

The Ultimate Wedding Planning Checklist

We've worked out everything you need to do and when you need to do it: Breaking it down for you every step of the way.

12 months before

Set your budget

Work out an overall cost for your wedding and start a wedding spreadsheet listing each item. The average budget for a wedding including honeymoon was €26,000 in 2017*.

Pick your guest list

How many people are you going to invite? Establish a rough number then start making the list with names and contact details. Irish couples invited 159 guests, on average, in 2017*.

Choose your bridal party

Chief bridesmaid, bridesmaids, best man, groomsmen, page boys, flower girls: choose the people you want for each of the main roles.

Plan the look and feel

Use a mood board or Pinterest to set the theme you want to achieve for your wedding by gathering the looks you like.

Agree the type of ceremony you want

Do you and your partner want a religious or a civil wedding? Religious ceremonies accounted for roughly 64% of Irish weddings in 2017, 12% were civil ceremonies and 11% were humanist ceremonies*.

Check the legal requirements for your wedding ceremony

Arrange an appointment with the religious celebrant or the registrar to give notice and book your wedding date for a civil marriage ceremony.

Book the venue for the ceremony and pay the deposit (if applicable)

Venues can be booked out a long way ahead of time especially for the summer months and on Fridays and Saturdays so book well in advance if you can.

Book the reception venue and pay the deposit

Hotels were still the most popular choice for receptions 67% in 2017, then came country houses 19%, and castles 9%*.

Start researching photographers, bands, florists, and caterers

As soon as you have a date and a location for the ceremony and reception, it's time to start looking into who is available on the date.

**Source: All figures supplied by weddingsonline.ie based on a survey of over 1,200 participants which took place in January 2018.*

10 – 11 months before

- Arrange wedding insurance**

Wedding insurance will cover you if something goes wrong before or on your big day for things like the dress, the venue, the suppliers and the rings.
- Hire the photographer**

You don't need to discuss things shot by shot just yet but make sure you find a photographer who can show you examples of the style of photos you like. The average spent on a wedding photographer, in 2017, was over €1,500*.
- Hire the videographer**

The same goes for the videographer. Find one who creates a record of the big day in a style you like. The average spent on a wedding videographer, in 2017, was over €1,200*.
- Book the entertainment for the reception**

Go and see the potential acts to see how they perform live in front of audiences before reserving your favourite.
- Meet the caterers and check menus**

If your reception venue doesn't offer a catering service, ask about any 'catering rules' they might have and book a catering service now.
- Book your wedding transport**

A vintage Rolls Royce and chauffeur? A horse and carriage? Reserve the transport that will bring you to the ceremony then whisk you on to the reception in your first moments of marriage.
- Book your florist**

Book the florist now even if you are not yet ready to start discussing the details of the bouquets, buttonholes and floral arrangements.
- Book your honeymoon**

Are your passports up to date? Do you need any vaccinations? Decide whether you want a luxury couple of weeks in the Maldives after the wedding or want to take a 'minimoon' in Ireland now and splash out later. The average cost of a honeymoon in 2017? Just north of €5,000*.

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8 – 9 months before

- Find a wedding cake supplier**
It's time to agree what kind of cake you want and book a supplier.
- Buy, order or hire the wedding dress and accessories**
Whether you have had a clear idea of the dress you want for some time or are still unsure, now is the time to make the decision. In 2017, the average amount spent on a wedding dress by Irish brides was just over €1,700*.
- Buy, order or hire the bridesmaids' dresses and accessories**
And once you decide on your dress then it's time to turn to the bridesmaids.
- Buy, order or hire the flower girls' dresses and accessories**
If you are going to have flower girls then you need to finalise their outfits too.

Need a helping hand to pay for your big day?

With a **Bank of Ireland wedding loan** you can apply in minutes to borrow between €1,000 and €65,000 and repay over 1 to 5 years. Find out more about a Bank of Ireland wedding loan, today.

Warning: If you do not meet the repayments on your loan, your account will go into arrears. This may affect your credit rating, which may limit your ability to access credit in the future.

Credit only available to over 18's. Lending criteria, terms and conditions apply. Bank of Ireland is regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

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6 – 7 months before

- Buy or hire the groom's outfit**
It's time for the groom to go for an initial fitting and buy or hire his suit.
- Buy or hire the best man's outfit and groomsmen's outfits**
In 2017, an average of roughly €1,000 was spent on suits for weddings which covered the cost of four to five suits (including the groom)*.
- Buy or hire the page boys' outfits**
And if you are having a page boy or boys then you need to buy or hire their outfits now.
- Arrange the gift registry**
Wedding gift lists are common in the US and the UK and guests from those countries often expect to be presented with a list of gifts to choose from. If you decide to use a wedding gift list service you need to start now. Many retailers offer this service.
- Choose and order invitations**
RSVP cards, 'thank you' cards, the order of service, 'save the date' cards and cake boxes all need to be ordered now.
- Reserve equipment rentals**
Book the marquee, tables, chairs, linen, crockery, cutlery, candelabras etc.
- Book first night accommodation for yourselves**
It may be included with your reception booking if your reception's at a hotel but, if not, make sure to book a place to stay.
- Review all your supplier contracts**
Time to read through the small print to see exactly what each of your suppliers has committed to deliver and when so there are no surprises.
- Ensure you've paid all the supplier deposits**
If you forget to pay a supplier their deposit they may assume you've decided not to use them so check you've paid the deposit for each supplier.
- Send 'save the date' cards if needed**

