

A romantic wedding scene featuring a bride and groom in a snowy landscape. The bride is wearing a white, short-sleeved, floor-length gown and is smiling towards the camera. The groom is wearing a light gray suit and is kissing the bride on the cheek. They are standing on a circular stone pedestal. In the background, a large, ornate cathedral with multiple spires is visible, partially covered in snow. The ground is covered in a thick layer of snow, and there are some evergreen branches in the foreground. The overall atmosphere is soft and romantic.

THE WEDDING DAY

guide



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A woman with dark, wavy hair, wearing a blue denim dress and black shoes, stands smiling in a rustic bar. The bar has a wooden wall with a sign that says "CREATE YOUR OWN WORK". There are three geometric pendant lights hanging from the ceiling. A white counter and two black bar stools are in front of her.

I GOTCHU

You're getting married! And I'm sure you're super excited. A wedding is just an opportunity to throw a party for the most important people in your life. It's so much fun and I'm excited to be a part of it!

Buuuut planning this thing can be logistically hellish haha. It's your first wedding so you don't have experience planning a wedding!

I want to help :) I blog many more Tips for Brides on my website that you can access here: www.cailichung.com/blog

And I made this resource for you to break down each part of the wedding day- what we'll do and how much time I recommend for various things! Just to let you know what to expect. And when I receive your questionnaire, I will also write up a personalized recommended timeline for your unique wedding!

Before we dive in, I want to tell you that your photographer should be able to capture beautiful images on your wedding day no matter the situation! These tips and tricks are simply little changes that can be made for an ideal photography-friendly wedding day.



I recommend having hair and makeup finished before your photographer even shows up

If your hair and makeup artist is still there when I show up, I'll take a few photos of her applying finishing touches. But you'll want your photos to capture you with your finished makeup on- not halfway done.

Hair & Makeup

PROFESSIONAL HAIR AND MAKEUP IS ON THE TOP OF most of my brides' checklists because it looks amazing on camera and removes the stress of getting ready on your own. It'll stay on through the crying and sweating and laughing you're going to do :) This is the time to treat yourself! Whether it's lash extensions or blown-out hair, professional hair and makeup will give you an extra boost of confidence in front of the camera, and it always photographs like a dream.





details

Recommended Time: 30 minutes

Details are the first thing I photograph. Instead of having me interrupt last minute preparations for help gathering your details, try to have them all prepared & in one place beforehand.



Here are some potential items to gather. The more you bring, the better!!!

- The dress
- The 3 rings
- Bride's shoes
- Jewelry
- Bridal Bouquet
- Spare flowers
- The vows
- 2 copies of a wedding invitation + envelopes
- Any other pretty paper
- Bridesmaid dresses
- Any family heirlooms you're incorporating
- Watches
- Bibles
- Perfume bottles
- Wedding day alcohol
- Any gifts to/from family and friends wedding planning!



Bring a wooden hanger

I'll take a photo of your wedding dress hanging. A wooden hanger adds a sense of luxury and beauty that a plastic hanger just cannot! You can even find personalized hangers easily online :)



Give me time for these :)

I believe that the people present are the most important part of any wedding. For the rest of your special day, I will be focusing on capturing you. But this time for details is my opportunity to do justice to all the work you've put into wedding planning! I got into photography because I love taking pictures of pretty people, but I also really love shoes ;)





the ladies

getting ready

Recommended Allocated Time: 40 minutes

Getting ready photos are pictures with you + your mom + your bridesmaids before the day really kicks off. If you have bridesmaids robes, I'll photograph you in those. And we'll photograph you (usually with the help of your mom) getting into your wedding dress :)

I recommend having hair and makeup done sooner rather than later because I'd hate for you to be rushed! Getting ready photos are taken after hair and makeup are done.



Look for Windows

Most brides get ready indoors. But even when you're inside, the most flattering light will still be with natural sunlight!

When I photograph getting ready photos, I'll open every possible window and flip off all the light switches. You can make lighting even more dreamy if you choose to get ready in a room with lots of windows and open areas.

Look for Clean backgrounds

Picture frames on the walls and other background items make a photo more busy and detract focus from you. If I can remove art of from the walls and hide it, I will! Having clean backgrounds will make your photos look more timeless and elegant.

It'll likely be a messy havoc in your getting ready room. But we'll clear off a corner of the room to look clean for photos :)

have your mom & bridesmaids get dressed first

Your mom or bridesmaids will help you get in your wedding dress. Have them change into their wedding attire first so they look picture perfect while helping you prepare!





