



Congratulations on your forthcoming marriage!

AusBride.com.au would like you to accept this wedding planner with our compliments as a memory of your wedding day. It is a comprehensive guide for the bride and groom to plan their big day. We wish you both a lifetime of love, health and happiness.





ENGAGEMENT



Announcing Your Engagement

The first people to be informed of your engagement should be your parents. It should be done by the bride and groom together but depending on the circumstances, you may wish to speak to them on your own first. This will enable them to discuss any issues they may have with you alone and have time to adapt to your news.

After you have informed your parents and immediate families, you can let other friends and family know either personally or by making a formal announcement via the daily newspaper. Check the newspapers for ideas on how to word your announcement or contact the paper for detailed examples of wording.

The Engagement Party

An engagement party can be a formal cocktail party style or an informal weekend luncheon at home. Invitations should be sent for both types. Normally, your parents would give the party but it can be hosted by yourselves if you choose. The party should be held after the formal announcement has been made. As your guests will bring gifts to the party, it might be wise to leave a gift list with your mother or chief bridesmaid for any guests that might like to get a gift that will be needed by the bride and groom. All gifts should be acknowledged by the bride and groom after the party with a thank you note. An easy way to keep track of who gave what gift is to write the gift on the back of the accompanying card when unwrapping.

Choosing an Engagement Ring

Traditionally, the groom selects a ring to give to the bride when he proposes marriage, as sign of his love and commitment. However, more increasingly, brides are selecting their own rings as they usually have a particular style or stone in mind. Consider also whether you would like your wedding ring and eternity ring (usually given to the bride by the groom after the first year of marriage) to combine with the engagement ring.

Bridal Party Attendants

There is no limit to the number of attendants that you may have in your bridal party but the general rule of thumb is to keep it simple. The bride is attended by a matron or maid of honour, depending on her marital status, bridesmaids and flower girls. The groom's attendants are the best man, groomsmen and the ring bearer.

Matron/Maid of Honour

Usually an easy choice for the bride as this would be a best friend, sister, or close family member. The matron/maid of honour will be a legal witness and sign the marriage certificate as well as hold your flowers, adjust your veil or train when required during the ceremony.

She will also help you to get dressed on the day as well as organise the other bridesmaids' attire. Traditionally, the matron/maid of honour will sit next to the groom on the bridal table at the reception.

Best Man

The best man will be a person close to the groom and will take on one of the most important roles at the wedding. He too will be a legal witness and sign the marriage certificate as well as handing the rings to the celebrant during the ceremony. The best man will also finalise any payments, if required, to the celebrant or minister.

He will also propose a toast at the reception as well as respond to the toast for the bridesmaids and read any letters or telegrams sent to the bride and groom.



Bridesmaids

The bridesmaids will normally assist with the opening of both the engagement and wedding gifts and be responsible for recording the gifts next to the guest name for later acknowledgement by the bride and groom. If the bride chooses, the bridesmaids would organise a kitchen tea and also the bride's hens party.

Groomsmen

Groomsmen would help the best man with the reading of the telegrams and letters at the reception. They would escort the bridesmaids during the day and participate in the bridal waltz with their designated partner.

They would assist the best man in any pre-wedding activities such as a bucks party if required and overseeing the collection and return of the men's suits if hired.

Flower Girl

Flower girls are junior versions of the bridesmaids and generally wear a dress of similar style and colour to the bride. The flower girl usually carries a small basket or posy of flowers, although it has become more popular for her to carry a basket of rose petals and, preceding the bride, strew them along her path. The best age for flower girls is between five and ten years. Girls younger than five may be overwhelmed with a lot of guests and may get stage fright at the last minute.

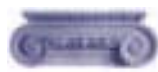
Flower girls can be seated at the main bridal table but it may be wise to seat them with their parents or people with whom they will feel comfortable.

Ring Bearer

The role of the ring bearer is to carry the rings into the ceremony, usually on a cushion with the rings gently attached. The ring bearer can be either a young boy or girl, it depends on the bride and groom but the most popular choice is a boy to partner the flower girl. If so, the ring bearer would be attired in similar fashion to the men in the bridal party. Give thought to the age of your ring bearer, as like the flower girl, it may be overwhelming to a tiny tot.

Ushers

An usher's role is generally to hand out out any 'order of service' booklets at the church and to seat guests as they arrive at the church. Guests of the bride are seated to the left and the groom's guests will be to the right. If the majority of guests are mutual friends of the bride and groom, they can be seated on either side. The immediate families will sit in the front pew with the mother of the groom being seated approximately five minutes prior to the processional. The mother of the bride is seated just prior to the commencement of the processional and any late guests should not be seated until after the processional. Ushers would escort both mothers to their seats.



ENGAGEMENT DETAILS

Announcement in newspaper on

Engagement party held at

On

The ring was purchased from

And is insured with

Bride's attendants will be

Groom's attendants will be

Ushers

Flower Girl

Ring Bearer

Celebrant/Minister





BUDGET FOR YOUR WEDDING



Before you can start planning for your wedding, you must have a budget to work to. This is very important, as you need to know what funds will be available to you before you put down any deposits or sign contracts for any services for the wedding.

Who Pays?

Traditionally, the bride's family bear most of the wedding costs but in these modern times, this is not always the case. With most couples working and living together, they contribute to the costs along with the groom's family in order to ease the burden for the bride's family.

You probably already have an idea as to whether or not your parents will be able to finance the wedding, either partially or with some help from yourselves. The bride, groom and both sets of parents should discuss this issue well ahead of the wedding so that a budget can be made and all parties are in agreement. At this time, you should get an indication from the parents in regards to how many friends and family they would like to invite. You may find that this list may need to be trimmed or a compromise made so that a number satisfactory to all is agreed on. Also discuss any family traditions that they may want you to carry out – this may or may not fit in with what you originally had planned.

Getting Prices

The Internet, Yellow Pages and recommendations from friends are the best ways to find out what venues or services are available to you and at what cost. The easiest way is to ring around first to find out if what you want is available through that particular outlet, rather than going around to several different shops with no result. When speaking to the suppliers, be specific about what you are looking for and ask them to give you a price (GST inclusive, so there are no hidden surprises) that would be valid at the time of your wedding. If you are planning well in advance for your wedding, you may find that the prices have risen by the time you are getting married.

When you are going to see the goods, whether it be the flowers or the dresses, take note of the appearance of the business. Are they organised or is the shop organised chaos? Are they neat and tidy? Rate the customer service level as well – cheapest is not always the best in terms of services and little extras.

Once you have chosen your supplier, find out, in writing if possible, when any deposits or progress payments need to be made and when final payment is required.

Normally, the financial responsibilities are as follows:

Bride and Her Family

Invitations & announcements – printing, postage and associated costs

Flowers for the ceremony and reception venues

Flowers for the bride's attendants

Corsages for mothers and grandmothers

Wedding dress, veil, lingerie and all accessories

Ceremony and reception music fees

Photographer and Videographer

Wedding day transportation for all the bridal party

Reception – food, beverages, decorations and all associated costs

Hair and make up costs for the bride and her attendants

Groom and His Family

Bride's bouquet

Any suit hire costs for the groom

Any marriage licence fees

Accommodation costs for out of town attendants

Wedding rehearsal dinner (optional)

Attendants

Personal wedding attire (excluding flowers)

Bride and Groom

Engagement and wedding rings

Wedding night accommodation

Honeymoon

Gifts for attendants

Most couples and their families will share the costs – use this list as a guide when discussing the wedding budget.



