

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE


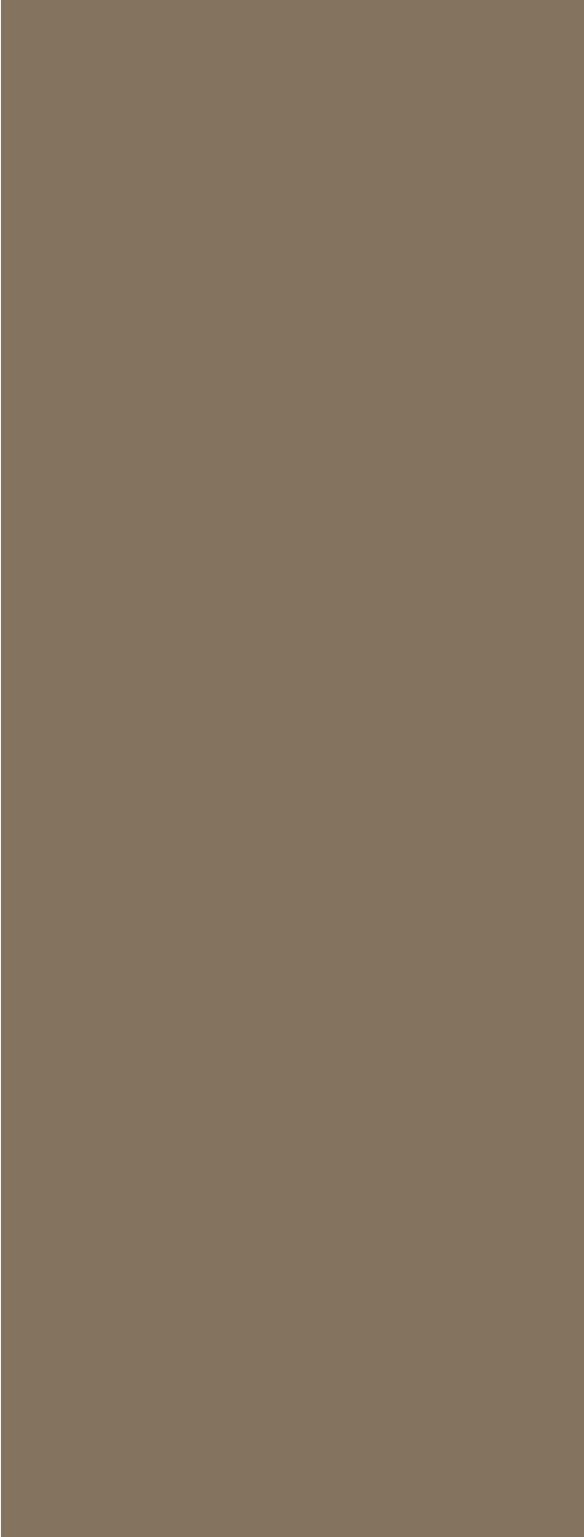
WEDDING VENDOR & FAQ'S

How to find and book vendors that suit
your needs



DEEP BREATHS OKAY?

KIM KAYE
PHOTOGRAPHY



You're ENGAGED and while it's exciting, where the heck do you start with the whole planning thing? When you go to Pinterest all you get is vague checklists and you end up scrolling through hundreds of blog posts trying to figure out something you've never done before. After being a bride myself and being a part of the vendor team, I can plan a wedding in my sleep, and I'm going to dish all the good info right to you!

This guide will take you step by step through the BIG decisions you have to make for your day, plus a few of the little ones. We'll tell you the questions to ask vendors, information to consider, and walk you through the thought process before booking each portion of your day!

Take a gander and see what tips and tricks you can find! Don't forget, I'm here to help and make your wedding process so much easier!

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GET MARRIED!

HAVE A DATE NIGHT

This is supposed to be fun and you and your fiancé have a lot of things to discuss! Go somewhere where you can sit down for a long discussion on priorities, budget, and your overall vision. It's all easier with a cup of coffee, bottle of wine, or your best brew.

RESEARCH

It's ok to take a breather and spend a few weeks on Pinterest and Instagram! This is all new and it needs time to settle in your brain. Let it sink in, find a bit of a vision and clearer path and then start planning!

