



Your Complete Wedding Guide

Create your dream wedding within your budget



Hurray, you are engaged, in love, and about to commence a life journey together. Now you want to announce it to the world and shout out loud how happy you are. But where exactly do you start? We all know that planning a wedding is a huge task, and can be daunting if you don't know where to start or what to prioritise. Here's where we can help! *Your Complete Wedding Guide* contains everything you need to know, including:

- Tips
- Price guides
- To do lists
- Timelines
- Wedding etiquette
- Budget planner

etiquette

/ˈetɪkət,etiˈkɛt/

noun

the customary code of polite behaviour in society or among members of a particular profession or group.



• ETIQUETTE •

STOP for a moment in your excitement to tell the world. Out of respect and common courtesy you should either visit or phone those closest to you such as parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, (and children from a previous marriage if you have some) advising of your engagement. Once done, then splash your news across social media.





ENGAGEMENT PARTY

Usually within 6 to 8 weeks of announcing your engagement it is a good idea to arrange a get together, a relaxed occasion where both sides of the family can meet and get to know each other before the wedding day. Perhaps keep it informal and have the gathering at a local park during the day (or your parent's back yard if they have the space). Family members love to bring a plate of food and be involved which keeps your costs to a minimum.

ETIQUETTE

Family gatherings usually involve the elderly and children. Perhaps make it a NO alcohol event and arrange family friendly party games. You can always invite same age friends to follow you to a Hotel/Wine Bar later on. Invite as many as possible because these same guests need not attend the wedding if you have already included them in engagement festivities. Be honest and just explain you are having a small wedding due to costs. They will understand and at least have shared an event with you.



HOT TIP



The first question everyone will ask is "When is the wedding?", so a good idea to have a date in mind. Read planning your wedding for guidelines on dates.



Planning your Wedding



MUST DO ITEMS

(12 to 18 months in advance)

Once you set a date then planning becomes a whole lot easier. Just remember that 80% of all weddings will occur on a Saturday. There are 32 Saturdays which everyone wants and these are during the months of March, April, October and November. The competition is fierce for 32 days of the year so try and book one year ahead. Because of the numerical number of 2020 this could be the busiest year for weddings in a decade, just so you know to book well ahead.

HOT TIP



Save up to \$3000 on your wedding. If your friends and relatives can attend on a day between Sunday to Friday then ask all your main wedding vendors for a discount, because many of them will provide a 10% discount or special offers incentives so they fill up their bookings midweek.





CREATE A THEME

Deciding on your theme at the start of your planning will make it far easier to make decisions on every aspect of the wedding. New age Bohemian features macramé and crystals, French provincial features long candles and rustic table settings, Industrial venues feature polished concrete floors, wooden or metal tables and chairs with minimalistic decorations, rustic settings on rural properties in barns, large sheds or marquees feature wooden tables and chairs and local flowers, Beach weddings are the most casual with no shoes or jackets for the men and light casual clothing for the guests. Traditional/Classic weddings are still the most popular at a wedding reception venue with tables set with white tablecloths, chairs decorated with sashes and stainless steel cutlery, crystal glassware and small posies on the table. Vintage and Boho chic are going out of style.

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The current trend is towards a ceremony in a park, beach, garden, botanical gardens or semi rural properties, with the reception under a Marquee or off to a local fine dining restaurant where you have your own private section for guests and fully catered with staff for drinks and food.
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The Ceremony



THE CEREMONY

Obviously the actual ceremony is the formal act of becoming legally married. It is illegal to get engaged if either party is still married (even if they are waiting on the divorce papers). You must book a celebrant/minister a minimum of one month and one day before the wedding because of the legal requirement to complete and lodge the official paperwork; however it is far better to do this at least a year in advance.

CEREMONY LOCATION

A public park can be used and the application fee to council is about \$110. There are no other fees, but do not go ahead until you have written approval. There are event suppliers who can provide an arbour, decorations, chairs and signing table. They will deliver, set up, dismantle and take away everything after the ceremony. Costs vary between \$500 to \$900 depending on distances, locations and items hired. There are a number of purpose-built non denominational Chapels on the Sunshine coast available for hire at a cost of between \$1,000 and \$2000. The advantage of hiring one of these is that they are dry, well decorated, have passed council requirements, hold public Liability insurance, the seating is built in, and most have onsite parking.

