# GROOMS GUIDE

A Guide for all KCP Grooms



#### IT'S ABOUT YOU, TOO!

Hey there KCP Groom! Welcome! I am so excited that I get the privilege of being a part of this exciting season of your life! I know that often times, the wedding industry really only focuses on the bride. It can easily start to feel like this whole "wedding" thing is only about her but that couldn't be further from the truth! You play a vital role here. If it weren't for you, none of this would be happening in the first place! It's important to me that I take time to celebrate my KCP Grooms and make sure you know that while your bride may be slightly more excited about these images, I know that I'm capturing your legacy too...and it matters that you're equally celebrated and educated throughout this process! So, I hope you enjoy this Groom's Guide full of information that I have gathered over the past 14 years of shooting weddings, meeting hilarious groomsmen and working with really awesome grooms!

#### GROOM'S DETAILS

At the beginning of the day, I will be coming to hangout with you and your groomsmen while you're getting ready. I'll explain more about what you can expect during that part of the day in a couple of pages! The first thing I will need to capture are your details. You may be thinking "Um, I don't have any details..." but you do! This may seem pointless but let me explain what these details are for. When I design album spreads, the goal of each spread is to tell a visual story of each part of the day. I will use these details shots to break up some of your getting ready shots on your "pre-ceremony" spread. Take a look at the album spread below to have a visual as to how I use these images that I'll be taking!





















#### GROOM DETAILS

Checklist: From Michael

These are common details that Michael shoots on a regular basis but they are by no means mandatory in any way! This checklist could also include heirloom items like a pocket-watch or something that was handed down to you and while you may not actually wear it on the wedding day, you would like a shot of it.

- Cuff-Links
- Tie or Bow Tie
  - Shoes
- Any Military Detail
  - Gifted Liquor
    - Watch
      - Belt
- Socks (if specialty)
- Custom Groomsmen Gifts
  - Boutonnières

#### WHAT TO EXPECT

First of all, I realize that you have never done this before and that you may have preconceived ideas about how the photography part of your wedding experience is going to feel. That's very normal. Having your photos taken isn't always natural and can sometimes be more stressful than fun. The good news is, I'm committed to making your time with me not only natural and genuine but also enjoyable! Photography is a huge part of the wedding process and I want my couples to think back to their time with me and say, "That was so much easier than I thought it would be...in fact, it was actually fun!" I will be hanging out with you and your guys while you're getting ready. Now, the thought of a photographer hanging out in the room with you and your best friends on your wedding day probably sounds less than ideal, but here's the good news....I'm probably the most down-to-earth gal you'll ever meet and I'm a PRO at capturing this part of your day without making it weird! I'll get to know your friends in an easy-going, natural way that will allow them to feel comfortable with me throughout the rest of the day. I will take a few pictures of your guys hanging out and then will prompt you (the groom) to do a few staged "Getting Ready" shots (see right) and a couple of classic portraits. I have found that staging a few "getting ready" shots is the most efficient way to get the shots I need while not interfering with too much of your hangout time! These staged shots will take about 10-15 minutes and I will give you clear and concise instructions every step of the way.











#### THE FORGOTTEN DETAIL:

#### The Boutonnière

Over the past ten years in business, I have noticed a trend. Boutonnières for the groomsmen are the number one detail that gets overlooked. I can't tell you how many times we're getting ready to do a first look or start bridal party portraits, and the groomsmen don't have their bouts on! This detail is actually the most time consuming details, especially if you have over 4 or 5 groomsmen because you can't put your boutonnière on by yourself. You have to have help. If you have a planner, they will be in charge of remembering the boutonnières and putting them on. Sometimes, it's a nice photo op to have a parent help with this! That leads me to the next page....



INCLUDING MOM

During Getting Ready

Now, I realize that this topic may not apply to every family. Each and every wedding day that I photograph is full of different family dynamics. It's more than okay to not follow these suggestions if it's not a great fit for your family. In many wedding day situations, I have found that there is very little direction for the Mother of the Groom. It's easy for her to feel lost and not included in the day. As a mom of two little boys, I can't imagine what it must feel like to know that your boy is getting married and will be starting a new life with his new wife. The Mother of the Groom often wants to be included but doesn't want to overstep in any way. One very sweet and thoughtful way to include the Mother of the Groom is to invite her into the getting ready space and allow her to take a few pictures straightening her son's tie or putting on his boutonnière.