FIND YOUR VISION

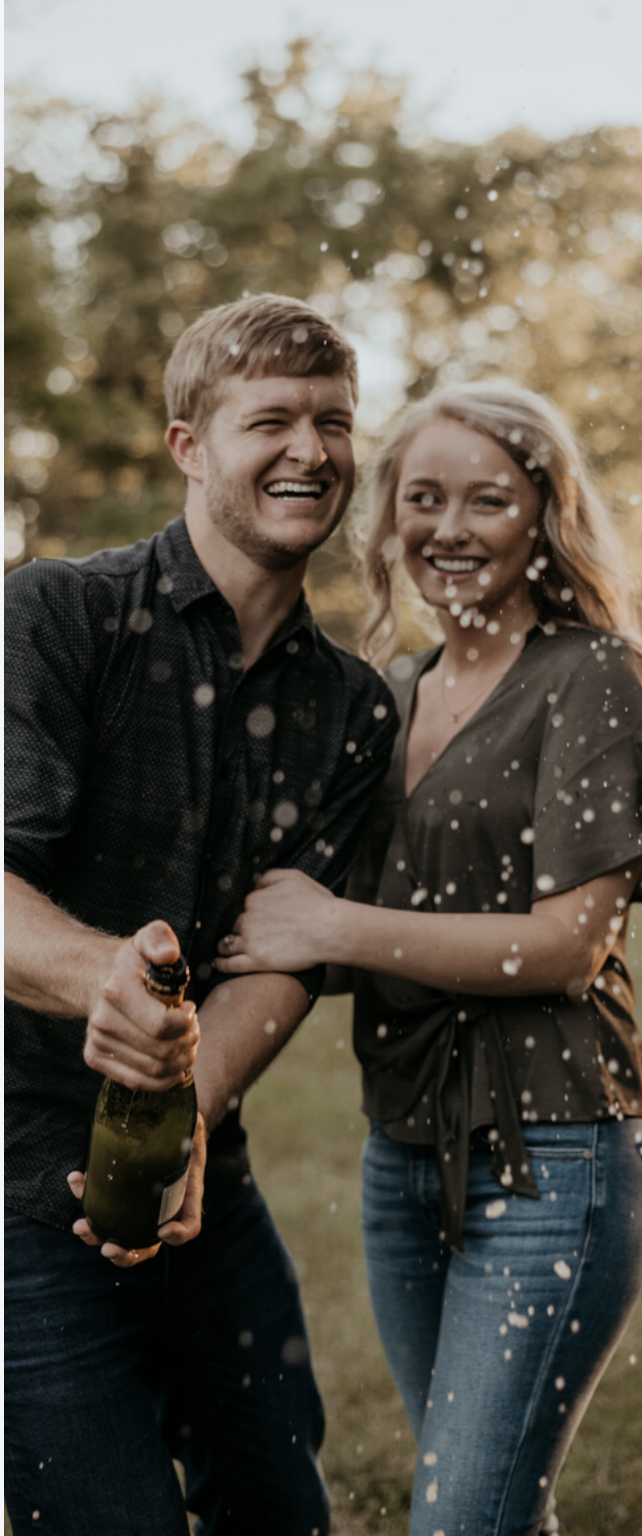
Do you want an intimate setting or a giant party? Evening wedding or morning brunch? Do you want to escape the traditional theme and go elope somewhere on the side of a mountain or sand dune? Party it up with your friends on a trolley or casually walk the streets to your reception? *if it's close by of course*

ENJOY IT!

Savor the bits and pieces of planning that you'll never get to do again! Like trying on dresses or sitting eating TONS of free wedding cake samples. Buy all the magazines, drink all the complimentary champagne, and treat yo'self!

TIPS FOR DIVING IN





BUDGET TALK

This is the not-so-fun part of the wedding planning but it's the foundation of the whole process! You can't find a florist if you don't know what you can spend, right?

Figure out what you want to spend out of your own pockets and have the family contribution discussion if needed.

also, don't be afraid to ask your photog what/who she used for her own wedding! You could possibly open a door to hella deals!

FIGURE OUT THE TOP 3

After you know your over-all budget, decide what your top three aspects of the day are. Do you want dramatic florals or do you want the venue to be elegant enough that you can keep decor minimal?

Do you want a fabulous guest-experience with favors and late-night snacks or do you want to invest in photography with photo albums to really make the experience last? List your priorities and figure out what you're willing to skimp on, and what you're willing to splurge on!



KIM KAYE
PHOTOGRAPHY



Have a discussion on what type of wedding you want and how many guests you want to be there. Do you want a more intimate wedding of 55 guests or so or something larger with a guest list around 200?