Churches, especially small country ones are very inexpensive and will often rent them out at a very reasonable cost of between \$250 and \$500. Ministers ask for a donation of between \$200 and \$500 to conduct the service.

Conditions do apply as you may need to prove that you are a regular attendee of that Religious group and agree to at least three marriage counselling sessions before the ceremony. The vows are prepared beforehand and you have little input, but you can select readings and include personal stories in the preamble before the vows. Consult with the religious minister as their protocol can vary considerably.





CIVIL CELEBRANT

A civil ceremony might only be 15 minutes long but a celebrant will spend between 10 and 15 hours in total on your ceremony to custom create a memorable service. The celebrant will work with you to create your personalised vows and service, writing a custom service, and lodging all the official paperwork to the Government. Each celebrant is different but fees vary from \$700 to \$900 depending on extras such as distances travelled.

HOT TIP



Fresh flower arrangements are not usually included in Chapels, outdoor arbours and Churches. You can keep it simple and have relatives cut ribbons to decorate the aisles with a few fresh flowers placed in strategic places. If you have the budget speak to a florist who specialises in flower arrangements for weddings who will put together a package for the ceremony, bouquet and venue table arrangements.





WEDDING VENUE

The trends for 2019/2020 are for more intimate, relaxed and outdoor weddings. The actual wedding ceremony can be held in a public park – pay the council the application fee and hire an event supplier for chairs, signing table and arbour. Then move onto a restaurant, Hotel or have mobile caterers set up at the family home. A popular wedding ceremony spot is Maleny Botanic Gardens where they have several areas for holding a wedding ceremony with the most spectacular views plus a pavilion as a wet weather option. Their fee includes the chairs, signing table and arbour. If you have between 4 and 50 guests it is easy to book out local restaurants for an excellent value for money reception dinner. There are a number of options to stay informal and keep the costs minimal. The Sunshine coast is blessed with several properties that have all the facilities to host the ceremony and do the catering.

Some are just acreage and you have to hire in mobile toilets, Marquees, tables, chairs, mobile drink vans and caterers, a lot of fun but also a lot of work.

The traditional option if you have the budget is to book a high end wedding venue that has a ceremony area and wedding reception with their own catering and bar staff. They are usually a one stop shop and can provide the cake, flowers, celebrant, table styling, DJ and catering in their own kitchens plus alcohol with bar staff. This takes the pressure off you as their wedding planners implement your instructions. Most will have a minimum order of anywhere between \$15,000 and \$30,000 depending on the number of guests, menu and drinks package selected. A rough estimate is \$220 pp for food and drinks.

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Whoever you choose will be one of the most important decisions in your planning process. The photographer is the one supplier who has the responsibility of capturing those special memories and is 'in your face' for the longest period of time on the day. Because this is an unregulated industry anyone can call themselves a photographer and earn extra income at the weekend. Prices vary dramatically but most professionals will charge an average fee of \$2900 that will include coverage from the bride getting ready to the first hour of the reception, between 5 and 6 hours in total. You normally receive a digital album and a printed photo album for this price. Wall decor prints or premium albums are extra.

Visit two or three studios to compare their work so you can select a style that reflects your personality and tastes. Look carefully at the technical quality of their work, and most importantly, can you establish a rapport that makes you feel comfortable. Check to see if they have industry credentials and support staff.



HOT TIP



Beware the paparazzi photographer who snaps away every second and provides you with 500+ photos. That continual bombardment on the day can be a very annoying distraction, plus there may not actually be many quality photos to choose from because they are snapshots. If they are being delivered on a USB you know that this is old technology and they are not aware of current technical trends.



VIDEOGRAPHY

Professional videography is more specialised than photography, not only in the equipment used but the fact that there is the audio involved. The skill is in the post production to edit a story rather than a record of events. Prices can vary from \$2000 to \$7000 for a full blown film style production captured over 6 hours. Decide if you really want a full hour long edited video with recorded sound and music that may not be watched more than a few times, a 7 minute highlight with a music

track that can be viewed by everyone on a mobile device may be a better option. Compare three videographers and ask to view a number of their video clips. Drones sound attractive but the operator now has to be licensed. Drones are not allowed in many areas, and confined spaces, trees and overhead wires impede operation. A minute of Drone footage in your video may outweigh the costs involved.