EXPENSES SUMMARY

BRIDAL GOWN		
VEIL		
SHOES		
OTHER ACCESSORIES		
BRIDESMAIDS' DRESSES		
OTHER ACCESSORIES		
FLOWER GIRLS' DRESSES		
OTHER ACCESSORIES		
GROOM'S SUIT		
OTHER ACCESSORIES		
GROOMSMEN'S SUITS		
OTHER ACCESSORIES		
HAIR	BRIDE	
	BRIDESMAIDS	
	FLOWER GIRL	
MAKE UP	BRIDE	
	BRIDESMAIDS	
	FLOWER GIRL	
FLOWERS	BRIDE	
	BRIDESMAIDS	
	FLOWER GIRL	
	GROOM	
	GROOMSMEN	
	RING BEARER	
	CORSAGES	
	CEREMONY	
FEES	CHURCH	
	MINISTER	
	ORGANIST	
TRANSPORTATION		
RECEPTION	FOOD & BEVERAGE	
	MUSIC	
	DECORATIONS	





BRIDE'S ATTIRE



The Bridal Gown

Most brides already have an idea of the type of gown they would like to wear on their wedding day, whether it be traditional, contemporary or something unique. There are no right or wrong styles of gowns but whatever you choose, it should be comfortable, elegant and practical – even though you will only wear it once, you will be standing, sitting and moving around for a long period of time on the day.

If you need some inspiration, browse through bridal magazines or visit a bridal shop. Bridal fairs are also a good idea and are normally held twice a year – they will usually be advertised in newspapers or bridal magazines. The Internet is a useful resource that can save you time when searching for your gown. You will be able to source suppliers of gowns, bridal fairs and hire shops and most bridal requirements.

While the traditional bridal gown is white, lacy and formal, the sky's the limit when it comes to style and colour. Modern brides are choosing a gown that suits their individual style and to accommodate their figure. You might find that your dream gown can be found in the formal wear section of a boutique or department store as opposed to a bridal shop.

Try on lots of different gowns – even if you are sure you know what you want. Enlist the help of your mother or your bridesmaids to get an honest opinion of what looks good and what doesn't. Take along a pair of shoes with a medium size heel and wear a strapless bra, just in case. Take some basic hair accessories like bobby pins, clips or hair ties so you can get an idea of how your hair will look with veils and head pieces.

Alternatives to buying your gown are renting or having it tailor made by a couturier. Certainly, renting your gown would be cheaper but this limits the styles and colours available to you. Most good formal wear hire shops have a bridal section.

If you can't find what you want in the stores, consider having your gown tailor made by a professional dressmaker or couturier. This way, you can create the gown of your dreams with all the preferred trimmings and extras. A good dressmaker can make your gown by just having photos or sketches to work from. Ask friends to recommend someone or look through the Yellow Pages or on the Internet.

If you decide to keep your gown after the wedding day you will need to have it cleaned and stored as soon as practical after the wedding. There are various methods e.g. calico bags or boxes with tissue paper to store your gown, but the type of material, climate and where it will be stored should be taken into consideration. Speak to your dry cleaner about what the best alternative is for your gown.

“ The Wedding gown is one of the most important garments in a young girls life and it portrays her image and feelings on this, her most important day”

DAVID MEDWIN - COUTURIER

BRIDAL GOWN CHECKLIST

Bridal Shop/Seamstress

Address/Phone

Contact name

Style/colour of gown

Accessories	Veil	Yes	No
	Headpiece	Yes	No
	Gloves	Yes	No
	Stockings	Yes	No
	Jewellery	Yes	No

Total cost including accessories

Deposit due

Progress payments due

Fitting dates

Final fitting

Final payment required



BRIDAL GOWN CHECKLIST

Shoe colour and style number

Purchased from

Lingerie required

Purchased from

Fabric for dress

Quantity required

For the Traditional Bride

Something old

Something new

Something borrowed

Something blue

Notes



Bride's Attendants

The style and colour of your attendants gowns should complement your own gown. Take into account the age, height and weight of the attendants when choosing a style. Strapless dresses may not be complimentary to full figured women. Consider the complexions and hair colours of your attendants when choosing a colour, as pastels can make women with fair complexions look washed out. Discuss with your attendants what they will feel comfortable wearing before making your final decision.

It is becoming increasingly popular for the matron/maid of honour to have a different gown to that of the other bridesmaids. The bridesmaids usually wear gowns of the same style and colour. Flower girls traditionally wear a smaller version of the bridal gown but this can be optional.

As the attendants usually cover the costs of their own gowns and shoes, try to select something that will accommodate everyone's budget. A formal style may be more practical so they may wear it on other occasions and will therefore be willing to pay extra for a gown they will get further use from.

If the shoes are not covered by the dress, consider having the shoes dyed in the same colour as the gowns or even covered with the same material. This will give a lovely effect when in line at the ceremony and for the photographs. Most shoe stores can arrange for shoes to be dyed or covered in the desired material. If not, source a local boot maker who can do this. Allow at least four to six weeks for this process. Ask to see a sample of the dye when made up before going ahead – quite often the finished product may vary from the colour chart you choose from.

Flower colours and styles need to be considered as most attendants carry bouquets. If possible, when selecting gowns or fabrics, try to have some flower petals on hand to hold against the colour to see if they will blend in.

As with your bridesmaids, the costs for the flower girl outfits are usually borne by her parents. As flower girls are usually young girls, consider a dress that will be comfortable and practical for them to wear for the whole day. They may become restless and irritable if they are restricted by a dress that does not allow them to move freely. Remember, they will probably spend most of their time running around and playing when not involved in official duties. Little slippers or ballet type shoes are a great idea and would be the most comfortable choice for little girls to wear for a whole day.



BRIDAL ATTENDANTS CHECK LIST

Bridal Shop/Seamstress

Address/Phone

Contact

Style/Colour of gown

Accessories

Headpiece

Yes

No

Gloves

Yes

No

Jewellery

Yes

No

Other accessories

Total cost including accessories

Deposit due

Progress payments due

Final payment required

Fitting dates

Final fitting

Shoe style and colour

Purchased from

Shoes to be dyed or covered at

Contact/Phone

Cost

Shoes to be taken in by

And ready for collection by

Flower girl accessories

Measurements and Shoe size

Matron/Maid of Honour

Bridesmaids

Flower girl





GROOM'S ATTIRE



Most grooms and attendants opt to rent their wedding day suit from a formal wear hire store to ensure the same style and colour of suits. The groom's suit should complement the bridal gown.

Traditionally, the groom wears a suit with a white shirt and either a bow tie or neck tie and a corsage in his jacket lapel. You will find that modern day grooms are choosing to wear colours that will blend in with the rest of the bridal party or the flowers, whether it be their shirt or tie or with an added vest. Browse through bridal magazines or visit some formal wear hire shops to get some ideas of what is available. The colours for the bride's attendants should be decided before you organise the colours for the male attendants.

