



THE ULTIMATE
WEDDING GUIDE

FROM A PHOTOGRAPHERS PERSPECTIVE

BEYONDTHEPOND.PHOTOGRAPHY

A romantic couple is shown in two parts of the image. The top part shows a man in a green shirt and a woman in a grey sweater embracing outdoors with green foliage in the background. The bottom part is a close-up of their hands clasped together, both wearing engagement rings. A white text box is centered over the image.

Engagement session advice

TIPS AND TRICKS FOR AN AMAZING
EXPERIENCE



Engagement Session

APPROXIMATE START TIME

Winter

Dec-Mar 3-5pm

During December through Mid-March you can plan on your engagement session taking place around 3-5pm. However the time changes in Mid-March and so that will make the start time one hour later.

Summer

Jan-Aug 6:30pm-8:30pm

Summer engagements, just like all engagements take place 2 hours before sunset. This will hopefully mean that the shoot will be during the cooler part of the day.



Engagement Session

APPROXIMATE START TIME

Spring

Apr-May Varies

The sunset time drastically changes throughout the course of these two months and so our shooting time changes as well. You can plan on approximately 5:30-7:30pm in April and 6-8pm in May.

Fall

Sept-Nov Varies

The sunset time changes drastically during these 3 months. In Sept, you can plan on 5:30-7:30pm until the third week & then 5-7 until Mid-Oct. After the first week of Nov, 3-5pm.

OUTFIT INSPIRATION



Your



wedding



D

A

Y

EXAMPLE TIMELINES

One location + First look (8 hours)

- 1:15-2:00 - Bridal details + final HMU touches
- 2:00-2:45 - Bride getting into dress + guys getting ready
- 2:45-3:00 - Walk to first look
- 3:00-3:15 - First Look
- 3:15-3:45 - Couple Portraits
- 3:45 - 4:00 - Bride with bridesmaids
- 4:00 - 4:15 - Full Bridal Party
- 4:15-4:30 - Groom with groomsmen
- 4:30- 5:00 - Immediate family photos
- 5:00 - 5:30pm - Couple hide to rest and retouch
- 5:30 - 6:00 - Wedding ceremony
- 6:00-6:30 - Sunset portraits
- 6:30 - 9:15 - Reception

EXAMPLE TIMELINES

One location + *No* First look
(8 hours)

- 1:45-2:30 - Bridal details + final HMU touches
- 2:30-3:15 - Bride getting into dress + guys getting ready
- 3:15-3:30 - Bride Portraits
- 3:30-3:45 - Bride w/bridesmaids
- 3:45 - 4:00 - Bride with her family
- 4:00- 4:15- Groom individuals + groomsmen
- 4:15 - 4:30 - Groom with his family
- 4:30-5:00 - Ceremony preparation
- 5:00- 5:30 - Ceremony
- 5:30 - 5:45 - Bridal party
- 5:45 - 6:00 - Family photos
- 6:00-6:30 - Sunset Portraits
- 6:30 - 9:15 - Reception

APPROXIMATE TIMES

- Details + Prep: 1.5 Hours
- First look + Portraits : 30-40 minutes
 - Bridal Party:30-40 mins
 - Family formals : 30 mins
- Extra Portrait time : As much as is left over!

WEDDINGS & SEASONS





PORTRAIT & TIMING TIPS FOR:

W I N T E R

Winter weddings are gorgeous! However, they do take some additional planning simply because of the sunset time. The hard part about a winter timeline is the fact that the sun sets around 4 pm. This means that all of your portraits have to be done before then! This isn't a problem if you're having a late afternoon wedding. However, if you're planning on having a late evening wedding, you may have a bit of downtime from 4 pm until the start of the ceremony. You will also need more coverage time as well.

S U M M E R

Summer weddings are amazing! I love that there is so much daylight! In some months, the light will last until 8:30 pm! So, if you're having a summer wedding, you'll need to plan on having a few minutes to slip out of the reception for your sunset portraits! You will NOT regret this! This is the absolute best light of the day and you're going to want to have portraits during this time period. Usually, these portraits happen during dinner or open dancing so that no one even notices that you're gone for a few minutes!