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5 months before

Choose and order your flowers

It's time to choose which flowers you want. Remember that if the flowers you choose are not in season, locally, they will have to be flown in adding to the cost. The average spent on flowers in 2017 was approximately €675 a wedding*.

Plan your reception

Using your mood board or Pinterest, finalise your theme, décor, centrepieces, favours etc.

Select the music for your ceremony

Book singers and musicians and finalise the music selection.

Select the music for your reception

Run through the music choices for the reception and make your final choices.

Brief all the musicians

Make sure they know exactly when you need them, for how long and what you expect from them.

Book children's entertainment and facilities

If you're planning to keep the little darlings entertained then now's the time to book their entertainment, onsite crèche facilities and any special requirements.

Finalise the guest list

Some of the guests on your list may not be able to make it; some may want to bring partners and children you haven't allowed for. It's time to create the final list.

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4 months before

Review your budget

Are you still on track? Are you overspending in one area and need to cut back? Do costs you didn't plan for have to be taken into account? Review your budget.

Have you selected your wedding rings?

In 2017, the average spent on wedding rings, excluding engagement rings, was roughly €1,300*.

Select outfits for your mothers

You want the mothers of the bride (or brides) and the groom (or grooms) to look and feel their best on your big day.

Arrange a tasting

Now that your wedding day is in sight, arrange a tasting with the caterer to ensure you're happy with your menu choices.

Finalise your cake design

It's time to make the final decision about the cake. In 2017, couples spent on average €378 on their wedding cake*

Select a master of ceremonies for the reception

Choose your master of ceremonies.

Select your ushers

Which of your friends and family will show guests to their seats and act as general guides during the day?

Plan your hen

The hen is traditionally the responsibility of the chief bridesmaid but you will want to know the plans and approve her suggested itinerary.

Plan your stag

The same is true of the stag which is traditionally organised by the best man.

Plan your rehearsal dinner

If you want a rehearsal dinner for your friends and family to meet then now is the time to plan and book it.

Finalise your honeymoon plans

Renew your passports if you need to. You may or may not want to change your surname on your passport to reflect your married status. You might also need visas and vaccinations if travelling abroad to countries that require them.

Marriage Registration Form

Make sure you have the form now. You'll need to give it to whoever solemnises your marriage before the marriage ceremony on the day.

**Source: All figures supplied by weddingsonline.ie based on a survey of over 1,200 participants which took place in January 2018.*

3 months before

- Book hair stylist and make-up artist**
Have you booked your hair stylist and make-up artist? In 2017, Irish couples spent an average of €368 on make-up and €313 on hair for the bride and three bridesmaids.
- Book beauty treatments**
Beauty treatments need to be booked in now for the run-up to the big day.
- Brief caterer on menu options and beverage requirements**
The caterer will need to know the numbers of diners and any special dietary requirements.
- Determine customs and traditions**
Are there any 'must do' traditions that you want for your wedding day?
- Meet with celebrant to finalise order of ceremony**
Go through the running order and the number of readings etc.
- Select readings and readers**
Choose the family and friends you want to read at the ceremony and appropriate readings you're both happy with.
- Write personal wedding vows**
If you want to make your own personal vows at the ceremony, it's worth starting to work on them well in advance.
- Determine order of events at the reception**
Where and when will everything happen and what are the timings?
- Finalise details of rehearsal**
The rehearsal itself does take a bit of organising so finalise the details.
- Prepare information for guests**
Where is it again? How do I get there? Where is there to stay? Start building a Frequently Asked Questions list for guests which you can share on paper and on social media.
- Prepare your wedding day itinerary**
What has to happen on the day itself, who will be involved and what time will everything take place.
- Agree the 'almost final final' guest list**
Who can't make it? Who will you ask instead?
- Send invitations**
It's time to send out the invites to your guest list.

2 months before

- Confirm venue arrangements**
Run through all the details with the venue.
- Arrange for wedding dress fittings**
Time to ensure that the dress fits.
- Prepare instructions for bridal party**
Let everyone know what you need them to do so there are no surprises on the day.
- Prepare instructions for all suppliers**
Go through each of the suppliers in turn and be clear and specific about what you expect to be provided.
- Agree guest lists for stag and hen**
Who is going on the hen and who on the stag?
- Select going-away outfit for bride**
What are you going to wear as your going-away outfit?
- Buy gifts for bridal attendants, parents, bride and groom**
Time to organise the gifts for everyone involved in your day.
- Print order of service, menus, and place cards**
Best get your printing done and set aside for the day.
- Send information to guests as replies are received**
As your guests confirm their attendance, you'll need to provide them with information which you'll hopefully have already gathered together as part of your wedding FAQs.