HOT TIP



Professional photography studios often have in-house videographers and can supply a package with video and stills. There is far more value in having a professional photographer, assistant and videographer than a lead photographer and second stringer photographer.



Wedding Dress





MUST DO ITEMS

(6 to 12 months in advance)

Wedding Dress

Deep down every Bride wants to look like a princess on her wedding day and it is of course all about the dress. Looking online will give you a ton of ideas, and before long you will have some styles you absolutely love, but your body figure is different to the models online. To look stunning in a dreamy dress that's perfect for you is to know how to emphasise your best assets and minimise your flaws. The only way to know for sure is to arrange fittings, a gown you love in a picture may not suit you, and a gown you thought looked drab on a hanger may look incredible on you. It needs to be comfortable as you will be wearing the dress for at least 8 hours. Make sure you take note of how the dress looks from the back because this is the view most guests will be looking at during the ceremony.

Try the gown on with your selected shoes to get a perfect length and ensure it hangs correctly. Traditionally in all cultures a veil or tiara adorns the head. The current trend is to wear a garland of flowers the hair stylist weaves into your hair. If you are on a tight budget then buying a second hand gown may only cost between \$300 to \$500, a gown off the rack with a few alterations can cost anywhere between \$500 and \$2000. An haute couture personally designed gown can cost anywhere from \$2000 to \$7000. Make sure any accessories such as earrings or necklaces are tried on when you do the final fitting to make sure they suit you and match the gown. Bridesmaids should be fitted after you have made your choice of gown and created an overall theme for your wedding.

• ETIQUETTE •

The bride/brides family is responsible for the costs and your bridesmaids are responsible for paying for their own gowns. It is usual for the bride to give a gift to say thank you to the bridesmaids and flower girls.

HOT TIP



Try and maintain a constant weight rather than crash diets where your body and body shape can fluctuate. A final fitting two weeks before the wedding is essential.



Grooms Suit





Grooms Suit

The cost of suits have dropped dramatically and it is now more cost effective to buy a made to measure suit which can be worn at the wedding and for special events years later, most males can fit into their suits for at least another 10 years. A standard black or grey suit can be purchased for as little as \$400 and the companies often include a shirt and tie in the price, more expensive designer suits range from \$500 to \$1500. The trend for 2018 was grey with black lapels or blue suits and the trends for 2019 are burgundy jackets or white jackets with a blue lapel. If you want to remain traditional then select a Black suit and white shirt which never dates. The groomsmen can of course be dressed differently and hire their suits for the day. The groom, groomsmen and father of the bride look best if they have matching buttonholes.

ETIQUETTE

It is the responsibility of the groom to pay for his own suit and of course the wedding rings. The Groomsmen pay for their own hire of suits.



HOT TIP



Make sure the trousers are altered to sit on top of the shoes, nothing worse than baggy trousers in photographs. To look slim do not wear double breasted jackets or shirts with ruffles (unless of course you are tall and slim and want some bulk), darker colours are more flattering for solid builds. Buy your shoes and wear them in a few months before the wedding day to avoid blisters.





HAIR STYLING & MAKEUP

This is one day where you want to look absolutely stunning and a professional hairstylist and makeup artist will make you look a million dollars, and they know all the tricks to make sure you look amazing in front of the professional photographer's camera. The costs are very reasonable and average \$300 to \$350 for hair stylist and makeup artist. If you are considering a major colour or styling change then start experimenting 6 months before the day. If you want to change the length of your hair it may take two or three cuts to reach the desired look. A trial run one month before the wedding is essential. It makes a lot of sense to perhaps do the trial run on the afternoon of your Hen's party.

A professional makeup artist will enhance your natural beauty and not mask it by covering you too much. The initial consultation and makeup trial will last about two hours. This is the time to experiment with tones and colours, and also find out if you are allergic to any products. Last thing you want is to be covered in red spots or rashes as you walk down the aisle. On the wedding day you MUST be the first one in the makeup chair, bridesmaids can wait- you are the most important person. Avoid make up trends and stay with a timeless classic.