As with the bride, the groom should stand out from the rest of his attendants. The groom's outfit can differ from his attendants through the use of a coloured vest, tie or shirt.

Grooms Attendants

The groomsmen can complement the bridesmaids by wearing a cummerbund or shirt in the same colour as the bridesmaids gowns. This has a great effect for photographs and when they are in line for official duties. You may choose to have their accessories of similar colour to the groom, but remember that the groom needs to stand out from his attendants.

As with the bride's attendants, the groomsmen are responsible for the cost of their suit hire and for any other accessories. The groom and his attendants need to go shopping together to tailors or suit hire shops to ensure that everyone is happy with the selection. Arrange to have regular fittings and a final fitting no later than a week before the wedding.

The groom and his attendants normally all wear the same colour shoes, traditionally black, but not necessarily of the same style. If possible, take the shoes along to the first fitting to see if different shoe styles are suitable.

Ring Bearer

As a partner to the flower girl, the ring bearer should also wear attire to complement her dress. Traditionally, a suit in the same style and colour as the other male attendants will be suitable.

All costs for the ring bearers' attire would normally be met by his parents.

GROOM AND GROOMSMEN ATTIRE CHECK LIST

Name of suit hire shop

Address/Phone

Contact

Colour of Grooms suit

Style number

Accessories

Colour of Groomsmen suits

Style number

Accessories

Colour of Ring Bearer suit

Style number

Accessories

Total cost of suit hire

Deposit required by

Fitting dates

Final fitting

Suits to be collected on

By

Suits to be returned on

By





WEDDING INVITATIONS AND OTHER STATIONERY



Who to Invite?

In order to establish how many guests you can invite to your wedding, you will need to have a budget in place. A budget will determine how many guests you can afford to invite and make it easier to put a limit on the number of guests.

The guest list need not be a major issue as long as all parties involved, the bride, groom, and both parents, are able to discuss it as soon as practicable. If all parties are contributing to the financing of the wedding then the best way is to establish how many guests you can have in total and divide it three ways. If one party has more guests than the others, it may create tension between families. You may have to look at inviting only the immediate families and not the extended families in order to be able to invite everyone else. If only one party is financing the wedding, then there should be a decision made as to how the guest list is divided.

You will also need to decide if you will be inviting children. While they may look cute entertaining the guests, they are also prone to having temper tantrums at the most inopportune times. They can also get bored and restless quickly if there is not enough to entertain them for a full day and night. If there are only a couple of children you would like have in attendance, consider having them in the bridal party. While most of your guests would not be offended if you did not invite their young children, it would be inappropriate to invite some children and not others.

If you have single friends you are inviting but are unable to add 'and guest' to their invitation, try to seat them all together at the reception so they do not feel uncomfortable with a table full of couples. While most guests realise they may not always be able to take a friend, they will appreciate being with other people in the same situation.

Even though it might be a good opportunity for business networking for your parents or yourselves, it could greatly increase your guest numbers. Best to leave this type of guest till last and if you have any room, then invite them.

If you have potential guests interstate or overseas, be prepared for them to accept your invitation. Don't assume they won't attend as they live too far away as it may rebound on you inflating your guest list further. It would be best to invite interstate guests well ahead of time and ask them to give you an indication as soon as possible as to whether or not they will be able to attend.

Wording of Invitations

The bride's parents traditionally send the wedding invitation when they host the wedding. If the financing of the wedding is being shared by all parties, you may want to word the invitation to show all parties as the host. The various wording combinations are endless and depend upon how formal or informal you would like them to be. For examples of different wording, contact a printer of wedding invitations who will show you a catalogue of different styles and designs. If you have any wedding invitations at home, look through these for ideas with regard to wording, design, fonts and colours. Most bridal magazines can give pictures or examples of wording.

While a printed invitation is most popular, you can create invitations yourself with the right tools – computer software, elegant paper and a very good laser printer. You might find that the cost difference between printed and home made invitations is minimal and therefore it may be easier to get them printed. Before ordering your invitations, consider what other stationery needs you will have and look at ordering everything at the one time.

Other Stationery Requirements

Generally, you will need wedding invitations and envelopes, RSVP cards and envelopes (optional), place cards for the reception and if desired, order of service booklets for the ceremony. It is a good idea to order some extra invitations

and envelopes in case of mistakes. Always make sure you have a few spare for keepsakes. Thank you notes can be printed but they are more personal if hand written by the bride and groom.

If you plan to have other stationery printed, they should all be uniform in colour, font, paper and design. This will allow the same theme to be followed throughout. A lot of brides like to colour coordinate their stationery in line with the colours of the bridal party or the flowers they will have. While the effects of this can be wonderful, this can often be time consuming and hard to accomplish.

Make sure you proof read all copies before authorising the printer to go ahead.

Once you have signed the proof copy, you are liable for any mistakes. Read through everything carefully, and pay particular attention to the spelling of all names.

Sending Invitations

Invitations should be sent no later than six weeks prior to your wedding. If you are getting married over the holiday season, i.e. January or February, it may be wise to send them eight weeks before. The RSVP date should be two to three weeks prior to the wedding. Don't forget you will need to know final numbers for the reception venue at least two weeks prior to the day.

RSVP Cards

Sending pre-printed RSVP cards and envelopes with the invitation is optional but will be convenient for your guests. This means they only have to fill in their name and the number of guests attending. The envelope should be already addressed to either the host or you. If you choose not to enclose RSVP cards, be prepared to follow up late responses.

Order of Service Books

'Order of service' books are a nice touch for the ceremony as they provide a memento for your guests. Generally, they list all the members of the bridal party, the parents of the bride and groom, the celebrant or minister, readers and any musicians or singers at the beginning then a running order of how the ceremony will unfold. You can include any poems or readings in full as well as a copy of your vows. A message from the bride and groom on the last page will make it more personal. As they are usually not very large, they can be bound with coloured ribbon in keeping with the wedding colour scheme. Ask your printer to show you examples or speak to the celebrant – they may have some from previous weddings.

Table Place Cards

Place cards are essential for your reception, as guests need to be allocated a seat at a designated table. This makes it easier for your guests to find their seats and will ensure that everyone is seated in accordance with your plans. It would be a good idea to have relevant groups together on one table (relatives, school friends, work associates, singles, etc) as guests will feel more comfortable sitting with people in which they have something in common. You will not be able to accommodate everyone in terms of their table location to the bridal table but try to keep close family and friends closest to the bridal table then work outward.

An alphabetical listing of every guest with their table number next to their name can be displayed in the reception foyer and guests can then go straight to their table without having to look at every place card.

Location Maps

Venue location maps for out of town guests will be very helpful, especially if guests are unfamiliar with the location of the venue. A simple photocopy of the street directory with the venue highlighted and showing the most direct route is easy to enclose with their invitation.



