

Throw the Wedding of Your Dreams

Even for the millions of brides who came before you, planning the perfect wedding can have been an extraordinary affair and - without a doubt - an overwhelming task. That's why we've prepared the following special wedding tips to get you thinking in the right direction. We're certain you'll be able to use our helpful wedding tips to plan the perfect day!

Selecting the Date:



Selecting the date of your wedding will help you immensely in your planning. Only when the date is chosen can you proceed to book your wedding and reception location, the person who will perform your wedding, and ensure that the people you would like for your bridal party reserve that day.

In choosing the best wedding day that's right for you and your fiancé, be sure to check the yearly calendar for special three-day holidays - that way if you choose to have your wedding on a 3-day weekend, your out-of-town guests will have some extra travel time to work with and perhaps plan a mini-vacation. If you plan to have a traditional, religious ceremony for your nuptials, also be sure to plan your special day separate and apart from major religious holidays. Of course you'll want a date that holds good weather potential too, so we recommend using the Farmer's Almanac or reviewing previously recorded weather averages to pick the best day for your dream wedding. But please do keep in mind that these studies are *not* 100% reliable in predicting the actual weather on your wedding day!

It's also a good idea to stay away from certain dates such as September 11, the Ides of March, weekends with Friday the 13th, any daylight savings dates which can disrupt your guests' arrival at your own wedding and Superbowl Sunday! Also, try not to plan your wedding date around the holidays when your guests are expected to celebrate with their own family and friends!

Wedding Party, Speeches, Ushers & Others

If you plan to have a wedding party, selecting from your friends and family can be a difficult task. Remember that in addition to the best man, maid of honor, groomsmen and bridesmaids, you also can ask people to be readers during the ceremony, or to give speeches during the reception or the rehearsal dinner, to be an usher or to be in charge of the guestbook and making sure people sign it as they arrive. Some people opt to keep it simple and just have a maid of honor and a best man. Either way, you can announce your wedding party on your webpage at **AGreatAffair.com** and provide your guests with some general information regarding who is in your wedding party.

It is appropriate at the time of the wedding to give a gift to the wedding party as a thank you for all the effort that they have put into helping you plan your perfect day. Gifts range from small personal gifts, like a framed picture of you with your wedding party, to more extravagant gifts like pieces of jewelry. The wedding party gift provides a very good opportunity to coordinate your bridal party, such as by gifting each a necklace or shoes to wear as part of their bridesmaid attire.

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Ceremony & Reception Locations:

The location of your wedding ceremony and reception is all about you and your fiancé's preferences and any financial limitations you may have. But you certainly will have an array of options to choose from. For example, you can opt for the traditional wedding ceremony in a church, synagogue, or other religious site or you could enjoy reciting your vows on a beach somewhere overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Likewise your wedding reception can be located in your home, under a big white tent overlooking the beach, or in a grand hall or ballroom. You must also choose whether your wedding will be held at a location close to where most of your friends and family live, or whether you will have a destination wedding. Again, this will depend on your tastes and of course, your wedding budget! Don't forget, **AGreatAffair.com** allows you to register to any wedding day expenses you desire to help you achieve your perfect wedding.

Wherever you choose to have it, you will need to thoroughly research your reception location to collect the following information:



(1) Will the facility provide you with the wedding vendors you will need (i.e., caterer, baker, etc.) or will you need to hire independent vendors to set up at the facility?

(2) What are the facility's rules about delivery by outside vendors? (i.e. when can the florist set up?)

(3) What sort of supplies (i.e., tablecloths, dishware, silverware, wine glasses, etc) will be provided by the facility and what remaining supplies will you need to independently rent?

(4) Does the place have a storage facility to store wedding supplies (chairs, tables, etc.) if their delivered too early?

(5) Does the place provide food catering and what type of food menu can they prepare?

(6) Do they offer a variety of alcoholic drinks and what does their menu of drinks look like?

(7) Is there enough parking, bathrooms, and electrical outlets available to comfortably handle the demands of your special event?

(8) Can the place supply a dance floor or will you need to rent one?

(9) Are there coolers at the facility to store flower centerpieces and also the wedding cake?

One of the single most expensive items at reception is the cost of drinks. You need to determine whether you will host a bar, or have a cash bar where your guests can buy their drinks. Also, decide ahead of time what drinks you will serve with meals or for toasts. As you can imagine, there are an endless number of factors to consider in choosing your reception site so when researching various locations, we recommend writing your questions down ahead of time before meeting with the reception coordinator – that way you'll be sure to hit all the right points at your meeting together.