Start compiling a rough draft of this before you dive into venue searching. There's nothing worse than falling in love with a venue and the guest list exceeding the venue capacity! You don't have to have the list completely nailed down, but have a good idea of a rough number and make sure to get lists from parents as well!

QUESTIONS TO ASK

HAVE WE SEEN THEM IN A YEAR?

WOULD WE BUY THEM DINNER?

DO OUR PARENTS WANT THEM THERE?

WOULD WE FEEL BAD FOR NOT INVITING THEM?

DANCING SKILLS?

THE DREADED GUEST LIST



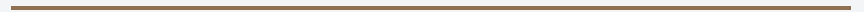
WHILE GUEST LIST IS COMPILING..

FIND A VENUE

Shop shop shop! Don't be afraid to go look at something that might not quite fit your vision, it might end up surprising you! Like they always say, "You can't judge a book by its cover!"

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN BOOKING A VENUE

- Do you have to book vendors off of their preferred list? Sometimes a venue can be cheaper but their required caterer outweighs the savings.
- Ask about hidden fees. Charges like cake cutting, service fees, and trash removal can add up!
- When can you arrive on the premise to set up? If it's the day of, you might need to hire a coordinator so you can relax!
- Ask to see some layouts and photographs of the space decked out. Sometimes the venue seems roomy but once tables and a dance floor are integrated, it becomes cramped and very segregated!



Make sure to ask your potential venue if they require a specific caterer or an approved caterer from a list! This might really rack up the cost or save you dollars, it just depends!

ASK THE CATERER...

- Do they provide dietary specified meals like gluten free, vegan, or vegetarian for your guests if needed?
- How fresh is the food? Does it spend hours in warmers pre- dinner?
- What's the service fee? This is normal but different percentages can rack up your bill!
- What's the server-to-guest ratio if you're doing a plated dinner? Will the first tables be done with their meal by the time the last guest is served?



FIND A CATERER

DO YOU NEED TO HIRE A WEDDING COORDINATOR?

IF YOU ANSWER YES TO ANY OF THESE
GET A COORDINATOR!

*A coordinator allows
you to enjoy your day, a photographer to do
their job documenting, and lets your family
and wedding party relax!*

CAN YOU GET INTO YOUR
VENUE TO SET UP
1-2 DAYS BEFORE?

DO YOU HAVE ANYONE
THAT WILL LINE UP THE
PARTY FOR THE CEREMONY?

IS PEACE OF MIND
IMPORTANT TO YOU ON
YOUR WEDDING DAY?

ARE YOU EXPECTING YOUR
PHOTOGRAPHER TO KEEP
YOU ON TIME?

DO YOU HAVE THINGS THAT
NEED PICKED UP ON THE
DAY OF, LIKE FLORALS OR
CAKE?

DO YOU HAVE FAMILY THAT
WOULD BE WILLING TO SET
UP/TEAR DOWN?



FIND A PHOTOG

I always suggest that if a venue and photographer are both in your top 3, book them simultaneously. There's nothing worse than finding your dream venue and your dream photographer not being available, and vice versa!

Finding a photographer is a tricky business - photographs are the only tangible thing that's left from the day you planned, and you want a photographer that not only can handle anything a wedding day can throw their way but someone who gives you more of an experience than just being another vendor.

ARE THEY INSURED?

- This is a tell-tale sign of if your photographer is a true professional! They should be able to show proof of insurance and your venue might require it. Insurance makes sure that they're not liable for any whoopsies on the wedding day and protects your final images!

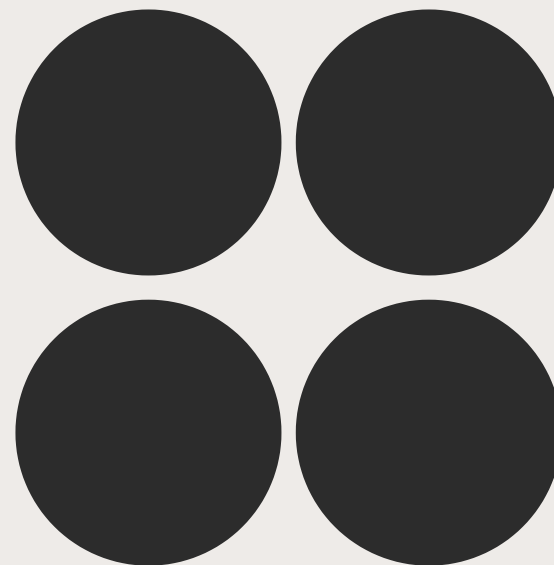
REVIEWS, REVIEWS, REVIEWS

- Comb the internet, Facebook, and any wedding storefront pages like the Knot and Wedding Wire to check out reviews. It's okay to ask the photographer for references too - you're investing a lot into them!

