

real
weddings

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— THE TIMELINE —

THE TIMELINE

AS SOON AS YOU'RE ENGAGED:

- Organize, organize, organize!
- Set budget
- Discuss time frame and dates
- Determine wedding basics: formal vs. informal, day vs. night, etc.
- Use the *Real Weddings Magazine's* timeline to help keep you on track and use *Real Weddings Magazine* (along with *Real Weddings Magazine's* website and social media pages!) to start your inspiration boards!

9-12 MONTHS

DATE:

- Check out *Real Weddings Magazine's* Special Offers!
- Set the date (but be flexible until you book your venue)
- Hire a planner
- Research venues, and then make the decision on your venue as this will often guide other decisions that you'll need to make
- Research and book other wedding pros ASAP: caterer, photographer, videographer, dj, floral designer, officiant, musicians, transportation, etc. (see additional worksheets available on RealWeddingsMag.com to help you identify the vendor categories that are most important to you)
- Choose colors and/or theme
- Research the marriage license (see list on RealWeddingsMag.com)
- Invite attendants
- Draft guest list (see worksheets on RealWeddingsMag.com to get started)
- Register (it's like virtual shopping!)
- Start shopping for gown / attire
- Set up engagement photo session
- Set up wedding website
- Once your guest list is finalized, send out save-the-date cards. Pro Kate Whelan from Kate Whelan Events says, "Save-the-date cards give ample notice for out-of-town guests, especially if your wedding will be during a holiday or on a popular weekend. Be sure to include any airline or hotel room information to make it easier for guests to make travel arrangements."

Beauty Boost: begin fitness regime

6-9 MONTHS

DATE:

- Invitations/stationery. Pro Catrina Arcularius from Catrina Maria Designs says, "Overestimate your order by about 10 percent. It's a great idea to order extra envelopes in any case. If you're on a short timeline, try ordering the envelopes first while the invitations are being printed so that you can get them addressed early."

- Book accommodations for out-of-town guests
 - Order cake and dessert bar
 - Sign vendor contracts/make deposits
 - Order gown and choose additional accessories
 - Choose attendants' attire
 - Schedule time off from work
 - Book honeymoon arrangements
 - Mail thank you notes as you receive gifts
 - Begin dance lessons
- Beauty Boost: start your med-spa treatments*

6 MONTHS

DATE:

- Schedule rehearsal and rehearsal dinner
- Book wedding night hotel
- Arrange day-of transportation
- Finalize guest list
- Order and/or start making favors
- Shop for ceremony/reception accessories (cake knife, ring pillows, etc.)
- Secure passports, visas, shots, if necessary

Beauty Boost: start thinking about wedding hair and makeup—figure out the look you want now!

4 MONTHS

DATE:

- Consult attorney for changes to insurance, wills, accounts and, if you choose, a prenuptial agreement
- Gather other necessary paper work that may be needed (such as proof of divorce, death or annulment of previous marriage—this will be needed when you get your marriage license)
- Shop for and order wedding bands
- Reserve rental items
- Develop wedding hashtag
- Order custom signage (don't forget to include wedding hashtag where appropriate)
- Choose groom and groomsmen attire
- Shop for attendants' gifts

Beauty boost: book wedding day appointments

2 MONTHS

DATE:

- Arrange wedding-weekend activities. Pro Lora Ward from The Venue Vixens says, "'After Glow' brunches are often arranged, especially if there are many out-of-town guests attending. The invitation can include everyone invited to the wedding, but most often is kept to the out-of-towners and family. Depending on the formality of this gathering, invitations may or may not be necessary. Or consider a 'Pre-Social' hour immediately before the wedding."
- Mail invitations (Don't forget to make a spreadsheet of your guests and assign each of them a number—

put that number on the back of their RSVP return card so that you can match the card to each guest just in case they forget to fill in their information before they mail it back to you.)

- Tasting with caterer, finalize menu
- List of must-take photos for photographer (see worksheet on RealWeddingsMag.com)
- Music for ceremony and reception (see worksheet on RealWeddingsMag.com)
- Confirm attendants' attire is arranged
- Update registry
- Pay deposits for honeymoon

Beauty Boost: see dentist for pre-wedding cleaning

1 MONTH

DATE:

Rehearsal dinner invites. Ward says, "It is not standard to send invitations to the rehearsal dinner, but if there is some question as to who should attend, it's a good idea. This is often a dinner planned

by the groom's parents, so they may wish to have invitations showing they are hosting and to make it special."

- Send day-after invites, if necessary
- Assign ceremony/reception responsibilities
- Confirm details with vendors
- Write or select vows
- Arrange marriage license
- Final dress fitting, with all accessories
- Arrange ushers and/or attendant to distribute programs at ceremony (if you have them)

Beauty Boost: hair/makeup trial run; de-stress with a spa day just for you!

2 WEEKS

DATE:

Dinner seating chart/place cards. Whelan says, "To create an organic flow to your event, try to seat the elderly and less social guests away from the dance floor, where the music is loud. Place

the younger, more social guests near the dance floor and bar areas. After all, this is where they will be spending the most time—and where they can get the party started!" And, consider putting your wedding hashtag on your place cards so that your guests can easily hashtag wedding photos that they take on social media.

- Contact guests who haven't responded
- Confirm honeymoon arrangements; share itinerary with family
- Arrange house and/or pet sitter
- Gift/welcome baskets for out-of-towners

Beauty Boost: final facial before big day; hair cut and color—don't do anything drastic. If you're making a drastic change, do so at least three months before the wedding.

1 WEEK

DATE:

- Arrange for dress pick up/delivery
- Break in shoes
- Final head count to caterer
- Distribute contact list/directions
- Prepare tip/payment envelopes for vendors; arrange for someone you trust to distribute these the day of the event
- Recruit someone to mail marriage announcements, if you're sending
- Get out the luggage and pack!

Beauty Boost: get waxed; begin teeth whitening (consult with dentist, and don't overdo it)

DAY BEFORE

DATE:

- Ask trusted friend/family member to bring marriage license and to be in charge of making sure witnesses sign the license after the nuptials
- If groom is renting a tuxedo, make arrangements for someone to return it if you're leaving for your honeymoon the day after your wedding
- Deliver welcome baskets
- Give rings to best man
- Distribute attendant gifts
- Rehearse

Beauty Boost: get a manicure and pedicure

THE BIG DAY!

DATE:

- Eat and be sure to drink lots of water before the festivities begin! During your reception, you'll be talking with guests and (likely) drinking alcohol, so having a little food and water in your system earlier in the day will help immensely.
- Have luggage delivered to wedding night hotel
- Remember to switch engagement ring to right hand
- GET MARRIED! Relax and enjoy the day!

Beauty Boost: get pampered by hair and makeup team

POST HONEYMOON

- Send thank yous
- Return gifts, if necessary
- Make sure vendor bills are paid
- Order wedding photos and albums
- Collect social media photos using your hashtag
- Have gown dry-cleaned and/or preserved, or
- Donate dress, or
- Have a "post wedding" photo shoot
- Enjoy married life! ∞

