

A Practical Wedding

**WELCOME!
I'M MEG KEENE.**

I founded A Practical Wedding in 2008 based on a simple idea: wedding planning doesn't *have* to be torture.

😭💖 Almost a decade later, we've helped over **30 million** couples plan authentic weddings (without blowing their budget), and grown into a kickass digital community centered around intersectional feminism (with a side of glitter).



To help you along the way, I've written not one, but two books—"A Practical Wedding" and "A Practical Wedding Planner"—which function as the emotional and logistical guide to help you through wedding planning. (Think of them as your wedding planning road map, security blanket, and defensive shield against anyone who tries to make your wedding about them.)

My team and I designed this checklist to get you started on your planning journey, but there's tons more on our site: apracticalwedding.com/engaged

**GOOD LUCK, AND MAY THE ODDS BE
EVER IN YOUR FAVOR.**

APW'S WEDDING PLANNING CHECKLIST

WHEN YOU'RE NEWLY ENGAGED

- You're engaged! Have some bubbly and bliss out
- Tell people the big news
- Avoid jumping right into planning if you can possibly avoid it: just enjoy this recent change!
- Pick up a copy of the APW Book and the APW Planner (but don't start)
- Sit down and figure out what your wedding priorities are
- Come up with a wedding mission statement
- Sign up for APW's wedding planning email list, so you have a built-in wedding BFF
- Have an engagement party, or a super casual engagement toast
- Decide if you want to elope, and ditch the rest of this list (really!)

12 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- Launch your master plan binder, notebook, or Google Doc
- Check out the APW Wedding Planning Spreadsheets and start customizing them
- Sit down and have your first (of many) guest lists chats (and don't forget to ask your parents for *their* list)
- Figure out your target wedding budget
- Narrow your venue search (ceremony and reception) to your favorite options
- If you want (and can afford) a wedding planner, find one that you share your wedding values

11 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- Begin touring your preferred reception and ceremony venues (ask questions!)
- Book a venue
- Begin your wedding photographer search: set-up meetings, and book

10 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- Start shopping for wedding attire. Make appointments at bridal and clothing shops as needed. Remember traditional wedding dress shops will have long lead times on ordering dresses
- Research what kind of food you want to have, and begin to interview and book caterers
- If you don't want a caterer, start to look into self-catering or having a potluck wedding
- Once you've booked your wedding photographer, shoot engagement photos (especially if you're using them for save the dates)
- Finalize your guest list before sending Save the Dates. Hot tip: our spreadsheets can help you do this
- Create a basic version of your wedding website, especially if you want to include it in your Save the Dates
- Design and order your Save the Dates

9 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- Send your Save the Dates
- Research wedding invitations and associated paper goods

- ❑ If you want to DIY your wedding invitations, come up with a plan now
- ❑ If you can afford a Day of Coordinator, hire one. If you can't, ask a friend to be your wedding stage manager

8 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- ❑ Check out local florists and make appointments
- ❑ Decide what kind of music you want to have. Do you need a DJ? A band? A DIY music plan? (Psst: check our APW's wedding playlists)
- ❑ Begin thinking about your officiant: who will it be?
- ❑ Daydream about wedding cakes, and discuss what kind you'd like
- ❑ If you want wedding showers or parties, peruse these ideas, and ask a friend if they'll plan it for you

7 MONTHS BEFORE THE WEDDING

- ❑ Book a florist, if you're using one (Here are tips!)
- ❑ If you've decided on a band or DJ, book one now
- ❑ If you want a videographer, book one now
- ❑ Research hair and make-up artists if needed
- ❑ Begin researching honeymoon destinations (because you KNOW you need a beak)

6 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- ❑ Think about rehearsal dinner options
- ❑ Start to plan any extra events associated with the wedding (after party, brunch, welcome party)
- ❑ Finalize your guest list (we have spreadsheets for that!)

- ❑ Set up a meeting with your officiant to discuss the ceremony and start marital counseling (if relevant)
- ❑ Start thinking about your vows and ceremony plan
- ❑ If you're having a friend officiate your wedding, now is a good time to ask them about doing so
- ❑ If you're not having a friend officiate your wedding, make sure you've booked someone (or the church/shul/mosque/temple)
- ❑ Set up your wedding registry
- ❑ Have a meeting with everyone who is helping (or start sharing those Google Docs!) and make sure they all understand what is expected
- ❑ Find a baker for your wedding cake, and if you can schedule cake tastings, do so

5 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- ❑ Book that honeymoon!
- ❑ If someone in your wedding is wearing suits, start figuring out if you want to rent or buy
- ❑ Check out wedding rings and decide what you want
- ❑ Decide if you need party rentals, and figure out what you need and put together an order (adjustments can be made later, so book now!)
- ❑ If you need a wedding tent, research and reserve one
- ❑ Schedule your hair and make-up trials, if you're hiring a stylist (also make sure you coordinate with your wedding parties or friends)
- ❑ Reserve hotel blocks for your wedding
- ❑ Make wedding night reservations as needed