PORTRAIT & TIMING TIPS FOR:

S P R I N G

Spring weddings are wonderful because they are at the perfect temperature! However, I recommend having plenty of Claritin and Zyrtec on hand just in case allergies start to flare up during portrait time. Spring weddings normally mean the potential for some blooms! If we happen to find any type of blooming tree or plant, it will be worth it to give us a few minutes for portraits with it! You'll LOVE the result!.

F A L L

Fall weddings are my favorite! I love the temperature and the colors! Most of my fall brides worry about color, and I just want to encourage you that all I need is one tree with some color in order to make it look like fall! A little bit of color can go a long way!! Your portrait time will vary depending on your wedding date! We'll be sure to discuss this when we approve your final timeline!

DAY-OF REMINDERS



GATHER
the goods.

If possible, collect all of your details before I arrive so that I can begin quickly and have more time for some “getting ready” shots of you and your party!

EXTRA
elements.

Sometimes, depending on the theme and “look” of the wedding day, there may be some extra elements that you could include when you gather your details. For example, if you’re having a country-themed wedding, you could include a piece of burlap or lace. If you’re having a rustic-themed wedding that includes some wooden elements, maybe save a small piece of wood for me to use when I’m shooting your rings and jewelry. This REALLY makes for beautiful, consistent album spreads!

KEEP
all three rings.

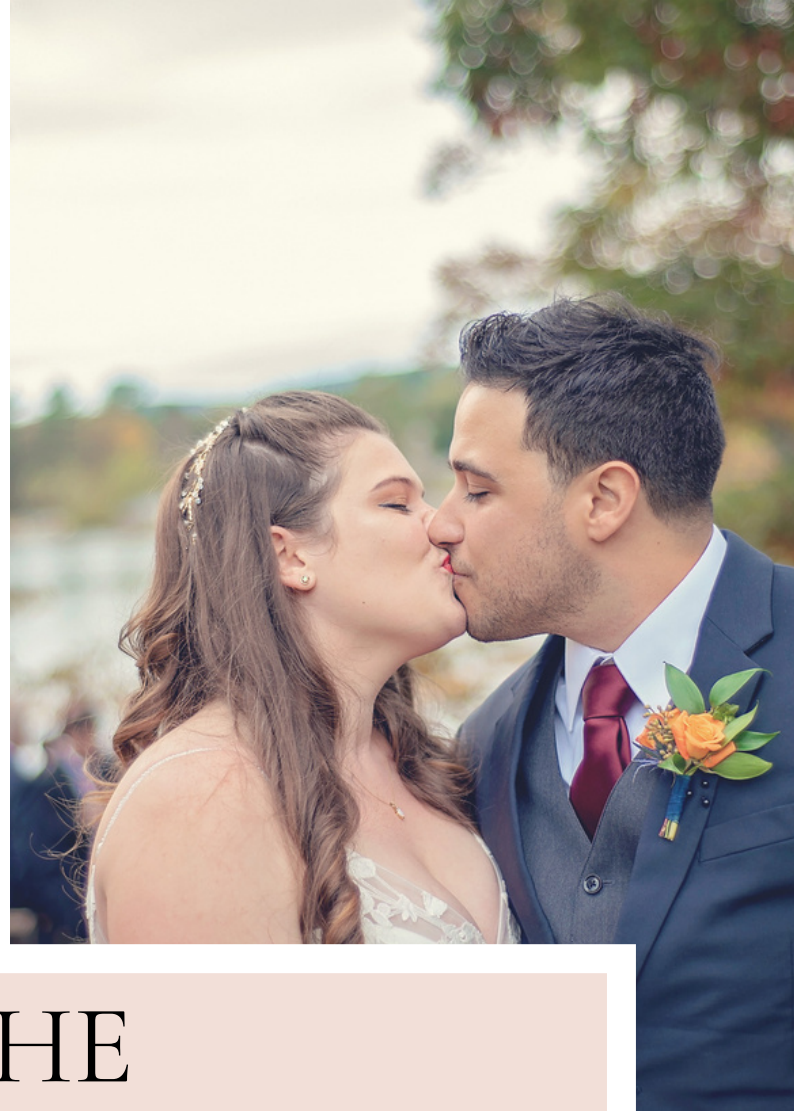
The most common detail missing when I arrive is the rings! Officiants and planners will tell you to hand over your wedding band to the “best person” before the day begins. However, it’s actually better to hand it over during the wedding party portraits so that I can shoot some great ring shots! If you forget, no worries, I can always shoot the ring shot at the reception if there is extra time!