Slow Down

Getting ready with your girls is one of the best parts of your wedding day! Try to leave more time here than you are expecting that you'll need. I promise you'd rather be able to slow down and enjoy this time than feel rushed to get to the ceremony



Getting Ready: The Boys

If you hire a second shooter, we can take getting ready photos of the groomsmen, too! I'll be with the bridesmaids and my second shooter will be with the boys.

We'll photograph the groom putting on his tie, pinning boutonnieres, any gifts exchanged, any drinks poured, and all the other shenanigans.



First Looks

For those that don't know, a first look is when you privately see your groom for the first time before the ceremony. I decided to break it down and argue both sides of the first look debate.

Pros:

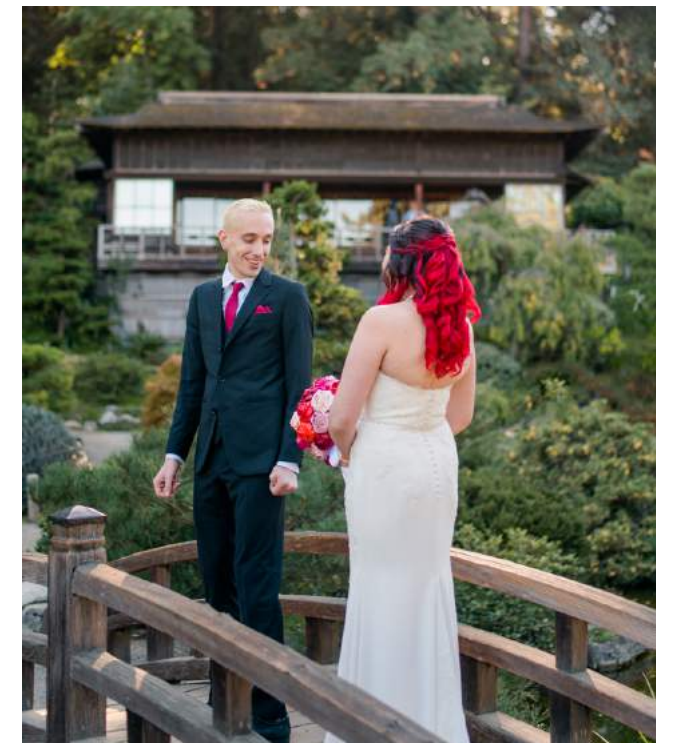
1. If you do do a first look before the ceremony, we can do the bulk of couple portraits before the majority of your guests arrive. As a result, your guests will spend less time waiting for you to join them at the reception. This makes your day so much more enjoyable for all the people who have come out to see you.
2. Doing a first look allows for more time for couple pictures. If portraits are of high importance to you, a first look is a great way create tons of extra time for them!
3. First looks can be truly magical and heartwarming. After you walk down the aisle, your groom won't have the opportunity to talk to you about what's running through his mind. If you do a first look, he will.





cons of a first look

1. It breaks tradition for the groom to see you before the wedding ceremony
2. Maybe you don't want the first look to be a private moment. You might want all your friends and family to be able to participate in that experience with you.





bride and groom portraits

Trusting your photographer is so important. Especially on your wedding day. You don't want to have to worry about modeling on an already busy day. You want someone else who can direct you, make you look fantastic, and make your day less stressful and more enjoyable.

I include Engagement Photos in all my collections because I think it's so valuable to take pictures with the same photographer before the big day. It's great practice and lets you know what to expect!

allocate at least 30 minutes to couple portraits

But if you want to spend even more time on couple portraits, I won't complain!!! :)

These are the photos that are going to end up on your walls for the rest of your life. Designate the time necessary to take them well. If other people are present during this time, they'll want to talk and we won't be able to get in a rhythm taking couple photos.

Consider being out of sight.

**Doing a First Look allows you to not feel
rushed and really enjoy couple photos**

If you feel the pressure of getting to your reception/guests, taking couple photos can feel rushed. Doing a first look is a great way to be sure to get in great bride and group portraits!



Personality Matters

You'll be spending time a lot with your photographer. I hope, independent of my work, I'm a person you want to spend time with on such an important day.





THE WEDDING PARTY

Recommended Time: 30 minutes





Bring Flowers for Each of the Bridesmaids

Flowers really just add romance to everything. They also give your hands something to do.



Invest in a Photographer Comfortable handling Large Groups

Your photographer should be prepared to adjust anything that is off and be comfortable directing a large group kindly and efficiently.

