

The BIG day.

The secret to a stress-free wedding day? Scheduling enough prep time! About a month ahead of your wedding date, work out a day-of timeline with your wedding planner/consultant and all of your Wedding Professionals: Photographer, Florist, Caterer & DJ

Here is a complete breakdown, in order of priority, of **what** should happen **when** on your wedding day

- Have a good protein-filled breakfast to start, you have a long day ahead of you
- Make sure all **Attire** is complete. The Bride(s) and attendants start their hair & make-up; attendants will go first, finishing with the Bride(s)
- The **Photographer** will arrive at least one hour before Ceremony time. This gives him/her plenty of time to capture the details — gown, shoes, jewelry, flowers, etc.
- If you have more than yourself plus four getting hair done, ask your stylist to bring an assistant to cut down on time. For makeup, add an assistant after yourself plus two
- If you're **traveling** to a salon, double the travel time you anticipate — better to have too much time than not enough
- Pre-ceremony photos of the Couple and their families. Two to three minutes per shot; more if the groups are very large, and less if they are very small. You must also consider how punctual the groups tend to be and possibly cushion the schedule to allow for unexpected delays
- Are you planning a First Look? Allow an extra 15-30 minutes
- Groom(s) and groomsmen arrive: An hour and a half before the Ceremony
- Bride(s) and bridesmaids arrive: An hour before the Ceremony. Make sure you are hidden before your guests arrive, so they don't get an early peek at your gown

- If the Bride isn't taking photos at the church prior to the **Ceremony**, then she can arrive moments before walking down the aisle and wait in the limo until it's time
- Ideal Ceremony Length: 30 minutes. It's enough time to have meaningful readings and music to make your Ceremony unique and memorable
- Maximum gap between Ceremony and **Reception**: One hour. Any more than that, and it is recommended suggesting places for your guests to visit between the Ceremony and Cocktail Hour
- Family Photos: Two to three minutes per shot — if your family is properly organized
- Wedding Party: Two to three minutes per shot. Keep it simple
- Didn't have a first look? Allow 30 minutes post-ceremony for photos of you and your bride or groom. If you did have a first look, you'll still want 15-20 minutes post-ceremony for just the two of you
- Save photos of very large groups (like classmates, coworkers, and large extended family groups) for the reception, when your DJ or bandleader can make an announcement to gather everyone. You'll be able to take the photos much faster than trying to track down 50 people during the Cocktail Hour
- Tip: The best way to save time taking photos is by being prepared. Compile a list of all the necessary shots and who is in each one. This ensures the couple and their families have all of their needs met, while saving a lot of time and confusion while shooting. It also allows to politely manage family members who ask for additional shots during the session
- Also, think about where exactly you'll want to take your photos. If your Photographer isn't familiar with the site, see if he or she wouldn't mind scouting it out. This is a huge time saver on the wedding day
- Ideal length of the Reception: Six hours. This will allow an hour for Cocktails, two hours for Dinner, and three hours for Dancing

ORDER OF EVENTS:

1. Introduction of the **Attendants** and the **Wedding Couple**
2. **First Dance:** The most common timing is immediately after the Couple enters the Reception, but you can also do your first dance following the conclusion of Dinner or right after Dessert
3. **Father/Daughter(s) Dance:** Immediately following the First Dance
4. **Mother/Son(s) Dance:** Immediately following the Father/Daughter(s) Dance. Or, sometimes, this dance is shared with the Father/Daughter(s) Dance
5. **Welcome Toast:** Given by the Father of the Bride or Groom or by the Couple
6. **First Course** (salad/appetizer) Served
7. **Toasts:** Ladies First! Start with the Maid of Honor, followed by the Best Man
8. **Second Course** (main course) Served
9. **Toasts:** Friends of the Couple can give a toast here, if desired
10. **Guests invited to dance:** Open up the dance floor, and get the party started
11. **Cake Cutting:** Two hours before the reception ends. The cake will then be passed on trays or set on a table alongside other fun sweets for guests who may want a sugar boost after dancing for a while
12. **Late-night Snacks:** A popular trend, many Couples start passing around bite-size snacks at this point to refuel guests
13. **Farewell:** If you're doing a sparkler farewell, for example, have guests start lining up about 10 minutes before you plan to exit