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Your Wedding Dress and Bridesmaid Attire

Searching for your perfect wedding dress can be fun and overwhelming. Make sure to start the process at least 4 months before the special day. Some designers need at least 6 months to get you your dress. Look through magazines, visit bridal shows, surf the net. Try to decide first what style dress you prefer. Also, most dresses come in varying colors of white, and some are multicolored. Think about how your dress will look like next to your bridesmaids in pictures. Don't forget your accessories – your jewelry, purse, bra and underwear, shoes and a veil and crown.

With respect to your bridesmaid dresses, first determine what color you would like for your bridesmaids. Then determine what kind of dress style would look best on your bridesmaids – bearing in mind if certain women are heavy set, their coloring and other physical attributes. At that point you need to decide whether all the bridesmaids will wear the same dress or whether they can wear different styles in the same color. You also need to determine whether your maid of honor will wear the same dress or whether her style of dress will be different in any manner.

Whether its your wedding dress or the dresses of your bridal party - remember to ask how long it takes to get the dresses in, and make sure you have 3 weeks to a month available for fittings and alterations.

Finally, don't forget to tell your bridal party any preferences you may have as to the shoes they wear, how they wear their hair or makeup, or what jewelry and nail polish you would like.

Entertainment & Music:



Choosing the right entertainment and music for your special night can be a very challenging task! After all, the right music and entertainment can simultaneously put a smile on your guests' faces as well as ensure some memorable moments at the party. You can hire a live band to belt out your favorite tunes or hire a one-man DJ, which will leave more room for a dance floor. Having a live band can be much more expensive than a DJ, so make sure to evaluate this against your budget.

In either case, make sure to prepare a list of the songs you want to hear at the reception. Also, make sure to let your band or DJ know what songs you have chosen for your entrance into the reception, your first dance, and any dances with parents or special relatives. Also, don't be afraid to add some ethnic music at the reception. For example, consider adding some up-beat middle-eastern music to your wedding so you and your guests can practice belly dancing! Your guests will appreciate your unique style and diverse music choices and they'll be happy to belly dance the night away!

In the event that you cannot get the floral arrangements you want on your budget, try decorating with candles. They are far less expensive, but can also achieve a very elegant setting. If you are worried about candles going out try using flameless candles – even your guests won't know the difference. Make sure to handle candles carefully as there is risk of fire. Also, make sure that your location permits the use of candles, some may not permit this due to insurance limitations.

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Flowers:



Choosing the right flowers will depend on a number of factors such as the bride's tastes and her personality. Ultimately, your flowers should compliment the overall theme of your wedding, as well as be a nicely added accessory to your wedding dress and your bridesmaids' dresses. Of course, your wedding budget will also be a determinative factor in choosing the right florist!

We recommend asking any potential florist to show you live sample bouquets and centerpieces that you can view, not just photo booklets of their latest work. After all, seeing live samples will give you the opportunity to clearly judge the florist's work and talent at making the perfect flower piece. Also, after you've decided on the right flower type, colors and style, be sure to ask your florist to prepare a sample of what your flower pieces will actually look like before she mass produces them for your special occasion. That way, you won't be surprised or disappointed by the look of your flowers on your wedding day as you would have already seen a real live sample ahead of time! Seeing the real thing can also ensure that you and your florist are on the same page when it comes to creating the perfect flowers for your perfect day!

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Photographers and Videographers

Usually you will have a lot of choices among photographers and videographers. Make sure to see samples of their work. Ask photographers if they will also shoot your engagement portrait. Look at what type of albums they have for you to choose from. Decide if you also want to purchase an album for any parents – they are usually less formal than your wedding album but may be available in packages. Make sure to give the photographer a list of pictures that he or she must shoot – such as you with your in-laws, or a family portrait with your grandparents, or anything else you would like. Let the photographer know if you want natural pictures taken, or whether you prefer people to pose for pictures, or whether you want a combination.

Videographers also need direction from you – like whether you want the videographer to film messages from each of your guests or not. Also, you will have to choose music that will ultimately play in the background of all or part of the video. You also need to decide whether the videographer will film the wedding, the reception or both, and whether he/she will film the period leading up to the wedding. Make sure to ask how many copies of the DVD you get, and decide if you need to order more for family or friends that you think would appreciate a copy.

Although these wedding tips are a helpful preliminary guide to planning the perfect wedding, we understand that there's still lots to do before the big day. The important thing is to pace yourself and to create and organize the special day according to a detailed schedule you've prepared. Checkout the checklist provided by AGreatAffair.com to help you manage the process. Also where appropriate, don't be afraid to ask your friends and family for help when you need it!