Plan for chairs/stairs if you have a larger bridal party

I prefer to keep my rows of people under 10 people. As the line gets longer, the people get smaller, and the faces get less distinguishable. Using chairs or stairs are a great way to get multiple rows of people.

parent first looks

I highly recommend doing a first look with your parent(s). It'll take ten minutes max.

A daughter's wedding day is an important day in the life of a parent. I think it's super sweet to make sure that your parents have some time with you before you walk down the aisle.

If you don't plan for a first look with your parents, the first time your dad sees you on your wedding day will be outside the ceremony. The second shooter and I will be waiting to capture you come down the aisle, and this interaction will be missed.



Venue Details

RECOMMENDED 20 MINUTES

I usually photograph the venue setup before the ceremony :) This way I can take empty room shots before your guests arrive. This also gives the bride and groom a chance to breathe, relax, and prepare before the ceremony starts.





THE CEREMONY

PUT YOUR DAMN PHONE AWAY

If you don't ask guests to put their phones away for the ceremony, I guarantee that when you come down the aisle you're going to see iPhones instead faces. Guarantee it.

Also, The WORST thing is when your photographer is ready to catch an important moment and a guest sticks out their phone and blocks the shot! Recreating your first kiss won't actually be your first kiss. I promise the professional photo will look better than your guest's iPhone photo.

As the ceremony starts, please have your officiant announce to put phones away!