STATIONERY CHECK LIST

Printer's name

Address/Phone

Contact

No. of invitations

No. of envelopes

No. of RSVP cards and envelopes

No. of Order of Service books

No. of Place cards

Quotation for printing

Order of Service books checked by minister on

Proof read copy on

Paper style and design confirmed on

Authorised to print on

To be ready by

Ribbon colour for order of service books will be

Any extras (paper, etc)

Final cost





GIFTS FOR EVERYONE!



With so many couples living together or living away from home before they are married, it is often difficult to know what they will need to start their new life together. For this reason, a gift register at a major department or specialty store will ensure that the bride and groom receive gifts that they would prefer and avoid any duplications.

Gift Register for the Bride and Groom

Most department stores and larger specialty shops have a bridal register service available, with no charge to the bride and groom. To register, speak to a consultant at the store and they will take you around the store and ask you to select what products you would like to receive as gifts. It is a good idea to select small and large gifts as you will probably have a group of guests that will all contribute to get one large gift and other guests who prefer to give an individual gift. The store will give you pre-printed cards to send with your invitations to let guests know where you are registered. Your guests can then either visit or phone the store and select their own gift – this is particularly handy for out of town guests. Once a gift has been purchased, it will be taken off the register so there will be no duplications. Guests can either take the gift to the parents home prior to the wedding, to the reception, or alternately the store will deliver gifts to you on a nominated date (usually after the honeymoon). The store will also provide a list of what gifts were given by which guests. This is very convenient when doing your thank you notes.

Even though you have advised your guests of your gift registry, some guests will prefer to get your gift the traditional way – that is, selecting the gift themselves. If you end up with some duplicated gifts, don't despair! Some extra glasses, cutlery, towels, etc can always come in handy. If you receive gifts that are not from your bridal registry, be sure to make sure that you write the gift on the back of the accompanying card.

Opening of Wedding Gifts

If you receive any gifts prior to your wedding, open them straight away and record the gift on the card. If you have time, you can write and send the thank you note.

It is a good idea to leave the opening of any gifts that are taken to the reception until the next day. Usually, they are taken from the reception by your parents or members of the bridal party so if time permits, open them before you leave for your honeymoon so they can be recorded correctly in readiness for the thank you notes upon your return.

Thank You Notes

While the thought of writing quite a lot of thank you notes for all your gifts may seem daunting and time consuming, it must be done. Most gift givers will be quite generous in what they spend on a wedding gift so it is only good manners to acknowledge receipt of the gift. Notes that have been hand written by the bride or groom, or both, will be far more personal than a printed card that says "Thank you for your gift, from the bride and groom". A hand written card tells the gift giver that you actually know what they gave you and that you appreciate it. In the event that you are able to return or exchange a gift that is not suitable, you should never tell your guests as they may be highly offended.

Thank you notes should be done as soon as practical after the honeymoon but no later than two months after the wedding.

Gifts for the Bridal Party

It is customary to give each member of the bridal party a small gift in appreciation of their help and participation in the wedding and so they have a special memory of the day. The bride usually gives gifts to her attendants and the groom gives gifts to his groomsmen. Traditional gifts for the bridesmaids are bracelets, small jewellery boxes, beauty travel cases or the like and for the groomsmen a pewter mug, money clip or pen. To make it more personal, you can have the gift engraved with the wedding date and the name of the bride and groom.



Gifts for the Parents

Most parents of the bride and groom play an important role in their wedding day, whether it be financing the wedding or just helping from start to finish with all of the details. Traditionally, a small gift of appreciation is given to both parents by the bride and groom.

Gifts for Each Other

It is traditional for the bride and groom to exchange gifts with each other for their wedding. Most couples feel it unnecessary as the wedding rings they give each other are sufficient but if you would like to follow this tradition, choose something very personal that can be treasured for a lifetime like jewellery or a framed poem that you have written for the occasion.





WEDDING FLOWERS



Most brides already have a favourite type and/or colour of flower that they would like to have for their wedding day. Depending on the season that your wedding falls within, some flowers are not available all year round. For this reason, you will need to have other choices ready. If you are unsure about what flowers will be in season, your local florist will be able to help. The flowers you finally settle on can have a huge impact on the theme and mood of your wedding, so take some extra time to shop around to make sure you get exactly what you want.

Choosing Your Florist

As with all other services, the easiest way to choose your florist is to ask friends or family for a recommendation. Failing that, the Yellow Pages or the Internet will provide you with florists that may specialise in weddings or some florists in your area. Flowers, and their prices, can vary from florist to florist so for peace of mind, speak to as many florists as you can (minimum three or four). Before authorising any flowers to be ordered or arranged, get written quotes on what the total cost will be. Following is a list of flowers that you will need, with some suggestions being optional.

Bride and her Attendants

- Bride's bouquet
- Bride's throw away bouquet (optional)
- Bridesmaids' bouquets
- Flower girl – bouquet or basket of rose petals
- Flowers for hair pieces – bride and attendants (optional)

Groom and his Attendants

- Groom's boutonniere
- Groomsmen and ring bearer boutonnieres

Family and Others

- Corsage for mothers and grandmothers
- Boutonniere for fathers and grandfathers
- Corsage or boutonniere for special helpers i.e. ushers at church (optional).

Venue Flowers

- Ceremony – arrangements for the altar and pews. You may be able to use flowers from any earlier ceremonies. Check with your minister.
- Reception – table centre pieces, cake table and the bridal table.

FLOWERS CHECKLIST

Name of florist

Address/Phone

Contact

Bride's bouquet

Bride's throw away

Bride's hair piece

Number and type of bridesmaids bouquets

Flower girl - bouquet or basket

Number and type of attendants' hair pieces

Number and type of corsages for mothers and grandmothers

Groom's boutonniere

Number and type of boutonniere for groomsmens' and ring bearers



FLOWERS CHECKLIST

Number and type of boutonniere for fathers and grandfathers

Flowers for special helpers

Flowers for ceremony

Flowers for reception

Total cost

Quotation received

Deposit due

Final payment to be made

Flowers to be collected on

By

Or flowers delivered to the bride at

Notes





PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO



Even though your wedding day will pass quickly, your photographs and video of the day will last a lifetime. They will capture special moments of your day that you may not have been aware of. For this reason, your choice of a photographer and videographer should be someone who has vast experience in this field and a style that suits the individual couple.

Photographer

A good wedding photographer can be expensive so be sure to discuss all costs up front so there are no hidden surprises after the event i.e. what you actually get for the price you pay. Some photographers may charge extra for the negatives or proofs. Good quality photographers will be booked well in advance so be sure to find one early. Ask friends and family for a recommendation or source one through the Yellow Pages, bridal magazines or the Internet. When making an appointment, ask to meet at their studio if possible so you can see the type of work they have done previously. Ask to see photos or a portfolio of other weddings they have done.

Discuss at length what photos are to be taken and where. Generally, photos are taken of the bride and her attendants preparing themselves, leaving the house, arriving at the church, all ceremony shots, family portraits with the bride, groom and bridal party then some photos of the bride and groom cutting the cake at the reception venue before the guests arrive. The cutting of the cake is staged – this is actually done during the reception. For photos to be taken between the ceremony and the reception, choose a venue with the seasons in mind and one that will be easy for the participants to get to. Be sure to let them know well in advance that they will be required for these photos so they can arrange to be there on time and therefore ensure your family portraits won't be missing anyone.