CAN THEY PROVIDE FULL GALLERIES?

- Ask for SEVERAL full wedding galleries when you're searching for a photographer. You want to make sure the full gallery tells the whole story, is edited consistently, and captures all the moments like the first kiss, dances, cake, and everything in between!

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND



WILL YOU NEED A SECOND PHOTOG?

- I usually suggest a second photographer if the timeline is a bit cozy (that way we can tag team wedding party portraits) or if you have over 150 guests. Ask your photographer who they typically hire!

ASK HOW MUCH TIME THEY NEED

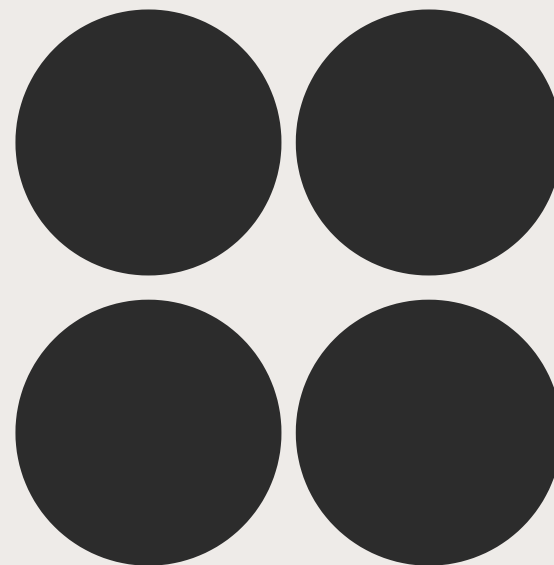
- We typically only need about 30 minutes to shoot each portion of portraits: wedding party, family, and couple portraits. Some photogs ask for 2+ hours, so make sure you ask and their needs are covered in your timeline!

COMB THAT CONTRACT!

- What happens if they get seriously injured the day before your wedding? What do they do if their memory card corrupts? What is their turnaround time for images? These should all be covered in the contract!

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

...CONTINUED



DRESS SHOPPING!

Ahhh one of my favorite parts of the whole experience! My biggest suggestion here is try on EVERYTHING. You might have a super clear vision of what you want your dress to be but a different style or designer might unexpectedly blow your mind. I highly recommend finding a dress store that does in-store alterations. It makes such a difference when the seamstress knows the designer in and out. Your dress will fit so much better and a solid bustle goes a long way when you're breaking it down on the dance floor.

NEW FAVORITE TREND:

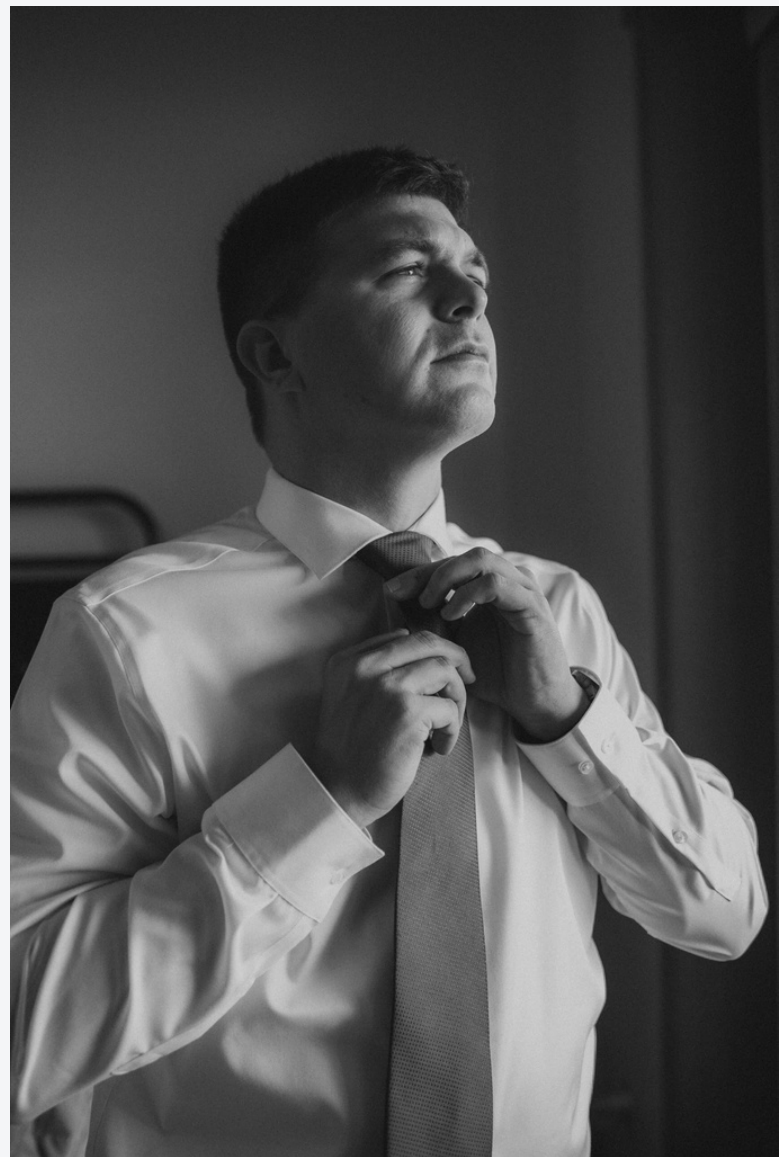
A super extra or sleek jumpsuit or second dress for partying up on the dance floor after all of the events are finished!