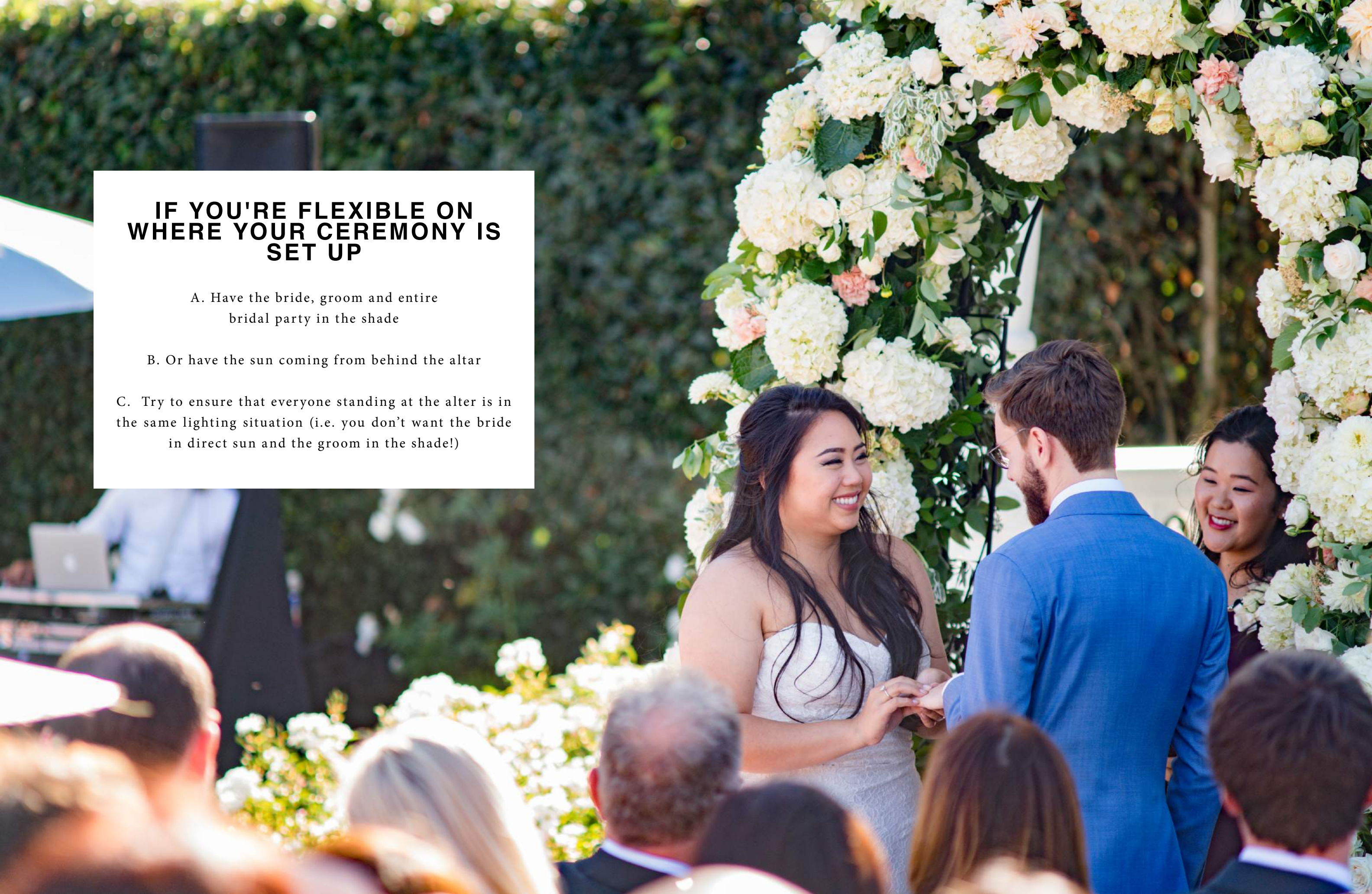


IF YOU'RE FLEXIBLE ON WHERE YOUR CEREMONY IS SET UP

A. Have the bride, groom and entire
bridal party in the shade

B. Or have the sun coming from behind the altar

C. Try to ensure that everyone standing at the altar is in
the same lighting situation (i.e. you don't want the bride
in direct sun and the groom in the shade!)





who should give you away?

It's traditional for the father of the bride to walk his daughter down the aisle. It's wonderful to watch a dad accompany his daughter toward someone he trusts to take care of her as well as he has.

But recently, many of my couples have been opting to have both their parents accompany them down the aisle. And why not? It's a great way to respect your incredible mom.



FAMILY PHOTOS

tell your family where & when to meet!

I recommend taking family photos right after the ceremony because everyone is already in one place. The number one problem during group photos is having to hunt someone down. We want to get these done as efficiently as possible so everyone can go party and enjoy themselves!

*Recommended Time: 30 minutes
(but varies depending on how big your family is)*



plan the family photos you want in advance

A few months before the wedding, I'm going to ask you to list out all the family groupings you want. Feel free to include names! You know best about any sensitive situations or about any groupings that are special to you! This is the most time efficient way to make sure you capture everything you want.



cocktail hour

After the ceremony, you're going to be taking (at least family) photos. The rest of your guests will be at cocktail hour mingling and waiting for you to join them.

Reminder: you can minimize wait time by doing a first look. Your guests want to see you!

Typically there is something small to eat and drink :)



There are many fun wedding reception traditions- and be sure to ask around about any specific to your culture!

But please don't feel bound to tradition. If there's something that doesn't feel "you," then don't include it! The point of the reception is enjoy yourself and party with your closest family and friends.

For the next little bit, I'm sharing about common reception events. And any fun recommendations I have from seeing how other couples have done them :)



grand entrance

Many couples join their reception with a bang!

Your DJ/MC announces to your guests to please find their seats.