It would be advisable not to entrust an amateur photographer with taking your wedding photographs. The results may not be what you envisaged and they only get one chance at it. Amateur photographers would be great for all the shots that your professional will miss and ask as many people as you can to take photos. They will usually produce the best candid shots. As the photographer generally does not take photos at the reception, consider having a disposable camera on each table and ask guests to take photos at their leisure during the reception. Have a responsible person collect all the cameras as the guests are leaving to avoid guests taking the cameras with them by mistake. This way, there would be at least one photo of every guest.

Collecting Your Memories

Make a date with your photographer after the wedding to view the proofs. It can take a few weeks or more. The proofs are generally normal size photos with numbers on the pack to make ordering easier. There will be plenty to choose from as the photographer will take several shots of the same pose and after a while they may all look the same. Ask the photographer which shots they think are best as they can generally tell which shots have better light, background, etc. Be sure to order enough for gifts to the parents, your bridal party, etc. or if you prefer, ask them to choose which ones they would like.

Videographer

The same rules for selecting a photographer apply to selecting a videographer – get a recommendation from someone close or view samples of their work. When viewing other videos, be sure to look for the standard of the lighting of the indoor shots, the audio (can you hear what's being said during the exchange of the vows?), etc. Professional wedding videos can be edited and set to music, have a running order on screen of the main participants or have some wedding day bloopers at the end – the possibilities are endless.

If your ceremony is being conducted in the church, you will need to confirm that they allow filming. Most churches nowadays do, but some older churches may not. Do not assume that it will be ok.

If you have budgetary constraints, consider asking a friend or family member who is handy with a video camera if they

would be able to do it for you. You may like to ask a couple of different people and spread the day between them i.e. one being with the bride and/or groom while they are getting ready, one to do the ceremony, one to do the photo session and one or more to do the reception. This way, they still get to enjoy the wedding and you have a back up in the event of one camera not working, batteries being flat, etc. You can then edit the end result yourselves and add music or narrations as required.

With both photographers and videographers, ensure that they will be dressed appropriately for the day. It would be inappropriate for all your guests to be dressed formally and the camera crew to be wearing casual clothes such as jeans and t-shirts. Be sure to stress to both parties that they and any assistants they may have be suitably dressed on the day. Any professional would not have a problem with this.

If you hire a professional videographer and they will be filming from start to finish, be prepared to provide a meal(s) at the reception. Most videographers will include this as part of their conditions.



PHOTOGRAPHER CHECK LIST

Name of photographer/studio

Address/Phone

Contact

Time required for bride and attendants

At

Time required for groom and attendants

At

Family portraits, informal shots to be held at

Starting at

Participants (excluding bridal party)

Required at reception to photograph

Total fee

Deposit required by

Proofs ready by

Wedding album ready by



VIDEOGRAPHER CHECK LIST

Name of videographer

Address/Phone

Contact

Time required for bride and attendants

At

Time required for groom and attendants

At

Filming of ceremony approved by

Required to film at photo session by

At

Number of people in crew

Meals required at reception

Total fee

Deposit to be paid by

Video ready for viewing

Notes





WEDDING CAKE



Traditionally, wedding cakes are fruit cakes with white icing and three tiers, with a miniature bride and groom, flowers or other decorations on the top tier. These days, anything goes. Have your favourite cake in any shape or form that you like. The bottom two tiers on a wedding cake are usually given to the guests (either to take home or served as dessert) and the top tier is taken home by the bride and groom and saved for the christening of the first child. If you decide to keep the top tier, it would be advisable to have a fruit cake, which stores well, rather than a chocolate mud cake or similar.

You may like to serve your wedding cake at the reception as a dessert. If so, you will need to ensure that the cake will be large enough to serve all your guests. The slice that guests take home is much smaller than the serving size they would need for dessert. Don't forget to organise cake bags if your guests are taking the cake home. They can be plain white or printed with the names of the bride and groom.

Check bridal magazines for the names of preferred wedding cake suppliers. Contact the bakers and ask to see photos or a portfolio of their previous works. If you want to create something different, be very specific and show photos or give drawings of what you want. You and the baker may have different ideas of the end result. Ask if you can sample a smaller version of the same cake.

Most bakeries will deliver the cake on the day of the wedding straight to the reception venue. Do not assume that this will happen – confirm this with your baker when making your inquiries. If you need to organise delivery of the cake to the reception yourself, enlist the help of a trusted friend with steady hands early on the wedding day. The bakery should have the cake suitably packed for delivery.

The cutting of the cake usually occurs after the toasts. The cake will be placed on a small table with a silver knife and is best situated in front of the bridal table. It can be taken away once the cake is cut. If your photographer is not staying for the duration of the reception, they will ask the bride and groom to pretend to cut the cake before the reception starts so they can leave. If there is any cake left over, ask someone to take it home for you.

*“ The wedding cake is a centuries old tradition, allowing guests to share
a little slice of this special day. Every cake should be created with the brides fantasy in mind.
Whether it's a cacophony of rosebuds and ribbons or a minimalist chocolate cube.”*

PETER SCHNEIDER - PATERSON'S CAKES SINCE 1916

CAKE CHECKLIST

Name of bakery

Address/Phone

Contact

Cake type

Icing colour and type

Number of tiers

Decorations for cake will be

Cake will be delivered to reception at

By

Time cake to be delivered

Number of cake bags required

Total cost

Deposit due

Remaining cake to be taken home by

Part of cake to save for bride and groom

Notes





WEDDING DAY TRANSPORTATION



You will need to have transport to the ceremony for the bride and her attendants and for the entire bridal party after the ceremony to the photo session, and then on to the reception. The bride and groom may also require transport after the reception to their wedding night accommodation. Other options include transport for the parents to the ceremony and reception and for the groom and his attendants to the ceremony. Normally, the groom and his attendants make their own way to the ceremony so that they are already at the church and in position when the bride arrives.

The best way to coordinate your transportation needs is to work out how many people in total you need to accommodate. If the bride is only having one or two attendants, the bride's mother may be able to ride to the ceremony with the bride, her father and her attendants. On the other hand, the bride may choose to ride separately with her father. It will all depend on how many people are involved.

After the ceremony, you will need a car for the bride and groom and one for the rest of the bridal party (usually the car that the bride, her father and/or attendants arrived in) to get to the photo session. The cars will usually wait for you, rather than go away and come back. As you will be charged an hourly rate, try and coordinate the timing of all venues to be in some sort of order. Most bridal parties have an early toast to the happy couple at the photo session so don't forget to have coolers and drinks pre-arranged (usually the duty of the groomsmen) and pass these to the drivers after the ceremony.

If you choose to have hire cars, the possibilities are endless. Cars for hire can range from Rolls Royce to Harley Davidson motorcycles or hot rods. While arriving by motorbike may be different, consider the practicality of having to sit on a motorbike if your dress has a huge train or in an open top car with an elaborate hair do and weather that may become inclement.

At the conclusion of the reception, the bride and groom are farewelled by all their guests. This is where you can make an impression by leaving by boat, horse and cart, a hot rod car or even a helicopter – anything is possible. Speak to the wedding coordinator at your reception venue for ideas and possibilities.