OH HEY GUYS

A grooms outfit matters JUST as much as a wedding dress! It's equally their day, so I recommend putting a lot of time and effort into the grooms look too!

Don't be afraid to explore custom options so the tux or suit fits perfectly! Places like Express have funky ties and socks that make great groomsmen gifts too and make the looks really unique! Other areas where you can switch it up: tie clips, cufflinks, quality cigars for the day of, or a nice straight razor shave at a barber on the big day!



THE FLORIST



You might be tempted to DIY this part of the day or go the faux flower route, and that's fine! BUT I will tell you that investing into a florist can make or break the whole aesthetic of the day! You've invested so much time, money, and effort into finding the perfect venue and photographer - a florist can bring out the true beauty of your venue and make your photographs that much more stunning!



WHAT IS THE FLORIST'S PLANNING PROCESS?

In person consultation? Multiple consultations? How flexible is the order during planning stages? When is a final order due? We provide two in-person consultations for packages under \$5,000, and add a third consultation if needed for extra large packages. However, we have no limit on phone or email contacts.

CAN THEY SHOW YOU ORIGINAL DESIGNS THAT THEY HAVE CREATED?

Bonus points if they can show you photos of events they have done at your venues! Variety of styles = flexibility to listen to the bride's preferences and not just design in their favorite style. Ideally, some of the photos they provide will match your desired look!

HOW DO THEY HANDLE DELIVERY?

Is it drop-off only? Do they stay to pin corsages and boutonnieres? Manage cake flowers? Handle pew flowers? What fees are involved and how flexible are they in delivery schedules? Note that if a florist is willing to deliver your designs several hours prior to the ceremony without any consideration of keeping the flowers looking fresh-this is a bad sign! They should consider water sources, venue locations, season, flower types and recommend a delivery schedule that is best for your needs AND flower freshness.

DO THEY TEAR DOWN ITEMS AFTER THE RECEPTION?

This is a big job and it is very helpful to have a vendor manage this process. Some florists will not only tear down for you and provide take home bags for flowers, we will also redesign left over flowers and donate to local nursing homes and hospice centers (we love offering this service).

THINGS TO CONSIDER



HAIR & MAKEUP

You might be tempted to DIY - after all, you do it every day right? But think about how much you're investing into a photographer, a dress, venue, florals, etc- the hair and makeup ties it ALL together and is the cherry on top. Besides, do you really want to have to deal with the stress of makeup and hair application on the morning of your wedding? No Queen, take a seat on your throne and own your day like royalty. OKUURT!?



- I suggest booking a team of hair and makeup artists that are used to working with each other. The booking process will be easier and they'll be used to sticking to a schedule together!
- Ask for photos. You want to make sure your makeup photographs well! Avoid heavy contours - while it's tempting, it looks really stripe-y in photos when it's not done correctly!

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- Ask if your H&M artists have ever cancelled an event, and why. This is SO important because you don't want to be left without one a week before your wedding. Again, check reviews!
 - I can't stress this enough: TRIAL RUNS. All stylists and makeup artists have different styles, personalities and techniques and you need to make sure it's a good fit- the last thing you want is to dislike your look on your wedding day!

