

counting down

the days until "I do"

There are many guides available to help you plan your overall wedding, offering a broad guideline to the average 15 month engagement. However, there are very few checklists available to help you prepare for the last few weeks leading up to your big day. Certainly this list isn't exhaustive, but will help remind you of some of the important details that you may have overlooked.

	4 weeks	3 weeks	2 weeks	1 week
bridal gown	Last fitting to finalise hemline & make last adjustments. Make sure you bring the shoes you are wearing on the day.	Pick up your dress and lay or hang depending on designers instructions. Keep your dress away from any danger areas e.g. air conditioner, windows, sticky hands!	Purchase your underwear. Choose underwear without seams for a clean finish. You can always buy a special pair to put on later in the evening.	Have gown steamed by a professional. Purchase non-alcoholic baby wipes, great for getting rid of little makeup marks on the day.
rings	Pick up wedding rings. Make sure you try them on before you leave to ensure they fit snugly.	Choose someone to hand over the rings. If you have no bridal party, then perhaps offer this to the fathers of the bride and groom.	Purchase a ring box or bag that you can pass to the ring bearer on the day of the wedding.	Polish engagement ring or have it professionally cleaned.
service & legals	Finalise all your service details, including whether you are going to memorise your vows, read them off a card, or repeat them after the celebrant.	Ensure all of your Readers have a copy of the Order of Service so they know when they will be speaking and can prepare beforehand.	Consider summarising the Order of Service for guests in a cute way e.g. print the order on a fan, or create a postcard to hand to guests as they arrive.	Arrange a rehearsal if required.
guest numbers & seating	Finalise all RSVPs. Follow up any guests who have not responded.	Check with your venue on the best seating plan that will suit your numbers. Finalise this now before you do your seating plan.	Create your seating plan board and ensure the font is large enough for older guests to read. Table numbers are better than names and easier to find on arrival.	Personalise your place names by adding fabric details or choose colours to complement your place setting.
food & drink	Finalise the menu with your venue or caterer. Consider roving canapés and desserts for a more relaxed atmosphere.	Finalise your alcohol and set a budget if the venue charges by consumption.	If parents are paying for food and drinks, ensure they have the payment details for the venue or caterer.	Let your venue know whether there are any guests with dietary requirements or allergies.
wet weather	Check weather forecasts at the Government BOM website.	Review wet weather options and consider how guests will get from your ceremony to reception.	Book wet weather option and transport options if required.	Check the weather forecasts daily. Things can change quickly. Inform all suppliers of any changes.
ceremony decor	Review your ceremony decor list.	Think about small additions that are cost effective e.g. a lace doily for your registry table, bags of white shells for beach weddings etc.	Consider arranging a water stand for your guests with personalised water bottles.	Ensure your guests have enough shade in summer by providing complimentary parasols or offer pashminas in winter.
reception decor	This is your last chance to make an impression on your guests. Work on the details.	Chill out areas are a unique way to provide an extra fun area for guests. Hire old vintage armchairs & lanterns or consider a photobooth.	Check your lighting. Replace bright lights with candlelight and ensure those areas like the table seating board have enough light.	Do something sweet in guest bathrooms e.g. scented candles, florals, luxury soaps.
photos	Take a walk around your chosen spot for photos and look out for tidal times and direction of sunlight.	Make a decision on the locations and style you are looking for. Ask your photographer what their favourite spots are.	Meet with your photographer and do a mock walk through of your day. Give them insight into the people you want captured.	If you have a unique stationery package, organise a full set for inclusion within your set up shots.
video	Make sure your videographer is familiar with your place of ceremony.	Choose the songs you want featured throughout your video. Consider what pace would work well with your video	Meet and talk through your wedding day. This is really important as it gives them insight as to what you hold important.	If your photographer and videographer have never met, introduce them. They will work better as a team.

