

planning timeline



let the countdown begin!

You enjoyed the initial rush of starry-eyed excitement, gushed over so many gorgeous ideas for the wedding, and all but shouted the news from the rooftops — until the zing of nuptial suspense gave over to a shuddering reality of to-do's and task-lists. Planning your wedding may seem daunting, but a deep breath and a little organization go a long way. No matter what your time-frame, this basic checklist will get you started, and our exclusive Organized Bride Wedding Planner will keep you on task right up to the big day.

6 to 12 months

- Announce your engagement and set the date
- Introduce your parents and future in-laws
- Set your budget — Determine what you both can spend and what your families will contribute
- Compile the guest list
- Reserve the ceremony site, the reception venue and the caterer
- Select members of the wedding party
- Shop for your gown, and the bridesmaids' dresses. Order dresses by the 6-month mark.
- Order and send out save-the-date cards
- Set up a wedding website, with travel and hotel information
- Register at two or three stores for a variety of gifts in different price ranges

3 to 6 months

- Sign contracts with vendors such as photographer, florist, officiant, and a band or DJ
- Discuss the ceremony and a rehearsal time with your officiant
- Order invitations
- Assist the groom's family with rehearsal dinner plans
- Plans honeymoon and reservations
- Choose and order wedding bands
- Purchase attendants' gifts, and gifts for each other
- Select wedding accessories, including the guest book, ring pillow, and favors

2 to 3 months

- Select men's attire with your fiancé
- Meet with the musicians to create song lists
- Ask close friends and family to do special readings
- Research the marriage license requirements for your state
- Finalize the menu with the caterer, and the cake details with the baker
- Arrange transportation from the ceremony to the reception

4 to 6 weeks

- Address and mail the invitations
- Write thank-you notes as wedding gifts arrive
- Order ceremony programs and reception menus
- Submit wedding announcements to local newspapers
- If you plan to take dance lessons together, now's the time
- Decide on a hairstylist and a makeup artist, and have a trial run with both
- Obtain the marriage license

1 week

- Give caterer a final headcount, and confirm plans with other vendors
- Go over the schedule with the wedding party so they know what's expected of them
- Write as many thank-you notes as possible
- See your hairstylist for a last-minute trim, and encourage your fiancé to do the same
- Confirm honeymoon reservations and begin packing

1 day

- Drop off welcome baskets for out-of-town guests at the hotel
- Pack everything needed for the ceremony, including your "survival kit"
- Get a manicure and pedicure and, if there's time, a relaxing massage
- Attend the rehearsal and rehearsal dinner—and start celebrating!

get married!