• ETIQUETTE •

The cost of hair and makeup is the bride's responsibility for herself and any flower girls. The Bride's mother, mother-in-law to be and bridesmaids may want to use the hairstylist and makeup artist on the wedding day. Quite often a good discount can be negotiated with everyone sharing costs.

HOT TIP

Choose your wedding theme, bridal gown and veil or tiara before you decide on your hairstyle.





WEDDING INVITATIONS & STATIONERY

Email invites are OK amongst the under 30s but not generally considered acceptable by parents and especially grandparents. It's a good idea to personally phone all those on your invite guest list 6 months before the wedding to enquire if they can actually attend. It helps with numbers because you still pay for their meal and drinks even if they do not turn up!

Let's face it, everyone loves receiving an invitation in the post because it makes us feel special. This is one area where you can save money. There are a whole lot of options available from DIY where you can design on a computer and print out on your own printer, keeping the costs to just paper, ink and postage. There is a stack of online options such as Vista Print where they have templates you fill out with quick delivery and low cost. The most expensive option, especially if you want to make a statement, is to contact a wedding stationery designer who will custom create a theme, design and print the Invitations, Order of Service, Place Cards, RSVP cards, Thank You Cards and even arrange Bonbonniere. This is a custom service so ask for a quote. Order 3 months in advance to avoid any possible issues or delays.

• ETIQUETTE •

Yes, this is definitely a cost that usually the Bride's parents pay for.

HOT TIP



Always order at least 10% more than you need to take into account damage, mistakes writing on cards etc. If you only need 40 and the minimum order is 50 then great, you may just need those extras as it always nice to have a few spares and one for your scrapbook.





FLORIST

There are florists and florists. Of course you can do a lot of DIY and save money. A family member may want to buy and arrange the flowers for the wedding arbour, the aisle seats and all the table decorations. If you are getting married in a religious space then often they have Church volunteers who do flower arranging in the aisles and altar (they ask for a donation). Wedding reception venues that have space for a wedding ceremony usually take care of flowers in the ceremony area and all table arrangements, but costs can vary from \$500 to \$1500. At the very least contact a specialist wedding florist who knows how to create wedding bouquets, posies for the bridesmaids and the button holes for the men, allow about \$500 just for these. A stunning fresh flower bouquet is the last centrepiece of your entire look and style on the wedding day, don't scrimp on your bouquet.

ETIQUETTE

The bride usually pays for her bouquet and the flower girls posies and the bride's family pays for all the flower arrangements.

HOT TIP



Ask your florist to design arrangements that can be used at the ceremony and double as extras for the reception venue.





TRANSPORT

The advantage of getting married at a wedding reception venue is that this is a cost you may not incur because everything is onsite. If you do need transport from the Hotel/Home to the wedding ceremony, then to a photo shoot location and back to the wedding reception, then transport is essential. DIY will save you money if friends or family have some choice cars that can be dressed with ribbons. But do you want to make family or guests responsible, and will the cars have enough space for the bridal dress?

The options are endless to make it a WOW statement. Here are a few ideas: Stretched Limo, Classic cars, Vintage cars, Horse and carriage or at the other end of the scale what about a Helicopter? Whoever you use, make sure they have a Government issued License plate and the relevant insurance. Cars come in a huge range of colours and styles, make sure it stays with the wedding theme and the colours match. White does not always work with a white dress. Prices vary but a wedding usually has a minimum order of two hours and prices can vary from \$400 to over a \$1000 depending upon the number of cars, distance travelled and the style of car selected.

ETIQUETTE

No surprise here, the Groom is responsible for selecting and paying for transport.





MUSIC

There are two main areas for music, the ceremony and the reception. If it is a garden wedding then most celebrants have a sound system and will have music they can play as part of their service. If you want an extra touch then hire a flautist, violinist or guitarist. A larger Church will usually have an organ and resident organist, prices vary from \$300 to \$600, and if it is a full service then you need the processional, Hymns or soloists during the ceremony, signing the register and the recessional (leaving the church).

If you are having the ceremony in a private Chapel then think about a classical singer or classical musicians. They can also double at the reception for background music whilst everyone mingles, then play for the dancing. If you are on a budget then a DIY sound system and CDs or iTunes plug-in is perfect - just nominate a guest to operate this for you. The next step up is a hired DJ who brings their own sound deck, speakers and lights, and can really help the dancing rock.