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entertainment	Reconfirm all your bookings with entertainment. Ask them what requirements they need e.g. seats, shading.	Provide your entertainment with the feature songs for your Processional, Signing of Registry, Recessional and Bridal Waltz.	Provide contact numbers, addresses and timing details.	Arrange cheques if you are paying entertainment on the night.
MC	Choose your MC wisely. This person must be a confident speaker and know you both well enough to tell a few stories.	Sit down with your MC and discuss the order of your reception, people you want to talk about, and how you want the night to feel.	Give your MC a time schedule and ensure that they know how long each person has to speak for. Make sure they can manage this.	Provide your MC with the full Order of the Day, with the final agreed timings of food service and speeches.
beauty	Trial hair & makeup. Preferably on the same day. Bring along veils and hairpieces.	Book in waxing and massage appointments. Pamper yourself. Invest in a lippy that will see you through the night.	Bride & bridesmaids to have facials. Men to have haircuts at least one week prior	Get a manicure & pedicure. Don't fake tan it too close to your day. Fake tan can create havoc on white and ivory!
flowers	Review your flower order and ensure all details are correct. If you are having flowers on guest tables at the reception try and notify your florist of your final table numbers.	Consider floral designs that you may have missed e.g. for the registry table, a little throw posy, chill out area designs, something for the loos.	Reconfirm the finishing touches to your bouquets. Consider the colour of your ribbon, embellishments, and the length of stems to suit.	Ensure your florist receives a copy of your Order for the Day and is aware of any issues with delivery times or locations.
cake	Review your cake order and ensure the size reflects your final rsvp list. Consider whether you want to have an extra tier to keep after your wedding day	Decide on whether your cake is being served at the restaurant or provided as take home packs. Order cake boxes.	Make sure the venue is aware of how you want to serve the cake and whether any part of it is needed to be saved e.g. top tier. Ensure they have a stylish cake knife.	Ensure your cake designer receives a copy of your Order for the Day and is aware of times and addresses for delivery.
Stationery	Review stationery needs. Think about menus, order of service, place cards, table names, entry signs, table seating plans, thank you cards? Order together, to save on print costs	Print menus to match your invitation stationery. Consider personalising them with guest details instead of doing place cards.	Ensure you have holders for all placecards and table names, or create ones that stand on their own.	Cross check your seating plan and your place cards. Bundle your place cards by table to make placement on the tables easy for staff.
bonbonniere	If you are thinking about providing guests with a gift, get creative. This doesn't always need to be edible.	Consider wrapping your bonbonniere for an extra decor touch. Fine fabrics and embellishments look great and get noticed by guests.	Ensure that the number of bonbonniere matches the number of guests.	Box the bonbonniere up and place in the order of your table seating plan, making it much easier for your helpers to place.
guest transport	Finalise all those guests requiring transport and nominate one person to be "bus monitor" to do a head count prior to leaving.	Talk with the transport operator who can suggest best times for pick up and drop off and best meeting spot.	Contact guests and inform them of meeting point and pick up times.	Inform transport operator if there are any changes in your ceremony spot due to bad weather.

top 10 hints and tips for making the most of your day

- You will most likely feel dehydrated prior to your ceremony (something about all the excitement and nervous energy) so make sure you drink plenty of water in the morning.
- Allow yourself some time between hair and makeup and leaving to the ceremony to have something to eat and relax.
- Give mum something really important to do in the morning. Mums like being involved, and if you have a mum that panics, the best thing you can do is give her something to do to take her mind off things. This will help you relax too.
- Even if you don't like having your photo taken, do take the time to have bridal photos (allow one hour). You will regret it if you don't.
- Don't panic if you are running a few minutes late. It is perfectly acceptable to be up to 10 minutes late to your own wedding. Far better than arriving prior to your guests!
- During the night, take your groom's hand and take some time out to look around and enjoy the moment. Yes, all these people are here because they love you.
- Use the time between entree and main courses to do the round of your guests and thank them for attending.
- Trust your suppliers. They are professionals in their field and will take care of little details and issues that arise. Don't micro-manage your suppliers. Just relax and know that everything is going to plan.
- You can be assured that there will be at least one thing that happens during the night...a broken glass, the spilling of red wine. Don't worry about it. You cannot control these things. Just let it go.
- Remember, this is your wedding day. It is not a dress rehearsal. It is not a grand photo shoot. It is the day you make your commitments. Remember why you are here and let love conquer all.