

GO-TO GEAR GUIDE

all the information you need to know to
build up your gear collection



When it comes to purchasing photography equipment, we know how many options there are to choose from! It can be so confusing to choose between Nikon, Sony, and Canon, figure out what kind of flashes to purchase, and be wise about where you're investing in your business (i.e. lenses vs. bodies, etc.!). We hope that this gear guide gives you a little more clarity for what equipment you may need as a wedding photographer.

CAMERA BODIES:

When it comes to choosing what camera body to purchase, there really aren't significant differences between Nikon & Canon. In general, Nikon cameras, especially the D750, are known for their low-light capabilities, while Canon cameras are better known for their beautiful bokeh. Honestly, there is no right or wrong answer as to which brand to choose!

If you're interested in pursuing wedding photography, there are a few things we recommend you include in your gear search as they are must-have's for your wedding day equipment:

- **Full Frame Camera:** The difference in quality that a full frame camera provides is a GAME CHANGER for wedding days, especially since you'll quickly find yourself in all sorts of lighting situations. Full frame cameras provide the flexibility that you need to perform your job without equipment limitations that you might experience with a crop sensor camera.
- **Dual Card Slots:** We cannot express the importance of this enough. Wedding images are too important to risk a memory card corrupting, so we always encourage wedding photographers to dual write in RAW to both card slots in your camera. This ensures that you have 2 exact copies of every picture you take at the wedding. Memory cards do corrupt, and you never want to find yourself explaining to your bride that her wedding pictures are gone forever because you didn't have a copy on the second memory card.

We strongly recommend the investment in camera bodies with these features when shooting once-in-a-lifetime wedding days!

Luckily for you guys, Michelle shoots with Canon & Kelsie shoots with Nikon, so you'll be able to see a gear list that we use for both brands! For camera bodies, below are the bodies that we use:

- **Michelle:** Canon 5D Mark iii - This is no longer available to buy new, so I recommend the [Canon EOS 5D Mark IV DSLR](#) camera for wedding photographers. For portrait photographers, I recommend the Canon EOS 6D Mark II DSLR Camera. The image quality is comparable to the 5D Mark iii & 5D Mark iv, but it is much more affordable! However, the 6D Mark ii does not have dual memory card slots, meaning if a card corrupts before you have a chance to back it up, you could potentially lose images.
- **Kelsie:** I recommend the [Nikon D750](#) if you're interested in photographing weddings.

CAMERA LENSES:

Lenses play an important role in the style of your photography primarily because they control the amount of bokeh in the image. We love using prime lenses because they are fast & have low apertures that allow us to create beautiful images with creamy backgrounds.

Kelsie's camera bag includes:

- [Sigma Art 35mm 1.4](#) - This lens is primarily used for the getting ready portion of the day, as well as open dancing during the reception.
- [Sigma Art 50mm 1.4](#) This is my go-to portrait lens, especially on wedding days! I use it throughout the entire wedding day, from bridal details, all the way through bridal party introductions to the reception.
- [Sigma Art 85mm 1.4](#) - This is my favorite portrait lens! The bokeh it creates is SO DREAMY. I usually pull this out when I have a little bit more time to spend with the bride and groom.

- [Nikon 105mm 2.8 Macro](#) This is my go-to lens for ring shots and other macro detail shots. If this is your longest lens, it doubles well as a portrait lens for ceremonies & toasts if you need to be closer without being distracting.
- [Tamron 70-200 2.8](#) This lens is used most often during ceremonies, as well as when I'm second shooting. It allows me to capture close, intimate shots without being in the way.

Michelle's camera bag includes:

- [Canon EF 85mm f/1.4L IS USM Lens](#) - my favorite portrait lens! I love the bokeh and the way my clients pop off the background.
- [Canon EF 35mm f/1.4L II USM Lens](#) - I use this most often for getting ready in small rooms, wide landscape portraits, and large bridal parties!
- [Canon EF 24-70mm f/2.8L II USM Lens](#) - I use this most often on the dance floor!
- [Canon EF 70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM Lens](#) - I use this most often during ceremonies, or when I'm second shooting to capture closeups of bridal party members while the primary photographer takes the group shots.
- [Sigma 50mm f/1.4 DG HSM Art Lens for Canon EF](#) - My most-used lens! This one stays with me all day long.
- [Canon EF 135mm f/2L USM Lens](#) - This lens is great for dark church ceremonies. It allows me to zoom in almost as far as the 70-200mm, but the aperture opens up another full stop from 2.8 to 2.0!
- [Canon EF 100mm f/2.8L Macro IS USM Lens](#) - I use this exclusively for ring shots & other small details! However, a lot of photographers I know love to use this as a portrait lens. It is a great alternative to the 85mm if you don't have both in your budget!

RECEPTION LIGHTING:

We know that off-camera flash can be scary, but we want to ensure you that if you have the basic equipment, you have all that you need to capture beautiful reception photos. For more information on how we use the below equipment to confidently photograph receptions in all different lighting scenarios, check out our Reception Lighting and OCF guide in the [shop](#)!

Kelsie's lighting equipment (Nikon):

- [Yongnuo N560 IV for Nikon](#)- I have 3-4 of these flashes and am happy with their performance. They are affordable and do the job well! Plus, if my light stand gets knocked over at a reception and one of these breaks, I can easily replace it without having to worry about spending hundreds of dollars on a new flash.
- [Yongnuo wireless trigger](#)-you'll need a trigger for each flash that you plan to use in your light set-up.

Michelle's lighting equipment (Canon):

- [Canon Speedlite 600EX II-RT](#)- I love these flashes! The menus are user-friendly and they work consistently. They also have more features than the Yongnuo brand, and do not require separate triggers to link them together! The Canon 600 EX-RT flashes are pretty pricy, so if they're not in your budget yet, I would recommend trying the Yongnuo brand made for Canon. I used these for almost three years before I upgraded!
- [Canon ST-E3-RT Speedlite Transmitter](#) - This attaches to my camera in place of an on-camera flash, and controls my off-camera flash if I don't want to carry a flash on my camera. It's a nice backup, or sometimes I use it when my arms are tired and I know I don't need a flash on my camera!
- [Rogue FlashBender 2](#) - This is essentially a giant bounce card! I strap it to my on-camera flash and use it during the open dancing part of the night.

Both of us use the below equipment throughout the wedding day as well. In order to have a full OCF set-up, you'll need these products, too:

- [Light Stands](#) - We recommend purchasing a lightstand that's taller than the highest height you plan to extend the stand. This allows for more support; it's much sturdier to have a 9ft light stand at 7 ft, rather than a 7ft light stand extended to 7ft.
- [Flash brackets](#) - You'll need one flash bracket for each light stand that you purchase.
- [Eneloop Pro batteries](#) - These last me an entire reception! We always recommend starting out a wedding with fresh wedding batteries, and using rechargeable batteries is more sustainable & creates less waste.
- [Shoot through umbrella](#) - I recommend having at least 2 umbrellas. This way, you always have a backup in case one breaks, & if you need to use two umbrellas to accurately light a room, you can.
- [Profoto Shallow Translucent Umbrella \(Medium, 41"\)](#)

We always recommend that you have backups of some of these items with you on the wedding day (flash brackets, batteries, etc.). This way you're fully prepared if something does break or run out of battery (because this happens all the time!).