ETIQUETTE

The Bride's family pays for the music.



HOT TIP



Ask the DJ to act as the MC, toastmaster, dance caller and help introduce the speakers. Most are very outgoing, know the wedding schedule and help everything run smoothly.





CAKE

On average, a wedding cake costs between \$350 and \$750 with the average bride spending \$525. Most bakers price wedding cakes by the slice, which is based on the complexity, ingredients, size and design of the cake. Specialty cakes, custom cakes, couture cakes or layer cakes generally cost more. It is very tempting to save money and DIY the cake by an enthusiastic family member or friend. If you want something simple and you only need to serve 20 to 30 guests, then that is a good option. A fruit cake is the traditional classic, but other options include cupcake tiers or macaroons, semi-naked cakes, sponge cakes with classic buttercream frosting and chocolate or candy buffets.

There are specialists who only do cake decorating so you can supply a cake made by family and have it decorated with your wedding theme.

• ETIQUETTE •

The bride's family pays for the cake as part of the reception and arranges some of the cake slices for guests who could not attend plus the top tier for the bridal couple's first anniversary (it does need to be a fruit cake to last a year).

HOT TIP To save money have the cake served as your dessert.





RINGS

Fortunately wedding rings are not as expensive as they used to be, and the groom's wedding ring is usually more expensive than the brides'. Standard gold bands are easily selected from a range of stock in Jewellery stores and can be sized on the premises. Allow between \$200 and \$400 for a standard band. Custom rings can be made by a lot of jewellers who are craftsmen. The trend for a male wedding ring is two toned, the most popular is black and silver or white gold.

• ETIQUETTE •

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The wedding rings are paid for by the Groom
.....

HOT TIP



Because of changes in the body have a final fitting two weeks before the day. Make sure those two boxes are kept safe by the best man or designated person.



ETIQUETTE COVERING THE ENTIRE WEDDING

No surprise, but the way couples deal with the wedding finances will determine their long term stability and healthy relationship. The 21st century is so different because modern couples tend to be older, and have higher incomes than their parents when they get married.

Sit down with both sets of parents to discuss the guest list. It may be that both parents may go halves in the total bill for the caterers and drinks, especially if they have a say in the guest list. Anyway, here is the traditional 'Who Pays for What' and is a guideline and open for discussion, hope it helps!

Bride's family: Invitations, Church decorations, musicians at Ceremony and reception, Bride's dress, Reception/Caterers (but NOT the alcohol), wedding flowers and bouquet, hairstylist & make up, wedding cake and photographer.

Groom's family: Wedding rings, all fees connected with Church or ceremony venue, minister or celebrant, Suit for groom and groomsmen, transport for bridal party from the ceremony to the reception, alcohol at the reception and the honeymoon.



Wedding Budget Planner

WEDDING VENDOR	PRICE QUOTED	DEPOSIT & DATE PAID	BALANCE	DUE DATE
BOOK 12 TO 18 MONTHS IN ADVANCE				
Celebrant/Minister				
Ceremony Venue				
Wedding/Venue				
Caterers/Restaurant				
Photographer				
Videographer				
SUB-TOTAL				
BOOK 6 TO 12 MONTHS IN ADVANCE				
Wedding Dress				
Shoes & Accessories				
Grooms Outfits				
Bridal Party Outfits				
Florist				
Music/DJ				
Wedding Rings				
Wedding Invites				
Cake				
Hair Stylist				
Make up				
Transport/Chauffeur Cars				
SUB-TOTAL				



WEDDING VENDOR	PRICE QUOTED	DEPOSIT & DATE PAID	BALANCE	DUE DATE
BOOK 3 TO 6 MONTHS IN ADVANCE				
Bucks Night				
Hens Night				
Wedding				
Accommodation				
Honeymoon				
Lingerie				
Gifts for bridal party				
Buy a special cake knife ?				
Incidentals				
SUB-TOTAL				
TOTAL				
BUDGET				

NOTES:

Print out the two budget pages and start planning. You may think of a number of extras that you want to include but this list will cover 95% of your wedding day requirements.