BRING
the bouquet.

Don’t forget the Bouquet! Have the bouquets and boutonnieres delivered before the first look so that they can be present in the portraits. No worries, if it’s hot, we’ll be sure to keep it in water as much as possible before the ceremony!

When you're planning a wedding day timeline, the best advice I could give is to **ADD CUSHION TIME!** Sometimes the most simple things can take an extra 20 minutes and then all of a sudden, the whole morning is thrown off. I have seen "getting the bride in her dress" take almost 40 minutes because of a button malfunction. It's a smart idea to add in an extra ten minutes here and there so that we have some wiggle room to work with! This way, if one part of the day gets thrown off by 20 minutes, I can help you compensate that time in other areas. There are so many different things to think about when you're planning a wedding day, and so here are some tips for the preceremony timeline! I realize that every single wedding day is different and so not all of these tips will apply to every wedding day schedule. Something else to consider is that not **EVERYTHING** will go as planned, and I promise you, that is completely normal!!





THE CEREMONY



CEREMONY TIPS

Here it is! The moment everyone has been waiting for!

The music is playing and the guests have been seated. Ushers make their way to the back of the church, and the coordinator is lining up the bridesmaids while giving the musicians a 5 minute warning. The bride is about to walk down the aisle to the love of her life..... and if she's like most girls, she's dreamed about this moment for a long time!

Vows will be shared and promises will be made... this is what it's all about!! In a world full of wedding blogs, Pinterest and bridal magazines, it's easy to be overwhelmed and consumed by the “prettiness” of the event.

While details do matter and planning is necessary, it's important to never lose sight of the real purpose of this amazing day!



LIGHTING

Ceremony lighting is really important. If you get married outdoors at 12pm, the lighting will be extremely harsh, and not only will there be harsh lines of light on your faces, but you will also be squinting. I suggest planning an outdoor ceremony 2 hours before sunset if you are having a FIRST LOOK.

If you are not interested in sharing the first look, then I would suggest having your ceremony 3 hours before sunset to ensure that you will have plenty of time for all of your portraits afterward. The lower the sun, the more romantic the lighting. If you are having an indoor ceremony, it is always best to have EVEN lighting at the altar. If there are two spotlights on the couple, I will not be able to expose the rest of the bridal party. It is better to have soft, even light across the whole altar.



ORDER OF SERVICE

I have seen so many couples do so many AMAZING things during their ceremony. I've photographed couples washing each other's feet, symbolizing that they want to serve each other for the rest of their life. Some couples share in communion while some light a unity candle. I've seen sand ceremonies, rope ceremonies, and the signing of the family Bible. The options are limitless!! As you plan your ceremony, make sure you design it to be exactly what the two of you envision it to be. This is your day!! If you have the freedom to be creative, then, by all means, be creative!!



PROGRAMS + DETAILS

The BEST advice I have for the program-making process is to remember that not EVERY guest needs a program! We printed a program for everyone attending our wedding but quickly realized that most families only took one. We ended up with over 200 extra programs! Yikes! Also, before ordering your programs, have SEVERAL people check them for spelling and grammatical errors. Programs and the ceremony decor are things that the bride can plan in advance but then delegate the actual job of setting it up to a friend or coordinator. The last thing a bride needs to be doing the morning of her wedding is running around setting up floral arrangements!

This leads me to my next column!



COORDINATION

Hiring either a full event planner or just a day of coordinator is SO important!! When a photographer is in charge of the timeline and the coordination of the day, the images will suffer. All of my most stressful wedding situations were caused by a lack of organization and coordination. It's so important to make this a priority. If you have a member of your party willing to help handle problems, questions or try to help with the timeline.



Example list for

FAMILY FORMALS

Family formals are normally our first interaction with them and so we love to have a game plan for this part of the day! Eight weeks before the wedding, you'll receive a questionnaire from us that will ask you to list out the family formals you want us to capture. Here is a sample family formal list to help you start preparing what shots you need. We do have to limit the family formal time in order to ensure that we have plenty of daylight for your romantic portraits. However, any large family group shots that we don't accomplish during family formals, we can be sure to capture at the reception!

