helping you decide how many people you can afford to share your special day with. Also, don't forget to order thank you notes to send after your wedding.
- ☑ **Rings:** Choose your wedding rings. These are the rings you will exchange during your marriage ceremony, and will wear for the rest of your married lives. There are as many options as there are couples; some couples like to buy matching wedding rings. You can also have them custom-made, or engraved with messages to each other. Shop around for these, as you may find similar rings at vastly differing prices by doing your homework.
- ☑ **Wedding Party:** Now is the time to choose your bridal party, including the best man, maid of honor, other attendants and any children involved ie. ringbearer and flower girl. While being asked to be in a bridal party is an honor, remember it is also a commitment and an expense, and be gracious if someone you ask wishes to decline. For those who say yes, celebrate and involve them in the process as much as possible. You will need to delegate some tasks during the planning and on the special day, and your bridal party can be a big help for many of these (see below). Additionally, you will likely want to give each of them special gifts to thank them for participating, so include this in your wedding planning budget.
- ☑ **Attire:** Of course, your wedding outfit can now be chosen, including your dress – yay! - and all accessories, a daytime or

'going away' bridal outfit if applicable, and the wedding party, groom, and parents' outfits for the special day

☑ **Ceremony:** This will include picking the location; some places such as popular churches will have a waiting list, so be sure and investigate as soon as you can to be certain you can secure the location of your choice. You will also need to consider such things as plans for the ceremony itself, which your priest or officiator will help with, wedding vows which you can write yourselves or research, limo or other transportation, flowers and any other décor you may wish to have for the ceremony, including ring holder pillow, flower girl basket, unity candles. If you would like to have a singer, piano player or other musical accompaniment be sure to book this as well. Don't forget to arrange for your marriage certificate! You will both sign this, along with your two chief witnesses (usually the maid of honor and best man) at the wedding ceremony.

☑ **Reception:** There is much to cover in this category, because wedding receptions can vary from simple luncheons to full-fledged dinner galas to cocktails on the beach at a resort. Once you have chosen and booked a location, you can begin to plan the décor and all the little details that will go into making your day exactly as you want it. This may include but not be limited to: catering or provision of food and drinks, wedding cake, décor, seating plans, tent/s, table and chair rentals, flowers and lighting, photography, and music, including choice of DJ, band or live orchestral music. Also consider arranging accommodations for out of town guests, and remember to make plans for rehearsal night, including dinner if desired.

☑ **Cultural:** Be sure and take into account any cultural considerations you need to be aware of. For example, some cultures have certain traditions such as breaking a glass, observing certain dances or ceremonial rites, etc.. You may also wish to have a program printed that explains the

significance of such rites so that all guests can understand and participate in the celebration fully.

- ☑ **Wedding Day Extras:** There are little extras you will want to remember, such as a guestbook and pen, wedding favors for your guests, and delegation of odd jobs that need attention, such as guest greeting, seating help, reception greeting line arrangement, watching kids, seating at the ceremony and reception, handing out the favors, and ushering the elderly. Your wedding party, close friends and responsible teens can help out with these important tasks, thus helping make the day smooth and enjoyable for everyone – just make sure you get acknowledgement of clear understanding from each person assigned a task.
- ☑ **Honeymoon:** Last but not least, many couples will book a little – or big – trip to follow the wedding. This vacation serves as a chance to get away from all the people and chaos leading up to the wedding, and just spend some time alone, and remember why you did this in the first place!

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