

WHAT'S THE RUSH? - SECTION 1.1

Newly Engaged

- You're engaged! Congratulations!!! Have a drink, a taco and embrace the moment
- If possible, avoid jumping right into the planning. Enjoy some alone time with your new fiancé.
- Sit down and figure out what your wedding priorities are.
- Come up with a wedding theme: colors, style, energy.
- Throw an engagement party, or a casual gathering and invite the people who mean the most to you. Announce it to them, then make it public.
- Decide if you want to elope and ditch the rest of this list. Request a copy of the Shane Michael Studios Destination Planner.

18 Months Before Wedding

- Decide who you want in your wedding party and begin making your proposals, (Yes you should propose to your desired wedding party, as they are making a commitment to still love you when this is all over). Start with your Maid/Matron of Honor, and make sure it is someone who can handle all the emotions you are bound to go through.
- Sit down with your fiancé and have your first (of many) guest lists chats (don't forget to ask your parents for *their* input.)
- Figure out your target wedding budget. Average wedding cost between \$20k - \$35k, unless you are doing a destination/elopement wedding.
- Narrow down your venue search (ceremony and reception) to your favorite options that fit your budget.
- If you want (and can afford) a wedding planner, find one who shares your wedding values. You can also request a Vendor referral from Shane Michael Studios.

16 Months Before Wedding

- Begin touring your preferred reception and ceremony venues (ask questions! A lot of questions!)
- Book the venue

Begin your wedding photographer/Videographer search: set-up meetings, and book. Venues and Photography/Videography can book fast and far out. Make sure to lock down on one that really matches your overall vision and personalities.

12 Months Before Wedding

- Start shopping for wedding attire. Make appointments at bridal and clothing shops as needed. Remember traditional wedding dress shops will have long lead times on ordering dresses.
- Check out your local florists and begin setting up appointments to meet and discuss your vision. If you don't want the added expense, this could also make for a good DIY project for you and your wedding party.
- Research what kind of food you want. Begin to interview and book caterers. However, if you don't want a caterer, start looking into self-catering or having a potluck wedding.
- Once you've booked your wedding photographer, shoot engagement photos (especially if you're using them for save the dates)
- Finalize the guest list before sending out your Save the Dates
- Design and order your Save the Dates. You should be able to talk to your photographer for help with design, and cost.
- Create a basic version of your wedding website, especially if you want to include it in your Save the Dates. (This part is not a necessity but can be fun and help keep some stuff organized for you.)

9 Months Before Wedding

- Send out your Save the Dates
- Begin designing wedding invitations. If you want to DIY your wedding invitations, come up with a plan now.
- If you can afford a DOC (Day of Coordinator), hire one. If you can't, ask a friend to be your "Wedding Day Stage Manager."

8 Months Before Wedding

- Decide what kind of music you want to have. Do you need a DJ? A band? A DIY music plan?
- Begin thinking about your officiant: who will it be? (If getting married by a Church, they could require having a few couple's counseling sessions. Be prepared to talk about each other's good and annoying traits.)
- Release your inner child and start talking about wedding cakes/deserts. There is no right or wrong in this area. Doughnuts, cupcakes, candy bar, raining chocolate fountains.... Sky is the limit here.
- If you want a wedding shower or party, ask a friend if they'll plan it for you or help you throw your own. Keep it simple but fun.

7 Months Before Wedding

- If you've decided on a band or DJ, now is the time to lock them down.
- Research hair and make-up artists. If you need help finding one simply request a vendor referral from Shane Michael Studios.
- Begin researching honeymoon destinations. Check out www.travelzoo.com for mind blowing deals and locations.
- Check out wedding rings and decide what you want

6 Months Before Wedding

- Think about rehearsal dinner options.
- Start to plan any extra events associated with the wedding (after party, brunch, welcome party).
- Finalize your guest list.
- Set up a meeting with your officiant to discuss the ceremony and start marital counseling (if relevant).
- Start thinking about your vows and ceremony plan.
- If you're having a friend officiate your wedding, now is a good time to ask them about doing so.
- If you're not having a friend officiate your wedding, make sure you've booked someone (or the church/shul/mosque/ temple.)
- Set up your wedding registry.
- Have a meeting with everyone who is helping and make sure they all understand what is expected.
- Find a baker for your wedding cake/deserts, and if you can schedule cake tastings, do so.

5 Months Before Wedding

- Buy your wedding rings!
- Book your honeymoon!
- For anyone in your wedding wearing suits, start figuring out if you want to rent or buy. (Buy if affordable. Everyman needs at least one suit in his wardrobe.)
- Decide if you need party rentals and figure out what you need and put together an order (adjustments can be made later, so book now!)
- If you need a wedding tent, research and reserve one
- Schedule your hair and make-up trials, if you're hiring a stylist (also make sure you coordinate with your wedding parties or friends)
- Reserve hotel blocks for your wedding
- Make wedding night reservations as needed

4 Months Before Wedding

- Finalize rehearsal dinner and book anything you might need to still book

- Order wedding invitations and stationery
- Make sure your passport is up to date if you're leaving the country for your honeymoon
- Book wedding transportation
- Create a spreadsheet for RSVPs and guest list addresses
- Talk to whoever is planning your bachelorette party and/or any wedding showers

3 Months Before Wedding

- Address and mail your wedding invitations (double check the postage!)
- Think about what ceremony extras you might need (a chuppah, aisle runners, etc.) and buy or rent them.
- Start planning out your wedding ceremony script.
- If you're DIYing anything for your wedding, start now or cross it off your list.
- Schedule dress fittings as needed.
- Make wedding night reservations as needed.
- Research your local marriage license, civil union, and domestic partnership rules.