Shot List Example

B&G with Bride's Immediate Family (Parents, Siblings, Grandparents, Nieces, Nephews) B&G with Bride's Parents

B&G with Bride's Siblings

Bride with her Parents

Bride with Mom, Bride with Dad

B&G with Bride's Grandparents

B&G with both sets of Parents

B&G with Groom's Immediate Family (Parents, Siblings, Grandparents, Nieces, Nephews) B&G with Groom's Parents

B&G with Groom's Siblings

Groom with his Parents

Groom with Mom, Groom with Dad

B&G with Groom's Grandparents

B&G with all family members if time allows





ROMANTIC PORTRAITS

If we're being honest, all of the wedding day images are important, but the real favorites are almost always from my time with the celebrants, brides, and grooms! These romantic portraits of just the two of you will be the images that you frame beside your bed or over your mantle, and they will also be the images that will fill your album for generations to enjoy.

These images are always my favorite not only because of their beauty but because this is such a sweet portion of the day. For this brief moment in time, you will be alone with your groom on your wedding day. You will have a chance to love each other and really connect before the craziness begins! Romantic portraits are normally done before the ceremony (after the "First Look") and then I LOVE shooting a few "just married" portraits after the ceremony as well! This is when the light is low and golden! It's such a romantic time for couple portraits! If you're not interested in a first look, we will make sure to include a lot of time after the ceremony for these portraits!

RECEPTION DETAILS



The party is here!! Receptions can be a blast! However, it's important to make sure that you have your event well thought out. This is the job of your coordinator and your DJ/Band. Your caterer will also play a big role in the design and setup of your event. Every aspect of your reception affects the overall outline of the evening. For example, if you're not having a plated meal, your reception will need to be set up in a way that allows movement.

Guests will need to be able to find the food stations easily, and there will be a mixture of dinner tables and high-top cocktail tables. This will encourage guests to mix and mingle. If you are having a plated dinner, you will more than likely need escort cards, full place settings, and space for all of your guests to be seated comfortably. Whatever the style of your event, make sure that you plan out all of the aspects of the evening. Your coordinator and DJ can help you set up the evening so that guests won't leave early or experience long periods of waiting for the next thing to happen.

Much like the ceremony, you have the freedom to make your reception your own! It's your party, it should be exactly how you want it to be! Here is a list of some key events that happen often at receptions:

- Wedding Party Introductions
 - First Dance
 - Father-Daughter Dance
 - Mother-Son Dance
 - Toasts
- Any Traditional Religious Dances
 - Cake Cutting
 - Bouquet and Garter Toss
- Large group portraits with friends
- The exit of the Wedding Couple

Some Extra Tidbits:

- GUEST CONSIDERATION: Take your guests into consideration when planning your timeline. If you have a lot of elderly guests that will not be staying until the very end, make sure you schedule the cake cutting at a relatively early time so that they can be a part of it.
- KEEP IT MOVING: Chat with your coordinator about how you can plan your reception in a way that will keep guests engaged and moving all night!
- MAKE IT YOUR OWN: If you want to have a special dance with your grandparents, do it! Make your reception a reflection of whom you are and don't feel tied to traditions. Also, make sure you give your DJ or Band a "Do Not Play" list if there are some songs you really don't want to hear during your reception!

Some Extra Tidbits:

- DON'T GET CAUGHT UP in the formalities and the details.
Sure, details are pretty and fun to photograph, but they can steal the joy of the day if you get too caught up in them. (Just speaking from experience here) Plan your centerpieces, welcome table, etc. well before the wedding date, and teach your coordinator or family friend how to set them up so that you aren't even thinking about those things the day of!
- RECEPTION COVERAGE : If you haven't purchased enough coverage time for your photography to last until the exit, that's ok! We have several options! (See next page!) I recommend planning your timeline so that you can have at least one hour of dancing photographed. The guests who dance during the first hour will still be dancing in the third hour! One hour of dancing will be enough time to really capture the joy of your reception!



THANK YOU!

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