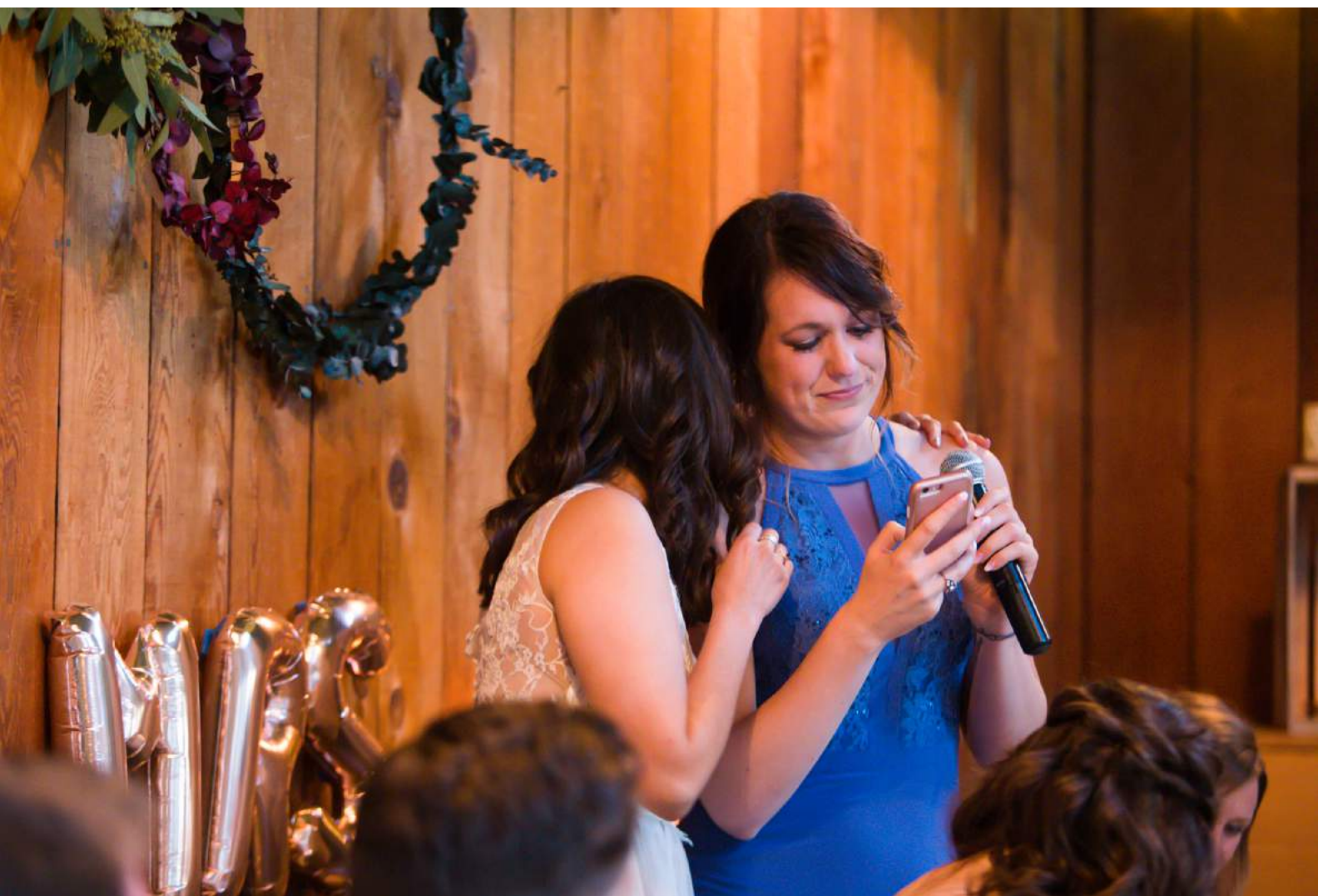
Then your wedding party enters the venue to music dancing. They can come out in pairs or all-bridesmaids-at-once-and-then-all-groomsmen-at-once





AND THEN IT'S YOUR TURN

Come out dancing to the cheers of everyone who loves you! Give a twirl and strike a pose <3



TOASTS

It's your wedding! You can choose anyone you'd like to speak. Many couples have 4 speakers:

1. Bride's parents
2. Groom's parents
3. Best Man
4. Maid of Honor

But you can have as many or as few speeches as you'd like! There's no rules.

Fun idea: At one wedding I attended, after the prepared speeches, they had an open mic where any guest could share a few words! I thought that was really fun and sweet.





A photograph of two men in formal attire (suits and ties) seated at a dinner table. The man on the left is wearing glasses and a blue bow tie, using chopsticks to eat. The man on the right is wearing a pink tie. The table is set with a blue tablecloth, white plates, glasses of wine, and a bottle of wine. There are floral decorations on the table and in the background. A large screen in the background displays a wedding scene. The text "DINNER" is overlaid on the right side of the image.

DINNER

Providing vendors dinner is customary. Unless otherwise arranged, your vendors will eat when you and your guests do.

If you have a buffet, your wedding planner will dismiss tables to grab food. If you don't have a wedding planner, designate that job to someone.



the first dance

Some brides and grooms go all out with a planned choreography! Others just slow dance in each others arms.

These can be really sweet and sincere. Or they can be fun and upbeat. Do whatever makes the most sense for you!

Many couples only play the first verse and chorus of a song.





parent dances



You can have a one song/dance for the bride&dad and another song for groom&mom. OR you can have these duos go at the same time.

These can be really sentimental. Or you can do something fun with your parents!

Fun idea: At one wedding I attended, the bride danced with her father for a verse and a chorus. After that, the DJ invited all fathers and daughters attending the wedding to join them on the dance floor. They later did the same thing for all moms and sons.





let them eat cake

The bride and groom are supposed to cut the cake together and then feed each other a bite.



Alternatively, you can smash cake into their face.