MY GOAL: Get you to your

# **PARTY**

Obviously, we want to take amazing photos of your day but we also know that the wedding day is not about photos, it's about a lifelong commitment, being with family and friends and celebrating your new marriage! The party is a very important part! We realize that most groomsmen are not pumped about picture time and we get it. That's why our goal, throughout the entire portrait process, is to have fun and get you to your party!! Rowdy groomsmen are a part of every wedding day and we actually find them to be hilarious and fun to work with! However, you can actually help us get you to your party faster by doing a few things!:

Encourage your guys to pay attention.
 If you trust us, they will too.
 Reassure them that the more they listen, the quicker they'll be done.

Our goal is to take your photos quickly and efficiently so that you can spend as much time as possible with your friends and family! We love hanging out with your friends but we make it a top priority to make their experience with us fun, fast and enjoyable!!



## 5 TIPS FOR PLANNING YOUR HONEYMOON

So, after 10+ years of marriage, we have realized that there are many things that my husband is great at that I should never attempt to do because when I do try to do them, it's always a mess! One of these areas is travel planning. Sean is the expert here. He's amazing at researching options, finding good deals, reading reviews, figuring out what works well with our credit card points and then actually booking everything without errors! It's quite amazing and I'm thankful for this skill set of his. After photographing over 200 weddings, I've noticed that there is a pattern with honeymoon planning. A lot of my KCP Grooms are in charge of Honeymoon planning while the bride is spending her time planning the wedding day. This may not be true for every KCP Couple and so if your roles are reversed, you can swap guides for this part of the planning process! Over the next couple of pages, Sean will be sharing five tips for planning your honeymoon that may be helpful as you are trying to make big decisions about where to go, what to spend and what will be a great fit for you as a couple!

#### TIP # 1 KNOW YOUR BUDGET

Debt can be a huge stress on a new marriage. One thing you want to avoid is coming home from your honeymoon with a pile of credit card debt. That is sure to provide some newlywed tension! There are amazing, affordable options for honeymoons. Don't feel like you have to keep up with the Instagram Influencers and go to crazy locations. However, if your budget allows for a crazy location then go for it! I have always wanted to stay in one of those over the water huts but we're still waiting for that to become a reality. Remember, your honeymoon is a big deal but you have decades of anniversary trips ahead of you!





### TIP # 2 PLAN FOR THIS TRIP FOR YOU & YOUR SPOUSE

This may sound super simple but let me explain. Kristen and I vacation very differently. My family grew up going to the beach and sitting on the sand all day and then going out to dinner every night. Kristen's family did camping adventures and never sat still. They even made their own meals (doesn't sound like a vacation to me!). It's actually a good challenge to try to plan trips where we can both experience what we love on trips. It could be that you're both very similar in the way you love to travel and that's awesome! No matter what your dynamic is, I recommend checking in with one another about your Honeymoon expectations as you plan. This can save you from a lot of unmet expectations and tensions that could arise on your trip.



#### TIP # 3 ALL-INCLUSIVE vs. NOT

We are big fans of all inclusive vacation options! It is so nice to not have to worry about the budget once your honeymoon begins. This was another reason a cruise is a good option for us because everything is included and we didn't have to think about food options. Something to consider about all-inclusive resorts is that you would more than likely be spending a lot of time at the resort and so you'll want to do some thorough research about the pools, the beach amenities, reviews on the food, etc.

#### BONUS TIP:

One thing that helps me decide about trips and where we want to go is to follow a resort's Instagram account for a while just to get a feel for what they have to offer and what people choose to do there. This will give you more of a real-time peek into the resort instead of what you would find on their website or booking site.

#### TIP # 4 CREDIT CARD POINTS

This can be a touchy subject for some. We are big Dave Ramsey fans, but we have credit cards that we use daily and pay off monthly so that we rack up great credit card points. The year before you get married can be full of some decently large expenses. If you have a credit card with great points, be sure to use any large purchases to your advantage so that you can collect points to use on your honeymoon. (Just to be sure you don't hear me saying "go into debt!", only spend what you can afford and what is wise!) For those of you that may not fly often but want to be dedicated to one airline for the sake of points, it's smart to choose an airline whose hub is closest to you. We have a Southwest Miles card that we book all of our flights through which gives us great perks like free bags and priority boarding. Then we use points to upgrade our seats to Comfort Plus (think more leg room and more food and beverage options.) I am a little obsessed with getting the most out of my credit card points! There is so much that you can get for free simply by doing your research. Some cards offer special bonus points during your first three months so be sure to look into those options.



