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the perfect wedding

The perfect wedding begins with proper planning

When it comes to their wedding, the bride and groom want everything to be perfect. From the ceremony to the reception, they consider all the details, and while this makes for a beautiful wedding day, it also causes months, and maybe even years, of stress.

The best way for a couple to remain calm while planning the big day is to get organized. By making a list of

things they need to do, they can allot time in their schedules for each task — and they can feel a sense of accomplishment and relief each time they cross something off the list.

This basic checklist can get them started on their way to a beautiful wedding day.

- **Set the date** — As soon as possible after getting engaged, the couple should select a wedding date and

decide on the type of wedding they would like to have. From a traditional ceremony in a church to a surprise wedding, where guests are invited to a "party" that turns out to be a wedding, couples are personalizing the event and planning weddings that reflect their lifestyles and interests.

- **Reserve a location** — The couple should reserve the church or location of the

ceremony soon after setting the date to ensure they can get married on the day they want. Then, they need to reserve a reception location. Party houses and halls specialize in party business and feature catering directors who will assist a couple in planning their dream wedding. Hotel receptions are becoming increasingly popular, and hotels also have catering directors on staff. Independent caterers are a good choice for home or garden receptions.

- **Select a photographer** — Every photographer has a different style and a different way of covering weddings. The couple should choose one who will accommodate their wishes, like taking the types and number of shots they want, attending both the ceremony and reception, and offering the album design they would like. The most important quality of a photographer is his or her personality. The couple will be spending an entire day with this person, so they should choose someone who will make them feel comfortable.

- **Book reception entertainment** — The couple should select a disc jockey or band that will cater to everyone at the reception — both the younger and older

generations. The musical selections should be diverse, and requests from the guests should be taken.

- **Arrange wedding transportation** — Whether it's a Rolls Royce, stretch limo, horse and buggy, or double-decker bus, the couple should plan for transportation to and from the ceremony and to the reception for themselves and their attendants. They should make reservations early.

- **Order dresses** — Shopping for a wedding dress, headpiece and bridesmaid dresses is one of the most fun parts of the planning for the future bride. She should choose a wedding dress that reflects her style and personality — and makes her look beautiful. When considering dresses for her attendants, the bride-to-be should opt for a style that complements her dress, as well as the girls in her party.

- **Choose a florist** — Flowers can add an elegant touch to the wedding day, and every florist has a unique style. The couple should select one whose arrangements they like and who offers them helpful, creative ideas about bouquets, corsages and centerpieces.

- **Decide on a bakery** — The couple should select a bakery based on the flavor of

the cakes baked there and the look of previous work. They should ask for a taste of the different types of cake offered, and they should see if the bakery will be able to create the design that they want.

- **Select formal wear** — Whether it's a basic tuxedo or a top hat and tail coat, formal wear completes the look of the wedding party. The couple should select a formal-wear provider who offers the style they want, has a variety of sizes available to fit all of the men standing up, and offers a large selection of bow ties and cummerbunds or vests.

- **Order invitations** — Invitations come in many different styles, so the bride and groom will have a number of books to look through. They should decide on a style that best suits their wedding, based on its formality, the time of day and the wedding colors. The stationery professional can help them with this decision.

With these important decisions made, the future bride and groom only have a few things left to do, like selecting favors, writing a wedding bulletin and buying thank-you gifts for their attendants.

They're well on their way to the wedding of their dreams.



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