

# *The Bride Guide*

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PLANNING YOUR BIG DAY



# Congratulations!

It seems like the proposal was just seconds ago, and now it is time to plan one of the biggest celebrations of your life— your wedding!

This guide will walk you through the key details that you may otherwise miss— from decor inspiration to budget tips to professional insights.

## After the Engagement

### GIVE YOURSELF ENOUGH TIME (AND MONEY) TO PLAN YOUR WEDDING

Set a budget and prepare a guest list immediately after the engagement. This will help you narrow down venues, caterers, and other vendors that will be able to accommodate your needs.

Next, set a date. Keep in mind that during peak season (May through October), in-demand vendors book up quickly. We recommend giving yourself at least one full year to plan to ensure access to the best dates, services, and preferred vendors.

For those planning a honeymoon at the same time as the wedding, give yourself at least six months to a year to scout the best airfare rates, accommodations, and packages.

Lastly, start shopping for your wedding dress! Most dresses take four to six months to be delivered, and you'll still need time to accommodate for alterations.

### KNOW WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU

Focus on the needs and values that are most important to you and your fiancé, not what your friends or family want. It is best to have a frank conversation with both families about the wedding details early in the planning process.



## Keep in Mind

**TRADITIONS:** What wedding traditions are your style?

**VENUE:** Pick a place that you love that fits your budget.

**NEEDS:** What are you not willing to compromise?

**STYLE:** Will this be casual, formal, or black tie? Venues and decor should align with the overall style of the wedding.

# Tips for Budget-Minded Couples

## TIME VS. MONEY

Avoid going down a DIY spiral. Pinterest and DIY websites have been both a blessing and a curse for the budget-minded couples. It is very easy for a bride and her team to take on more than they can handle. Consider what is worth doing yourself and what is better left to professionals. Don't sacrifice all of your time (and your mental stability) to save a few dollars.

## KNOW WHEN TO SCRIMP AND WHEN TO SAVE

Here are a few ways to save that won't cost you your sanity:



### Fashion & Beauty

#### DON'T PAY FULL PRICE FOR A WEDDING DRESS:

Keep an eye out for sample sales and trunk shows for unbeatable markdowns.

#### TAKE YOUR PERSONAL STYLE INTO ACCOUNT:

Even if mom wants you to look like a princess in the big ball gown, you know that simple boho sheath is screaming your name.

#### DO YOUR OWN HAIR & MAKEUP:

If you have a steady hand and the right tools, you can create a beautiful bridal glow all on your own!

### Venue & Decor

#### HOLD THE CEREMONY AND RECEPTION AT THE SAME VENUE:

One venue. One deposit.

#### CHOOSE DECOR THAT CAN BE REPURPOSED OR SOLD:

If you can't find a way to repurpose your decor in your own home or as party favors, try selling it.

#### BUY (OR RENT) SILK OR HANDMADE PAPER FLOWERS:

Live flowers are often more expensive, and the faux ones can look just as gorgeous.

### Food

#### ELIMINATE OR LIMIT APPETIZERS:

Appetizers are a delicious budget sucker. If you plan to eliminate appetizers, avoid having a large gap (longer than 30-40 minutes) between the ceremony and reception where guests are left hungry and waiting.

#### HAVE YOUR FAMILY MAKE SOME (OR ALL) DESSERTS:

Just make sure your venue or caterer approves this before you give your helpers the thumbs up.

#### CONSIDER AN ALTERNATIVE TO A TRADITIONAL WEDDING CAKE:

Cupcakes or doughnuts, anybody?

### Miscellaneous Details

#### SKIP THE WEDDING FAVORS

Small extras can add up quick.

#### FOREGO THE PROGRAMS

#### CONSIDER A HONEYMOON FUND IN LIEU OF A GIFT REGISTRY





THE ONE AREA WHERE YOU SHOULDN'T SKIMP:

## *Food & Drinks.*

Think of all the weddings you have been to. The wedding with amazing food and drinks comes to mind first.

**PEOPLE ALWAYS REMEMBER THE FOOD.**

**PRO TIP:**  
Don't be the "lackluster wedding food couple."  
Great food can be had at any budget.



# Straight Talk From Our Wedding Planner

Unlike your dessert station, we won't sugarcoat this—wedding planning can get messy. A few Do's and Don'ts:

## DO

***...know which aspects of your wedding are most important to you and ration your budget accordingly***

***...know your wedding venue before you begin dress shopping:***

The 25-foot Princess Diana train isn't ideal for your beach wedding.

***...listen to your caterer regarding how much food and drink to have:***

Knowing how much food and beverage is needed for your guest list is their specialty.

***...keep premium photography moments open for the professional photographer you hired:***

Grandma can get a snapshot with her new smartphone later.

***...manage your "Pinterest Expectations"***

## DO NOT

***...rely on budget figures you find online:***

These figures usually come from national or regional averages, not local, so do your research.

***...judge a vendor based on price alone:***

Many vendors are willing to customize their packages so they fit your budget and needs.

***...wait until the last minute to finalize details:***

Finalize major details around four to six months before your wedding.





## Often Overlooked Details

### CREATE A WEDDING WEBSITE:

This is the place for details like transportation, hotel rooms, area restaurants, etc.

### PICK A HASHTAG

### DON'T FORGET ABOUT ADDITIONAL COSTS

gratuity, labor fees, rental fees, cake cutting charges, etc.

### MEN NEED ALTERATIONS, TOO!

#### LAST TIP:

Don't forget to stop,  
take a deep breath, and  
enjoy your special day!



## Catering with Character For Over 40 Years

For more event planning advice, reach out to the pros at Gilmore Catering at [catering@gilmorecatering.com](mailto:catering@gilmorecatering.com), follow us on social media at [@GilmoreCatering](https://www.instagram.com/GilmoreCatering), and visit us online at [www.gilmore-catering.com](http://www.gilmore-catering.com).

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