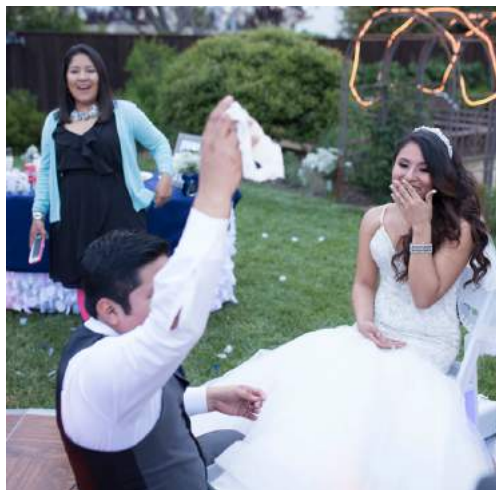


the bouquet toss

All the single ladies gather on the dance floor. The bride throws her wedding bouquet (or a bridesmaids bouquet if hers is too big) over her head. The woman who catches the bouquet is supposedly the next to get married.

Take a couple swings before you actually toss the bouquet. Kinda like fake tosses. If you toss on the first go, your group of





garter

This is the male equivalent of the bouquet toss. A garter is a band that the bride wears on her upper thigh. During the reception, she sits in a chair and her now husband removes it.

After, similar to the bouquet toss, all the single gentlemen gather on the dance floor, and the groom throws the garter over his head. The man who catches the bouquet is supposedly the next to get married.

Take a couple swings before you actually toss the the garter. Kinda like fake tosses. If you toss on the first go, your group of single dudes probably won't be ready.

I haven't done any actual research on this, but the wedding tradition of a garter seems to be less and less popular.



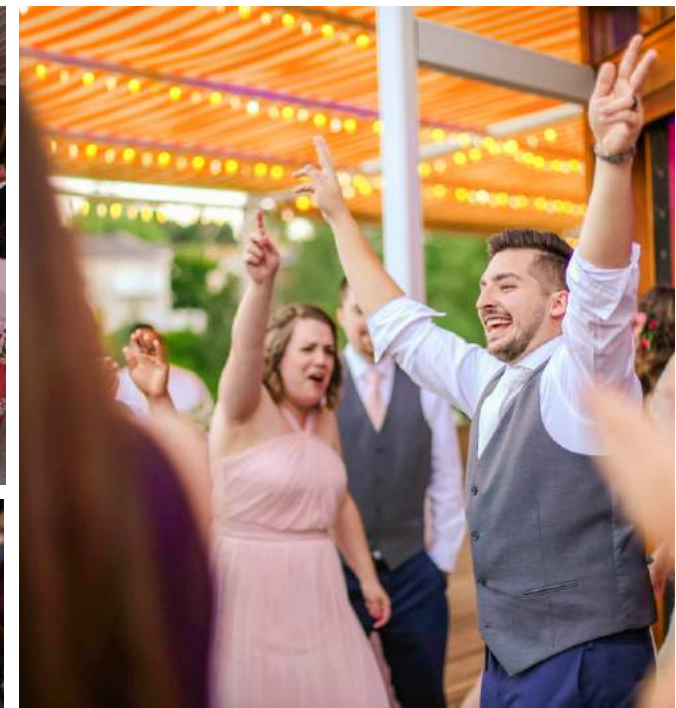
Be sure to ask if there
are any wedding
traditions specific to
your culture!



Just Dance

I really do love this part. And I'm going to be right there on the dance floor with ya capturing the action.

I recommend only hiring a photographer and videographer to capture the first hour of dancing. Photos begin to all look the same after that time :)





A FINAL GLAM SHOT

If you're willing to steal away for 5 minutes once the dance floor opens up, I'd love to take a night portrait of you two. There are certain shots you just can't get during the day :)