TRANSPORTATION CHECK LIST

Name of hire company

Address/Phone

Contact

Number and type of vehicles required

Time cars arrive to collect bride

And arrive at the ceremony by

Groom and attendants picked up from

By

At

Leave ceremony at

For photo session at

Leave photo session for reception by

And arrive at

Bride and groom transport after reception to

Picked up at

By

Total cost

Deposit required





HAIR AND BEAUTY



Hairstyles

While you may be tempted to get an entirely new look for your wedding, it would be a good idea to resist this. If you are considering a new style or cut, try it out at least three to six months before your wedding day. What looks good in a magazine or on others can often not suit a brides image. New hair colours should be tried at least one month before the wedding.

Visit your hairdresser at least six months prior to the day and discuss what styles you are interested in. What you may like to do may not always be possible. Talk about whether your hair will be worn up or down and ask for suggestions. If you are wearing a veil and/or head piece, give your hairdresser an idea of the size and shape so there are no surprises on the day trying to work around these obstacles.

Your attendants will have hair of varying colours and styles. Ask them if they are intending to change the length or colour of their hair prior to the wedding so you can make a decision about what you would like for the day.

Make your hair appointments with enough time to spare. Consider how many in your party (bridesmaids, flower girl, mother, etc) and the type of style that everyone is having done. Most hairdressers will offer to give you a hair trial two weeks before the wedding so you can see how your hair will look. Take along to the trial your veil and head piece if possible to get an indication of how long this will all take on the day.

You may find it easier to have your hairdresser come to you on the day. If this is what you would prefer, ask your preferred hairdresser well in advance if this is possible. Depending on their situation, they may or may not be able to oblige. Getting your hair done at the salon can be easier if there are not enough rollers, hair pins etc or if equipment breaks down. Also, they all have wash basins, rather than having to stick your head over the laundry sink etc.

Don't forget to wear a button down shirt or dress when getting your hair done to avoid having to take your clothes off over your head and spoiling your new hairstyle.

HAIR CHECK LIST

Name of hairdresser

Address/Phone

Contact

Appointment time

To be at

Bride's hair will be styled

Number and style of bridal attendants

Any others

Total cost

Hair trial date

Bride's hair being paid for by

Attendants' hair being paid for by

Notes

Make Up

Your hairdresser will probably be able to recommend a make up artist as they have usually dealt with plenty of them. Ask your hairdresser to suggest an artist that they know will be able to create the look you're after. No two make up artists are the same – while one might be creative and like to use bright or dark colours and be quite outrageous, the other may be a little bit more conservative and be able to give you a subtle glow.

If you are having no luck in finding someone, visit the make up counters of local department stores or pharmacies and speak with the consultants. If the actual cosmetic company does not offer after hour services, you will find most of the consultants contract their services for weddings.

To save time on the day, it would be easier to have the make up artist working while you are having your hair done. If you are having your hair done at the salon, check with your hairdresser first before confirming the appointment. There may not be enough room at the salon to coordinate both services.

As with your hair, ask your make up artist to give you a trial two weeks prior to the wedding – preferably on the same day as your hair trial. This way you can experience the total effect.

Any facial or other related beauty treatment should be done at least three weeks prior to allow for unexpected reactions.



Manicures and Pedicures

Again, your hairdresser should be able to recommend someone to give your hands and feet some pampering for the big day. Try to get both treatments done at the same time, preferably a day or two before the wedding. If applied correctly with the correct top coats, your nail varnish should be fine until after the wedding.

A pedicure is a good idea for your feet, in order to prepare them for a full day of standing, walking, dancing and the like. Try to walk around in your wedding shoes for a whole day a week before the wedding so your feet can get used to the shape of the shoe and if any blisters are to appear, they can be healed before the day.

Tip: If your honeymoon destination is a warm location, do you need to get your legs, underarms or bikini line waxed before you go? If so, do this at least one week before so any redness will be gone in time for the big day.

MAKE UP/MANICURE/PEDICURE CHECK LIST

Name of make up artist _____

Address/phone _____

Contact _____

Name of manicurist _____

Address/phone _____

Contact _____

Manicure and/or pedicure booked for _____

On _____

Waxing treatments booked for _____

Make up artist to arrive at _____

By _____

Bride's make up will be _____

Attendants make up will be _____

Total cost of make up _____

Deposit paid _____

Manicure/pedicure cost _____





WEDDING RINGS



When you purchased your engagement ring, you probably considered what style of wedding ring would complement it, whether it be a special design or a plain wedding band. As with your engagement ring, your wedding ring can be any design you choose. If your rings are designed to merge into one another, consider whether you need to allow for an eternity ring at a later date.

At the wedding ceremony, you should wear your engagement ring on your right hand so your ring finger is bare when the groom gives you the wedding ring. After the ceremony, you can change your engagement ring back over.

In these modern times, mens' wedding rings are not limited to plain wedding bands. If the groom is able to wear his wedding ring every day and is not limited by work restrictions he may prefer to create his own design.

Purchase your wedding rings at least a month before the wedding and organise insurance for them as soon as possible.





PRE WEDDING PARTIES



Kitchen Tea

A kitchen tea is usually an afternoon tea party given to the bride by the bridesmaids about one month before the wedding. Guests traditionally give the bride small and inexpensive items necessary to stock her new kitchen, whether it be a rolling pin, tea towels, a tea strainer and the like. With most brides having most of these utensils already, a different theme such as a plant party could be chosen, where guests bring small pot plants or garden utensils.

Hen's Party

As with the male buck's party, the hen's party is a 'female only' get together for the bride, her attendants and the guests who will be attending the wedding. It is advisable to have this party at least three weeks prior to the wedding. The bridesmaids are in charge of inviting the guests and organising where the party will be held. Most popular choices are good restaurants with guests moving on to dance venues afterwards.

Buck's Party

Usually quite a rowdy affair, the buck's party should definitely be held a minimum two to three weeks prior to the wedding. Some grooms have emerged from the festivities of a buck's night with multi coloured hair or shaved hair and eyebrows no matter how loudly they protest.

The buck's party is an all male affair for the groom, his attendants and guests. Organised by the groomsmen, traditional entertainment has been known to include female strippers and the like. While this is less popular in this day and age, if you will be offended by any entertainment of this kind, you should let the groom know. Most grooms are subjected to this type of entertainment by their friends even though they request that these entertainers not be included in the party.

A lot of buck's parties are being held at day time events such as the horse racing or other sporting events so as to avoid the after dark entertainment. This could be the alternative if the groom would like to move away from the traditional style of entertainment.

Rehearsal Dinner

A wedding rehearsal is usually a run through of what will happen during the church ceremony and is held a couple of days before the wedding. The minister will run through where everyone stands and practice readings if desired.

Whether or not you have a wedding rehearsal, it might be a good idea to have a rehearsal dinner to give the bridal party and parents a chance to get together and maybe even meet for the first time prior to the wedding.

If you are having out of town guests arrive a few days early, invite them along so you will have a chance to catch up with them properly, rather than only having a few minutes together on the wedding day.