THINGS TO CONSIDER



BOOKING A BAND

A live band can add SO much class to a wedding reception and really bring out all ages and guests to the dance floor! If you go the live band route, make sure you still have someone facilitating the timeline for the evening and making announcements, and you've seen the band in concert a few times!

FINDING A DJ

My biggest suggestion for finding a DJ that has a great playlist and doesn't tell corny jokes? Think back to the most fun wedding receptions you've been too, and ask your friends who their DJ was! A DJ can make or break a wedding reception. You want someone that listens to your requests, keeps the timeline and the party going, can read the crowd, and can be fun and personable without overdoing it!

RECEPTION MUSIC

STATIONERY ONLINE VS. CUSTOM

ONLINE

(MINTED.COM, ETSY, ETC)

- Easy to visualize what it will look like!
- DIY abilities
- Sometimes more affordable
- Quick to order if you're a procrastinator!

CUSTOM

- Entirely custom & unique. The designer can create a look that ties with your florals, colors, or vibe!
- Not necessarily expensive. You might find it's even cheaper to go custom!
- An amazing keepsake from your day! - They can help you craft elegant ways to say "please don't bring your 8 adult children" or "cash over presents please"!

CAKE & DESSERT

Don't feel like you HAVE to have cake if you're not a cake person! If you're pie people, have some pie! Or ice cream, brownies, cookies, macaroons, doughnuts, you name it!

FINDING THE SWEET SPOT:

- Explore local bakeries that you love and see what they have to offer! There's nothing better than a fresh donut delivery from your local bakery the morning of your wedding!
- Ask your cake bakery what materials they use as far as icing and decor methods. If they're a primarily fondant-based bakery and you hate fondant, you'll want to reconsider!
- Consult your florist! If you're wanting fresh flowers on your cake, your florist might be able to step in and provide extra florals so everything is cohesive!



LITTLE DETAIL

WEDDING PARTY GIFTS

Should you get gifts for your friends that attend/throw all the showers and parties, stand in the hot sun for hours of photos and wear high heels and a hot suit for 8+ hours? Absolutely. You can find awesome personalized gifts on Etsy, in boutiques, or even on Amazon! My gift suggestion for the girls? Pay for their hair and makeup! It'll make them super gorgeous for your day, save them a wedding expense, and go a longer ways than a personalized tank top!


GUEST EXPERIENCE

The guests are there for YOU, but if you want to go the extra mile and make your reception super fun, here's some ideas to make things exciting!

- Photobooth
- Late night snack
- Games like giant Jenga or Cornhole
- Coloring books or activities for the kids
- Signature cocktail
- Glow-sticks or lights for the dance floor

RINGS

Don't be afraid to look outside of the box when it comes to rings! There's some amazing, high quality wedding bands on Etsy. Have a spouse that is hard on jewelry or works with their hands? Purchase an affordable ring off Amazon and then add a silicone ring in for every day wear!



WEDDING TRANSPORT

Trolleys, classic cars, and limos are all super fun options if you have a large gap during the ceremony and reception, are bouncing from place to place for events or photos, or just want to treat your wedding party or yourselves to something fun and extra on your wedding day!

Make sure that your transportation has working air conditioning if you're getting married in the summer and be prepared for whatever sound system they have so you can hook up your own playlist!

CONSIDER
GROUP
TRANSPORT IF..

YOU HAVE A LARGE WEDDING PARTY!
YOU HAVE SEPARATE CEREMONY & RECEPTION SITE YOU
HAVE A LARGE GAP AT SOME POINT IN THE DAY IF PHOTOS
ARE IN A SEPARATE PLACE

STAY AWAY FROM PINTEREST. SORT OF.

Pinterest and other inspiration sources are GREAT in the beginning stages. But once you really start diving in, they can cause a lot of mind changing, dissatisfaction, and second guessing. Cut yourself off once you have a good idea of how your day should unfold and what you want it to look like!

FINAL TIPS

ENJOY IT.

It only happens once, so please please savor it! Make it as fun as possible: make date nights out of registering, binge watch your fav show while invitation addressing, have a girls night in while DIYing decor, and step back and reflect on the big picture when you get overwhelmed.

BOOK A HONEYMOON FIRST.

This is totally biased, but I highly advise this! It gives you a vacation to look forward to during the process and it allows you to invest in yourself FIRST before feeding guests or making the parents happy!

ALL THE BEST!

You GOT this!
You're on your way
to make this the
BEST day ever and if
you need anymore
help, I'm here for
you!

XO