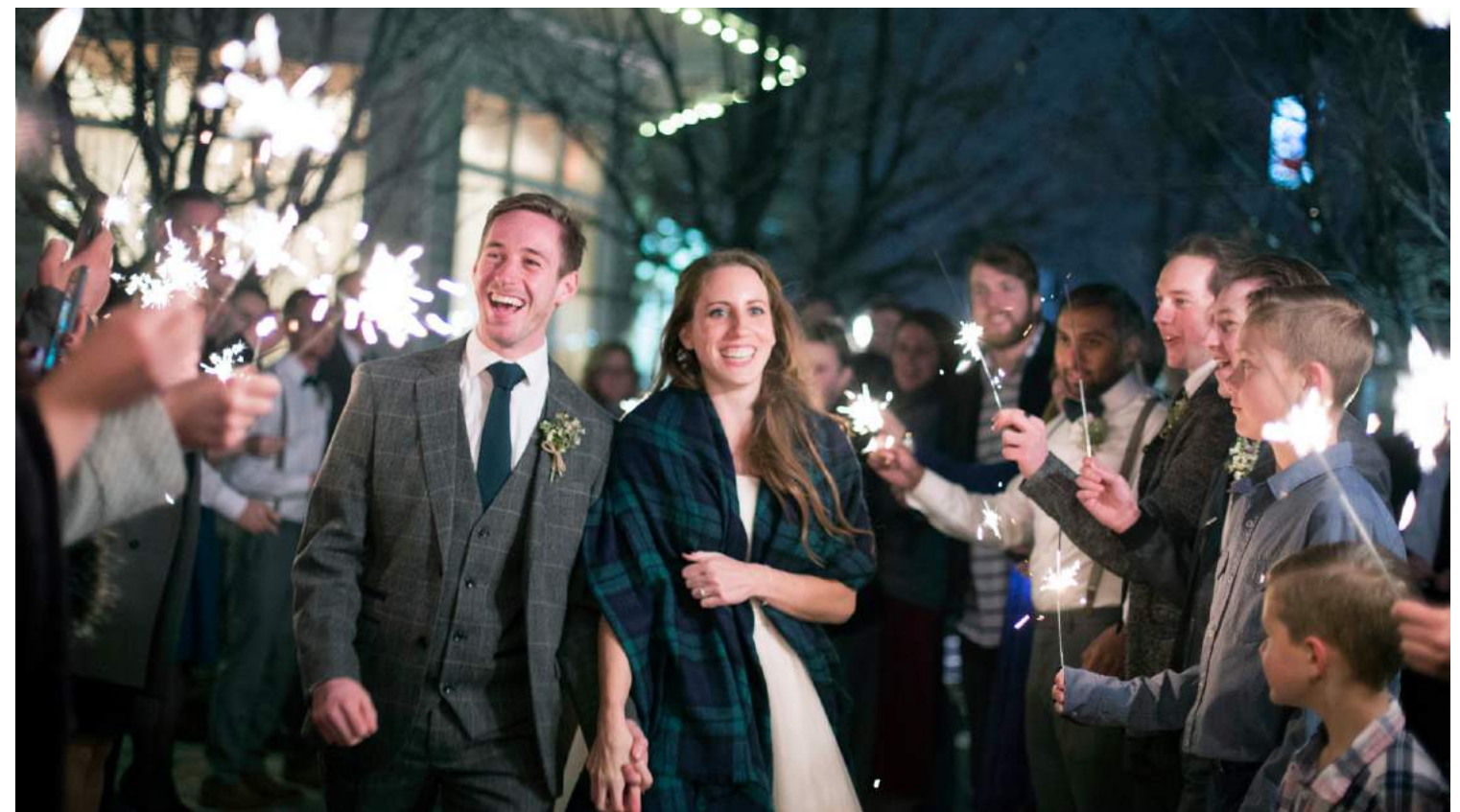




a photo request

I don't want to be another vendor on your wedding day. I'm by your side the entire day and I want to feel like a bridesmaid with a camera. You should feel very comfortable around me and hopefully I make your already joyful day even better.

I'm so blessed to be invited into the lives and stories of such amazing people. And I want a photo with you two at some point :)



exits

What should brides know about exits? Just that they should have one!!! Your special day deserves an obvious and climatic ending!



what're your options?

Sparklers

Bubbles

Flower Petals

Confetti

Rice

Colored Smoke Bombs

Steamers

Glow Sticks

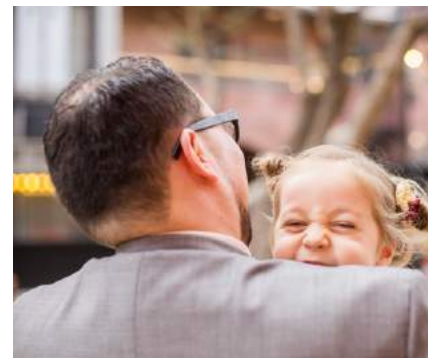
Ribbon Wands

Balloons

Nothing. Seriously. Just have everyone cheer or clap or make an arch for you run through

If you expect most of your guests to leave before the end of the reception, you can have an exit to conclude your ceremony.





Don't feel like you need to remember any of this! I really do want you to enjoy your wedding, and I'll give you specific instructions as the day goes :)

But just as a quick recap because I like checklists:

how I'll help your day run smoothly:

- I'll write you a personalized recommended timeline (or work with your planner to come up with one) after I receive your wedding questionnaire
- 2 months before your wedding, I'll give you instructions about how to list out desired family photos.
- I'll keep time for you on the wedding day to make we keep things moving and capture everything we need to!