1 month before

- Track RSVPs as they come in**
Keep a running total of confirmed attendees.
- Acknowledge the gifts you receive**
And a description of who sent which gift (take photos on your phone if you need a reminder).
- Brief your photographer**
Work out what kind of video(s) the videographer will provide and decide how much or how little you want them present during the day.
- Confirm arrangements with musicians**
Check everything will be as you agreed.
- Confirm transport arrangements**
Check everything will be as you agreed.
- Confirm floristry arrangements**
Check everything will be as you agreed.
- Confirm arrangements for equipment hire**
Check everything will be as you agreed.
- Confirm venue arrangements**
Check everything will be as you agreed and visit to take another look.
- Get reception accessories**
Buy, hire or borrow everything you need.
- Arrange trials with hair and make-up artists**
Your wedding day isn't the time to experiment so use your trials to work out what you want beforehand.

Need a helping hand to pay for your big day?

With a **Bank of Ireland wedding loan** you can apply in minutes to borrow between €1,000 and €65,000 and repay over 1 to 5 years. Find out more about a Bank of Ireland wedding loan, today.

Warning: If you do not meet the repayments on your loan, your account will go into arrears. This may affect your credit rating, which may limit your ability to access credit in the future.

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3 weeks before

- Give final numbers of guests to caterers and reception venue**
How many?
- Prepare seating plan for reception**
Who is on the top table? Where is everyone going to sit?
- Prepare place cards**
Put the names on the cards to let everyone know where they are expected to sit.
- Prepare wedding speeches**
The sooner you start preparing the better!

2 weeks before

- Confirm all arrangements with suppliers**
Check everything will be as you agreed.
- Provide wedding day schedules and instructions to all suppliers**
Let them know what you expect in black and white.
- Arrange final wedding dress fitting**
Last fitting.
- Pick up wedding dress and accessories**
- Pick up or print tickets and your travel itinerary for the honeymoon**
- Arrange foreign currency for your honeymoon if you need any**
- Wrap your gifts**
If you haven't wrapped your gifts, do so now.
- Test drive the route to ceremony and reception**
How long will it take? Are there any road works or diversions planned (remember to let guests know of any closed roads etc.)?

1 week before

- Confirm rehearsal date and details**
Ensure everyone will be there at the right time.
- Review all wedding plans**
Run through everything from top to bottom.
- Make arrangements for receiving gifts at reception**
How will you receive them and where will they be stored safely?
- Prepare to pay balance of fees to suppliers**
Ensure you pay your suppliers according to the terms you agreed.
- Pack for honeymoon**
Time to pack the suitcases and set them aside.

2 days before

- Arrange to pick up the groom's and best man's outfits, if hired**
- Give gifts to parents and each other**
- Pack all the items you need for the wedding ceremony**
- Drop off all items at the reception venue**
- Confirm the wedding day itinerary with the bridal party**

The day before

- Attend and direct the rehearsal (make changes based on what you learn)**
- Give the updated itinerary to all involved**
- Brief your ushers on their duties**
- Ensure you have the rings somewhere safe**
- Oversee the decoration of the ceremony and reception venues**

The wedding day – before the ceremony

- Make sure your mobile is fully charged (and you know where your charger is)
- Make sure you have all the wedding details and checklists with you
- Make sure you have Marriage Registration Form and wedding programmes
- Coordinate the musicians, photographer, videographer, officiant, florist, transport or ensure somebody carries out this responsibility
- Liaise with your reception venue manager to ensure everything is in hand

The wedding day – during the ceremony and after

- Provide any final payments to suppliers or ensure somebody carries out this responsibility
- Have someone collect your marriage licence, candles, guest book etc. after the ceremony
- Have someone coordinate the photography and videography

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The wedding day – the reception

- Coordinate caterer, musicians, DJ, cake supplier, photographer and videographer or ensure somebody carries this responsibility out
- Have someone oversee the reception receiving line if you have one
- Ensure somebody provides any final payments to suppliers
- Have someone to coordinate your first dance, cake cutting, bouquet throwing and any other ‘moments’
- Ensure someone has the responsibility to collect all your wedding gifts

After the wedding

- Ensure the dress goes to the cleaners
- Arrange to have the dress stored
- Return any hired attire and ensure all the bridal party do so
- Ensure the bouquet is preserved
- Place an announcement in the newspaper if desired
- Send out ‘thank you’ notes for gifts
- Send out change of address cards if necessary
- Send ‘thank you’ notes to suppliers
- Ensure you pick up and store your marriage licence somewhere safe

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