Where possible, try to avoid having too many activities to attend the week before the wedding. There will be enough details and tasks to attend to without adding to your load.



MUSIC



Ceremony Music

Traditionally, a church wedding will have processional music when the bride arrives, selected hymns during the service (optional), signing of the register music and the recessional march when the bridal party leaves. If you are having a ceremony outdoors, there is more room to move and musicians and volume levels may not be an issue. With church ceremonies, you can be limited to the number of musicians and volume level due to the size and policies of the church. While a string quartet may look and sound great, they may not be able to fit into a small church. Most churches can organise their regular organist to play for you (an extra fee). Alternatively, determine what the policy is for taped music or live musicians.

Reception Music

Rivers Reception venues can cater for all types of musical preferences whether it be a disc jockey or a ten piece band. You will need to cater for all age groups when choosing your music.

The bridal waltz is a solo dance performed by the bride and groom to 'their song'. If you are having a live band, confirm that they are able to perform your special song. Ask to hear a demo tape and get a copy of their song list as well. Disc jockeys can give you song lists to select the type of music you would like to have.

Whether you choose a disc jockey or a band, ask them to check with the reception venue for any technical information they may need and to confirm when they will have access to the venue to set up. Make sure you inform them when they will need to be set up and ready by. You don't want them doing sound checks or lugging equipment into the venue while the guests are having pre-dinner drinks.

Be prepared to provide the band or disc jockey with at least a main meal and/or soft drinks for the duration of the evening. This is standard practice for entertainers and should be confirmed at the time of booking.

MUSIC CHECK LIST

Ceremony music will be

Ceremony musicians will be

Address/phone

Contact

Organist/Musicians Fee

Band/Musicians for reception are

Disc Jockey will be

Address/Phone

Contact

Total fee

Deposit required

Final payment required by

Bridal waltz will be

Other special songs

Set up and ready by

Music will finish at





WEDDING NIGHT



Your first night together as a married couple will more than likely find you both exhausted after a long but enjoyable day. In light of this, it would be better not to invite guests back to your hotel room after the reception. You may find over zealous guests staying longer than you anticipated or worse, staying all night. It will give you both a chance to unwind and be alone together after being with your guests all day.

If you are leaving for your honeymoon early the next day, arrange to have your luggage taken to the hotel on the wedding day. Most hotels will hold your luggage till your room is available for check in. Regardless of your plans after the wedding, you will need a change of clothes and some toiletries.

Ask the hotel for any special bridal packages they offer which may include complimentary champagne on arrival, breakfast in bed and late check out.



THE HONEYMOON



After all the celebrations are over, you deserve a holiday. Your honeymoon gives you both the chance to recharge your batteries and spend some valuable time together.

Newlyweds tend to take their honeymoon immediately after the wedding but you may prefer to postpone your departure till a more convenient time of year. If this is the case, try to have at least a few days away together before going back to your daily routines.

Your honeymoon can be as simple or extravagant as you can afford. You may prefer to fly off to a warm location to laze around or be adventurous and undertake lots of activities on a tour.

As with any holiday, ensure you have everything you need to travel well in advance such as passports, travel insurance, vaccinations, etc. Leave a copy of your itinerary with a family member just in case you need to be contacted but ask them to limit contact to emergencies if you do not want to be disturbed.

WEDDING NIGHT CHECK LIST

Hotel name

Address/phone

Room number and floor

Check in time

Check out time

Luggage delivered by

On

Accommodation will be

And includes extras of

Total cost

Deposit paid

Arriving at hotel by

And departing by

Notes



HONEYMOON CHECK LIST

Honeymoon destination

Departure date

Staying for

Leaving destination on

And arriving home on

Flight number

Travel agent

Address/phone

Contact

Passport numbers

Travel insurance with

Policy number

Vaccinations required

Total cost

Deposit paid

Final payment due





WEDDING CEREMONY



For those couples who want an alternative to the traditional church wedding, there are several options you can consider. This can apply to couples who are not comfortable with a religious ceremony for any reason. Some couples are simply not at ease with being the centre of attention and may prefer to have a private ceremony with family and close friends then invite other guests along to the reception afterwards. Whichever way you decide to go, create a ceremony which best suits the personality and taste of both the bride and groom.

Depending on your faith, the traditional church wedding can celebrate mass as well as the exchanging of vows. Discuss with your partner what you think will be appropriate for you while making allowances for any religious or traditional practices you may follow. Once you have decided on the type of service you would like, speak to the minister at the church to see what can be arranged. Most church weddings are flexible now and will even allow the bride and groom to have their own vows rather than the traditional ones offered by the church. The minister will run through how the ceremony will unfold and be sure to ask if you would like something done out of the norm such as the bridal party facing the congregation etc. A rehearsal a couple of days before will make it easier for all concerned to know where they are to stand, walk to, etc. Most churches will either charge a fee or ask for a donation. If you decide to have the church organist, this will normally be extra as will any flowers or decorations you would like to have. Check with the minister to see what you will need to provide.

Most churches will require couples to participate in a pre-wedding program before they will perform a wedding ceremony. The program varies from church to church but generally consists of the bride and groom attending a scheduled number of workshops, either with other couples or on their own, to evaluate your compatibility. The minister will then discuss with you both the results of this program. Ask your minister if you will be required to attend any programs as they can be held across an entire weekend.

For a non-church wedding, you will need to select a venue first – a park, the beach or even the place that you first met. Once you have approval for the ceremony from the relevant authorities, you will need to engage the services of a celebrant. Try the Yellow Pages or your local paper. When speaking to the celebrant, ask them to give you a copy of the vow ceremony they will be using and if you do not want to write your own vows, ask for some ideas or examples.

The time of your ceremony may depend on other bookings on the same day but generally, the ceremony is held late afternoon with the reception following in the early evening. While you have a photo session to complete between the ceremony and the reception, your guests will have to amuse themselves or you may wish to accommodate them at this time. Try to coordinate the reception to be no more than two hours after the ceremony.

CEREMONY CHECK LIST

Name of church/venue

Minister of celebrant

Address/phone

Total fee

Pre wedding classes to be held on

At

Total fee for ceremony

Organist fee

Ceremony to begin at

Groom to arrive by

Decorations/flowers for ceremony

Bells at church to ring

Photographer/videographer permission given by

Order of service books checked by

And authorised on

Rehearsal to be on

Processional music will be

Hymns to be

Signing of register music

Performed by

Recessional music will be

Readers of scriptures or other will be

Notes





RECEPTION



At Rivers, we can create a reception that will be in keeping with the mood or theme of your wedding. Whether you would prefer to be aboard one of our stunning function vessels or at our beautiful Rivers reception centre at Southbank, our experienced wedding coordinators can plan your reception to run smoothly and leave you to enjoy what will be remembered as the best day of your life.

Once you have confirmed the date of your reception, you can think about what decorations you would like and what style of food and beverage package would best suit your needs. Decorations can be as simple or as luxurious as you desire and may include chair covers with sashes, candelabra, table centre pieces with a difference or even a stunning ice sculpture. Ask your wedding coordinator about other upcoming receptions that are being held by others using similar decorations and arrange to inspect the room when it is decorated. It will give you an idea of what your reception will be like.