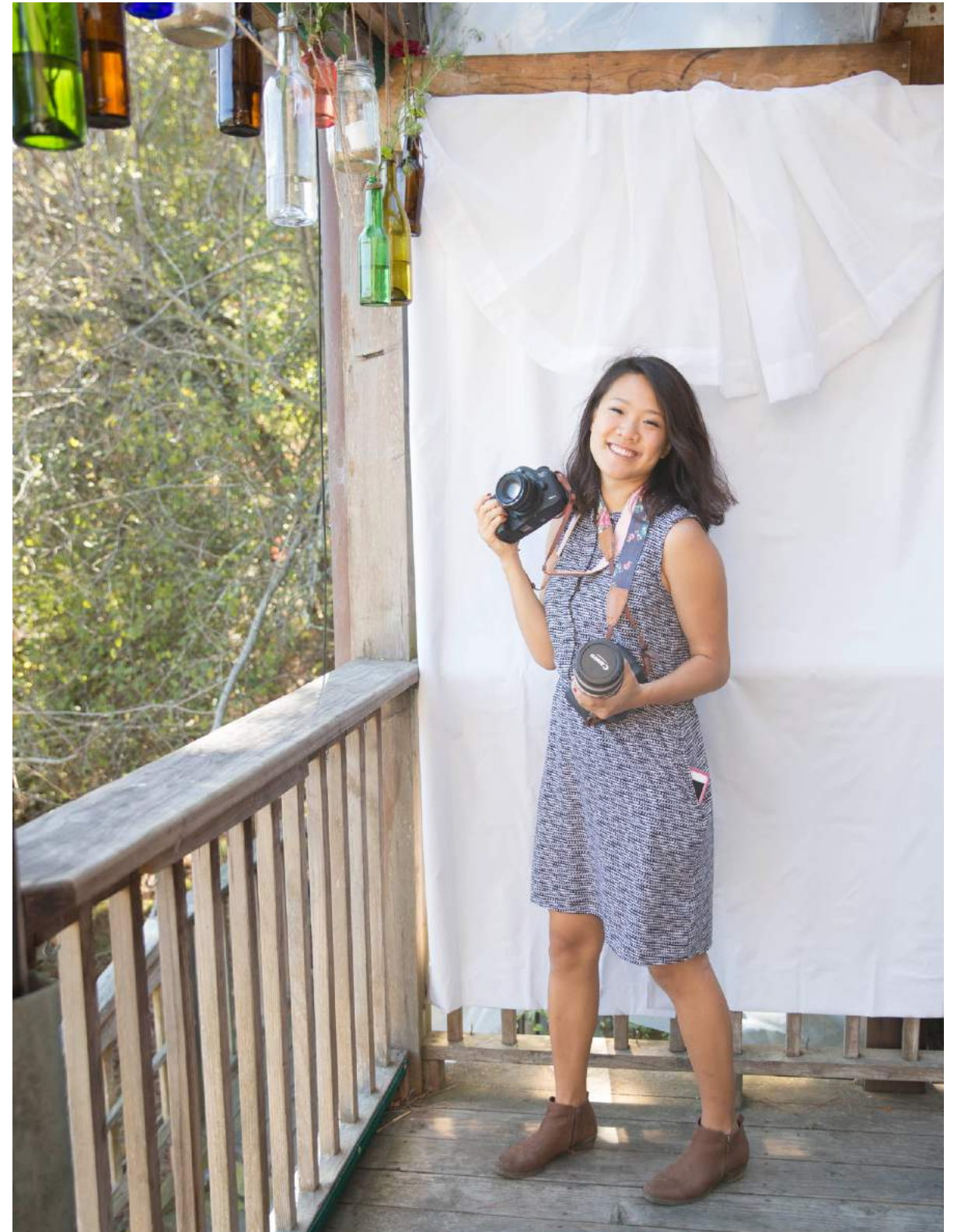
prep you need to do in advance:

- Gather all details in one place the night before
- Have officiant ask all guests to put phones down during the ceremony
- Tell all family members when and where they need to meet for family photos
- Tell all wedding party members when and where they need to meet for group photos



a final note

I KNOW I JUST GAVE YOU A LOT TO THINK ABOUT. I created this guide to help you with planning your wedding day schedule. At the end of the day, though, these details won't matter nearly as much as the memories you make. Your future memories are the most important thing to me, and I want you to feel free to be yourselves and enjoy it. Have fun together. Laugh a lot. And we'll take care of the rest!



SEE YOU SOON