#### TIP #5 EXCURSIONS

If you are staying at a resort or on a cruise there are normally options to do great excursions that will allow you to see more of the area, go shopping, do something active or visit a historical site. Again with Kristen's vacation style she likes to be doing things. We have done zip lining, sunset cruises, snorkeling, hikes, four wheeler tours, etc. These are an added cost and they can add up quick so be sure to list them out by priority. Be sure to read reviews on excursions and look for honest feedback about whether or not it's worth the investment!





TRUTH ABOUT CRUISES: You may be thinking "there is no way we are going on a cruise" for our honeymoon. We definitely had some friends turn up their noses to that idea when we shared that was an idea for our honeymoon. The truth is, not all cruises are like Carnival Cruise lines. There are classy ways to cruise that will allow you to rest, enjoy good food, see multiple places without ever changing lodging locations, do some adventurous excursions while also getting to have some beach days. Try to book cruises during the school year so there are less kids and families on board. Also, cruises are starting to create exclusive areas for a higher price. We have stayed in the Haven on Norwegian Cruise Lines and it has spoiled us for any future cruises. So if it is in the budget to splurge on the upgrade, it is totally worth it!



DELAYED HONEYMOONS: We work with a lot of couples who go on delayed honeymoons and just get away for a couple of days right after the wedding and this is a great option if you're wanting to save up for a longer trip! Here are some of our favorite 2-3 day destinations in the continental United States:

CHARLESTON, SC
SAVANNAH, GA
WACO, TX
BAR HARBOUR, MN
SEA ISLAND, GA
ASHEVILLE, NC
SANTA BARBARA, CA
LAKE TAHOE, NV
NEW YORK CITY
JACKSON HOLE, WY





#### BEING THERE FOR YOUR

## Bride

Even if you're getting married to the most relaxed bride on the planet, there will still be moments throughout this process where she will feel stressed. Planning a wedding isn't for the faint of heart. There is a lot to be done, it's expensive, and there can sometimes be unspoken expectations and lingering tension during the planning process. She may say it's not stressful and that she's fine, and even if that's true, it will speak volumes to her if you do a few of the following:

- 1. Check on her: Ask her how planning is going and how she's feeling about it. When she shares concerns, just let her be frustrated and don't try to fix it!
- 2. Take on some tasks: You may already have a "honey-do" list for the wedding but if you haven't already asked about helping her with some of her list, that would mean a lot to her! I remember Sean offering to help with our wedding planning and even though I didn't have a ton of things to hand over to him, it meant so much that he offered!
- 3. Encourage Date Nights: It's easy to spend all of your free time working on wedding stuff, but date nights are important too. Don't neglect each other in the midst of the busyness of your engagement.

You are her greatest source of encouragement! Through this entire engagement season, you two have a choice. This can either be stressful or it can actually be the most amazing season you have ever had in your relationship! Sure, there is a lot to do and a lot to plan, but these next few months will give you an opportunity to love each other in a new way, support each other in a new way, figure out new ways of solving problems, communicate more effectively and learn how to be on each other's team. When you choose to view this season in that light, it changes everything. The season of engagement is supposed to be a time that prepares you for marriage and not a time that you can't wait to get through! If there is anything we have learned over the last fifteen years of being married, it's that every season of our life together presents us with an opportunity to either grow closer or distance ourselves from one another. We want you both to draw closer and feel more connected than ever when your wedding day arrives. My encouragement and challenge to you is to fight to make this season a healthy one!





#### NEXT STEPS

I'm so excited that I get the privilege of working with you! The next step is to get to know one another at your engagement session and I am really looking forward to that! It will be a completely relaxed and casual time together. It won't be rushed or forced or awkward. I teach my couples everything they could possibly need to know about having their portraits taken and I'm pleased to share that every single groom is pleasantly surprised at how much they actually enjoyed their engagement session! I can't wait to hangout and get to know you both! Congratulations on your engagement and welcome to your new title as a KCP Groom!