There are several food and beverage packages on offer at Rivers and they are constantly being updated to keep up with culinary trends. A package can be tailored for you according to your requirements, whether it be a complete dinner or a buffet style dinner. You will need to advise of special dietary requirements when giving your final numbers two weeks prior.

Table Arrangements

The bridal table is a long table set and raised in the middle of the room so that all the guests may see the bridal party. You may also like to have your parents on this table though they may prefer to have their own table with other family members or their guests. The bride and groom are seated together in the middle of the table with the best man next to the bride and the matron/maid of honour next to the groom. The other attendants would then be seated alternately in the remaining seats, and if your parents are joining you, they would be seated at either end of the table.

As mentioned earlier, all your guests will need to be assigned to a certain table and allocated a seat. You will need to have a list (usually in alphabetical order) displayed in the foyer showing guests what table they will be seated at. On the table, you will need to have place cards at each setting, showing guests where they are sitting. Try to group people together in terms of common interests and age groups as this will make it easier for guests who have not previously met to strike up a conversation.

What Happens Next?

The traditional reception starts with guests having pre-dinner drinks before being seated to welcome the bridal party. The bridal party will then be introduced with the bride and groom coming in last. The entree would then be served, followed by the main course. After the main course, the toasts and speeches would be held and followed with the cutting of the cake. Once the cake is cut, the newlyweds would move onto the dance floor to do the bridal waltz and be joined by their attendants and their parents. Other guests would then be invited to join in. The dancing will continue and after a while, dessert and coffee would be served. Just before the bride and groom leave, the bride throws her bouquet and the groom throws the bride's garter.

For your reception, you will need to have an MC (master of ceremonies) who will introduce the bridal party and announce the toast makers and advise guests of what event is coming up. The MC is usually a close friend or family member who is familiar with bride and groom. If you do not have anyone to ask, your band leader or disc jockey can perform these duties for you.

Toast and Speeches

Normally, the first toast will be to the bride and groom and will be made by the MC. After the toast, the groom will then respond on behalf of both himself and his bride and he will thank everyone involved with the wedding day. After

his speech, the groom would then propose a toast to the bridesmaids and the best man would respond on behalf of the bridesmaids. The best man would also give a speech and include some stories about the couple, maybe including how you met. He would then propose a toast to the bride's parents and family. The bride's father would respond and then propose a toast to the groom's family.

This is intended as a guide only as different cultures may have other toasts to be made.

After all the toasts have been completed, the best man and groomsmen would then go through and read any telegrams or faxes that may have been received. It may be wise to censor these yourself as what some people regard as funny may be offensive to others.

Cutting of the Cake

This is usually done at the conclusion of the speeches and provides a good photo opportunity for your guests.

Bouquet and Garter Throwing

The final official duties for the night are the throwing of the bouquet and the garter. Tradition states that all the single girls form a circle and the bride stands with her back to this circle and throws the bouquet back over her head. The girl who catches the bouquet is said to be the next to marry. If you would like to keep and preserve your bouquet, organise your florist to have a smaller version of the original made for you to throw.

After the throwing of the bouquet, the bride sits on a chair and the groom removes a garter from her leg. The garter is thrown backwards towards the single males and the man who catches it is said to be the next to marry.

Saying Goodbye

At the conclusion of the evening, the band leader or disc jockey will ask all the guests to form a circle on the dance floor and the bridal party and parents to form a small circle inside the larger one. Starting at one person, the bride and groom then go around in alternate directions and thank every guest for being a part of their special day. Once you have said goodbye to all the guests in the outer circle, you can say goodbye to your bridal party and parents.

Proper etiquette states that guests should stay until the cutting of the cake but most guests do not leave until after the bride and groom have left.

When the bride and groom have left marks the end of the reception. However, you may like to have your guests stay on – speak to your wedding coordinator about having extra time for your guests.



RECEPTION CHECK LIST

Name of reception venue

Address/phone

Wedding coordinator

Final guests number

Children

Others (band, videographer, etc)

Total number of guests for reception

Reception to start at

And finish at

Extra time organised

Cost per guest

Deposit to be paid by

Final payment by

Final guest numbers required by

Decorations	Chair covers	Yes	No
	Candelabra	Yes	No
	Flowers	Yes	No
	Ice sculpture	Yes	No

Other

Master of ceremonies

Name of band

Contact

Name of disc jockey

Contact

Total fee

To be set up

And finish playing at

Entrance song for bridal party will be

And the bridal waltz will be

Number of tables

Number of guests per table

Notes





HANDY PLANNERS



When you get engaged...

- Decide on your budget with parents
- Decide on your wedding date
- Book a venue for the ceremony and reception
- Call a meeting with minister or celebrant
- Choose your bridal party
- Find a photographer and videographer
- Select the bride's and bridesmaids gowns and accessories

Six months before your wedding...

- Select a florist
- Have dress fittings for bride and attendants
- Choose groom and attendants suits
- Design your invitations and other stationery
- Choose a wedding cake
- Look at bands/musicians/disc jockey for ceremony and reception
- Organise honeymoon destination
- Book wedding day cars or other transportation
- Make appointments for hair and makeup for bride and attendants

Three months to go...

- Have invitations printed
- Confirm other printing requirements i.e. RSVP cards, order of service books, place cards, etc
- Finalise ceremony order with minister or celebrant
- Write wedding vows
- Attend any pre-wedding programs as required
- Finalise flower selections
- Book honeymoon
- Arrange any travel documents required for honeymoon i.e. passports, travel insurance, etc.
- Register your gifts at a bridal registry
- Book musicians for ceremony and reception
- Draw up draft for guest list and discuss with relevant parties

Two months to go...

- Finalise guest list and send out invitations
- Speak to your reception wedding coordinator at Rivers to discuss menus and any decorations required
- Select wedding rings for bride and groom

Visit dentist and get your teeth polished
Book wedding night accommodation
Have another dress fitting and organise final fitting date
Make final selections for any readings for the ceremony
Finalise order of service books for ceremony and get minister to check

One month and counting...

Finalise documentation required for minister or celebrant for ceremony
Book a date for the ceremony rehearsal
Work on guest table and seating allocations
Choose a master of ceremonies for the reception
Check all deposits have been paid
Select accessories for the bride's gown
Have any beauty treatments such as facial
Confirm groom and groomsmen's suits and other accessories
Buy gifts for bridal party and parents
Have kitchen tea for bride

One week to go...

Have hair and make up trial
Book venue for rehearsal dinner
Confirm appointments for manicure and/or pedicure
Have any waxing done
Chase up any outstanding RSVPs
Final guest numbers to reception venue
Write place cards for reception and drop off at reception with guest list
Organise disposable cameras for the reception
Confirm groom's transport arrangements for the ceremony
Groom and his attendants should have any haircuts done now
Hen's or buck's parties to be held by now
Pick up wedding rings and have any other jewellery cleaned
Organise a schedule for final payments
Start having some early nights and drink lots of water
Groomsmen to organise any drinks for the photo session
Pick up your gown a week before
Give your shoes a test run at least a week before
Groom's suit to be collected
Practice smiling!



FINAL WEEK PLANNER

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



