

Planning Timeline

In general, 12 months should prove adequate for planning a wedding without feeling a time crunch. However, trendy venues and in-demand vendors book quickly. If there is a special site or vendor that you couldn't do without for your wedding, it is best to contact them as soon as possible. Verify their availability and ask what type of monetary commitment they require to reserve your date. The following timeline serves to guide you through the rest of the planning process.

11-12 Months Out

- Set your wedding date
- Create a budget (see **budget worksheet** for more info)
- Create a priorities list (see **priorities worksheet** for more info)
- Create a preliminary guest list (total guests in attendance will drastically affect how your budget is allocated)
- If you intend to enlist the help of a coordinator, now would be the time to hire one (planners/coordinators usually offer a variety of services from full planning to day-of coordination and everything between)
- Research ceremony and reception venues
- Research vendors, choose 1-3 per category and place them on your preferred list (see **selecting the right vendors worksheet** for more info as well as the **preferred list of Milwaukee vendors**)
- Research design/décor elements (color palette, theme, style, mood, attire, cake, flowers, etc.) Clip pictures from magazines that depict design elements you find inspirational. Store them in your three-ring binder under the appropriate headings (ceremony, reception, flowers, attire, etc.) Fill out Muscari's **Personal Style Questionnaire**.

10 Months Out

- Further refine guest list
- Select bridal party participants
- Select a color palette
- Select wedding style/theme
- Select bridal gown/maids' attire
- Select menswear
- Select sites for your ceremony and reception
- *****
- Once you have these details in place, contact the vendors on your 'preferred' list and schedule preliminary consultations (If you do not have these details in place, it is difficult for vendors to guide you through the design process, this is particularly true of your baker, florist, and lighting design firm).
- Create and mail 'Save The Date' announcements
- Select main vendors, sign contracts and make deposits (if you haven't already)

8-9 Months Out

- Begin shopping for wedding rings
- Research potential honeymoon locales
- Contemplate your invitation options (printing can take up to 3 months and it is ideal to mail them no later than 6 weeks prior to your event)
- Take a deep breath; this isn't so bad, is it?

6-7 Months Out

- Purchase and engrave wedding bands
- Book Honeymoon ***Do you need a passport? ***Do you have a passport already?
- Reserve a block of rooms for out of town guests at a hotel of your choice (you could also reserve smaller blocks at a handful of hotels to accommodate guests' personal tastes and budget requirements)
- Reserve a room for you and your groom to retreat to post-festivities
- Place order for invitations and other printed materials (thank you notes, programs, menu cards, etc.)
- Have engagement photos taken, announce engagement in local paper

4-5 Months Out

- Meet with officiant, review ceremony plans, Do you plan to recite personalized vows? Are they written?
- Plan/reserve room for rehearsal dinner. Don't forget to order table centers for the rehearsal dinner. A corsage for mom is always a nice touch.
- Finalize guest list
- Purchase guest favors
- Rent men's formalwear
- Register for gifts at your top 3 stores
- Research requirements for getting married. License, Blood Tests, Marriage Classes
- Purchase attendant gifts

3-4 Months Out

- Obtain Marriage license, Blood Tests, Etc.
- Address and Mail invitations
- Schedule Tastings
- Schedule Hair Appointment (sample and day of)
- Schedule Make-up Application (sample and day of)
- Schedule final dress fittings
- Contact vendors to schedule final consult (aim for one month prior to event)

1-2 Months Out

- Meet with vendors for final consults/pay remaining balances
- Follow-Up on missing R.S.V.Ps

- Finalize seating chart
- Order/write escort cards
- Print programs/itineraries
- Schedule Pedi/Manicures
- Purchase ancillary items (guest book, toasting flutes, cake set, etc.)
- Create and distribute to vendors a schedule for your event (see **event schedule worksheet**)

2 Weeks Out

- Confirm final guest count with vendors
- Finalize seating chart
- Make any last minute additions to orders
- Begin packing for honeymoon
- Go to your favorite spa and get a massage and facial

1 Week Out

- Keep things in perspective, your wedding is just the beginning of the journey as Mr. & Mrs.
- Finish packing for honeymoon; confirm house/pet sitting services, forward mail, hold newspaper, etc.
- Take your maids out for a lovely brunch, luncheon, or afternoon tea