4 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- Finalize rehearsal dinner and book anything you might need to still book
- Buy your wedding rings
- Order wedding invitations and stationery (tip: check out our post on wedding invitation wording)
- Make sure your passport is up to date if you're leaving the country for your honeymoon
- Book wedding transportation
- Create a spreadsheet for RSVPs and guest list addresses
- Talk to whoever is planning your bachelorette party and/or any wedding showers, send them to APW for tips

3 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- Address and mail your wedding invitations (double check the postage!)
- Think about what ceremony extras you might need (a chuppah, aisle runners, etc) and buy or rent them
- Start planning out your wedding ceremony script
- If you're DIYing anything for your wedding, start now or cross it off your list
- Schedule dress fittings as needed
- Make wedding night reservations as needed
- Research your local marriage license, civil union, and domestic partnership rules

2 MONTHS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- Begin working on your wedding vows

- Make sure everyone in your wedding parties have bought what they're wearing
- Figure out what you're wearing to your rehearsal dinner
- Put together a list of what you want to pack for your honeymoon, if you're taking one

SIX WEEKS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- Start wearing your shoes around the house as needed
- Make sure you're updating your gift registry and spreadsheets as gifts arrive, and send thank you notes now if you can
- Confirm that out of town guests are set up at hotels and lodging
- Figure out if you want a guest book, and make it happen if so (also: test your pens!)
- Write thank you notes for your shower gifts
- Finalize your vows
- Make sure your wedding outfits are still on point
- Finalizing your menu with your caterer
- Finalize your wedding ceremony

1 MONTH BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- Put together your seating chart
- Create your escort cards
- Finalize your ceremony outline
- Create a wedding timeline
- Make any necessary nail and spa appointments
- Confirm all vendor payments (and tip amounts)
- Create your wedding playlist, if you're doing the DIY DJ route

- ❑ Make sure your wedding party knows any critical information as it pertains to the rehearsal dinner or wedding day
- ❑ Give your DOC a copy of the vendor contract information, delivery schedule, and set up times (or work with them to gather that information)
- ❑ Schedule a final dress fitting
- ❑ Print wedding programs if you're having them
- ❑ Confirm all rentals and/or adjust your rental order
- ❑ Sit down with your wedding stage manager or DOC and walk through all the details for your wedding day
- ❑ Get a marriage license

TWO WEEKS BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- ❑ Check with guests who haven't RSVPed
- ❑ Confirm head counts, menus, vendor meal requests, and delivery with your caterers and bakers
- ❑ Confirm your photo requests, required family, and timeline with your photographer
- ❑ Make sure that everyone who is delivering something to the wedding (rentals, flowers, etc) has a confirmed, final timeline
- ❑ Send a transportation schedule to transport providers
- ❑ Make sure any clothing you want cleaned or pressed is taken care of
- ❑ Ensure that there is a plan for wedding venue set up and breakdown

ONE WEEK BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- Pack an overnight bag, and include: your toothbrush, birth control/condoms, something to sleep in, an outfit for the next day, honeymoon luggage, and your passport
- Get your wedding manicure/pedicure (if it's happening at all)
- Make sure a copy of your honeymoon plans is left with family and friends
- Put your final payments + tips for vendors in labeled envelopes and give this to your DOC or someone else to manage
- Get your wedding day "oh shit kit" put together (aspirin, make-up, safety pins, mints, snacks, etc)
- Pick up your dress (if it wasn't delivered to you)
- Try on your entire wedding ensemble
- Give all of your vendors an emergency number to call, just in case (note: not yours!)
- Assign a family member to be the photographer's point of contact
- Hand over all of your planning docs (including a copy of the vendor delivery schedule, set up times, and phone numbers) to your wedding stage manager or day of coordinator and take a step back to enjoy this thing!

1 DAY BEFORE YOUR WEDDING

- Rehearse your ceremony with your officiant and wedding party
- Confirm your honeymoon transportation, airport drop-off, etc
- Set your alarm (and a back-up)

- Print out your vows (or memorize them)
- Drop off your favors, menus, table plans, and place cards with your caterer or venue

LAST MINUTE THINGS YOU MIGHT FORGET (AKA RIP THIS LIST OUT & STICK IT TO YOUR FRONT DOOR)

- Rings
- Vows
- Marriage license
- Dresses
- Suits
- Driver's license
- Wallet
- Cash
- Passport/ID
- Socks, underwear, bra
- Accessories
- Comfortable shoes
- Tips for vendors
- Wedding playlist
- Umbrella
- Snacks and water

ON YOUR WEDDING DAY

- Make sure you pause and appreciate your family, friends, and each other
- Take a few minutes every so often to breathe and focus. Smile at your friends, give hugs, be in the moment

- ❑ GET MARRIED!

AFTER THE WEDDING

- ❑ Send out your thank you notes (to people who helped with the wedding and for gifts)
- ❑ Make sure your vendors have been paid in full
- ❑ Follow-up and make sure you know when you'll get your wedding photos back
- ❑ Ensure that rentals, clothing, and accessories have been returned (as needed)
- ❑ Toast your marriage! You did it! Now the good stuff starts for real.