2 Months Before Wedding

- Begin working on your wedding vows.
- Make sure everyone in your wedding parties have bought what they're wearing.
- Figure out what you're wearing to your rehearsal dinner.
- Put together a list of what you want to pack for your honeymoon, if you're taking one.

Six Weeks Before Wedding

- Make sure you're updating your gift registry and spreadsheets as gifts arrive and send thank you notes now if possible.
- Start wearing your shoes around the house. (Nobody wants to have blistered feet the day of your wedding, and you will be in these for the better part of the day. Also start looking into a second pair of comfy shoes, that match your attire, for after the ceremony and photos.)
- Confirm out of town guests are set up at hotels and lodging.
- Figure out if you want a guest book, and make it happen. Test your pens and have backups ready.
- Write thank you notes for your wedding shower gifts
- Finalize those vows
- Make sure your wedding outfits are still on point and not "Shrinking." – it's not you, it's the outfits.
- Finalize your menu with the caterer.
- Finalize your wedding ceremony.

1 Month Before Wedding

- Put together your seating chart and create your escort cards.
- Finalize your ceremony outline.
- Create a wedding day timeline or coordinate with your Photographer/Videographer and see if they can help. They are with you most of the day and should have plenty of input to help keep your day running smooth and stress free.
- Make any necessary nail and spa appointments.... (It's necessary, so just do it.)
- Confirm all vendor payments and tip amounts (18% - 20% is typical but not required. However, pay attention to your contracts. Some vendors will have already included a gratuity into their costs.)
- Create your wedding playlist, if you're doing the DIY DJ route
- Make sure your wedding party knows any critical information as it pertains to the rehearsal dinner or wedding day
- Give your DOC a copy of the vendor contract information, delivery schedule, and set up times (or work with them to gather that information)
- Schedule a final dress fitting. (Told you it was the outfit and not you.)
- Print wedding programs if you're having them
- Confirm all rentals and/or adjust your rental order
- Sit down with your Wedding Stage Manager or DOC and walk through all the details for your wedding day
- Get a marriage license

Two Weeks Before Wedding

- Check with guests who haven't RSVP'd. (Statistically, 80% of those who RSVP'd will actually show.)
- Confirm head counts, menus, vendor meal requests, and delivery with your caterers and bakers.
- Confirm your photo requests, required family, and timeline with your photographer.
- Make sure everyone who is delivering something to the wedding (rentals, flowers, etc.) has a confirmed, final timeline.
- Send a transportation schedule to transport providers.
- Make sure any clothing you want cleaned or pressed is taken care of.
- Ensure there is a plan for the wedding venue set up and breakdown.

One Week Before Wedding

- Pack an overnight bag, and include: your toothbrush, birth control/condoms, something to sleep in, an outfit for the next day, honeymoon luggage, and your passport.
- Get your wedding manicure/pedicure (if it's happening at all)
- Make sure a copy of your honeymoon plans is left with family and friends
- Put your final payments + tips for vendors in labeled envelopes and give this to your DOC or someone else to manage

- Get your wedding day “oh shit kit” put together (aspirin, make-up, safety pins, mints, snacks, etc.)
- Pick up your dress (if it wasn't delivered already)
- Try on your entire wedding ensemble. (It's ok to do a little happy dance in it.)
- Give all of your vendors an emergency number to call, just in case (note: not yours!)
- Assign a family member to be the photographer's point of contact
- Hand over all of your planning docs (including a copy of the vendor delivery schedule, set up times, and phone numbers) to your wedding stage manager or DOC and take a step back to enjoy this thing!

1 Day Before Wedding

- Rehearse your ceremony with your officiant and wedding party
- Confirm your honeymoon transportation, airport drop-off, etc.
- Set your alarm (a back-up, and a back-up for the back-up.)
- Print out your vows (or memorize them.)
- Drop off your favors, menus, table plans, and place cards with your caterer or venue.

Last Minute things You Might Forget

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rings | <input type="checkbox"/> Passport/ID |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vows | <input type="checkbox"/> Socks, underwear, bra |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage license | <input type="checkbox"/> Accessories |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dresses | <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable shoes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suits | <input type="checkbox"/> Tips for vendors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's license | <input type="checkbox"/> Wedding playlist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wallet | <input type="checkbox"/> Umbrella |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cash | <input type="checkbox"/> Snacks and water |

Wedding Day

- Make sure you pause and appreciate your family, friends, and each other
- Take a few minutes every so often to breathe and focus. Smile at your friends, give hugs, be in the moment.
- GET MARRIED!

After the Wedding

- Send out the thank you notes (to people who helped with the wedding and for gifts)
- Make sure your vendors have been paid in full
- Follow-up and make sure you know when you'll get wedding photos back. (Average turnaround time is 4-8 weeks till viewing of finished edits.)

- Ensure rentals, clothing, and accessories have been returned (as needed)
- Toast your marriage! You did it! Now the good stuff starts for real.