

# KAYLA CASSIDY PHOTO

## THE ULTIMATE WEDDING PLANNING GUIDE







# WELCOME!

## A CURATED GUIDE TO YOUR EFFORTLESS WEDDING EXPERIENCE



Your wedding is more than a single day - it's the culmination of your story, the merging of families, and the beginning of a new chapter. It's an experience, a carefully crafted moment that deserves to be preserved with intention and artistry.

But let's be real - wedding planning can also feel overwhelming. From choosing the perfect vendors to finalizing the timeline, there are a million moving pieces. That's where I come in. This guide isn't just about helping you plan; it's about making the process effortless so you can actually enjoy your wedding day, knowing that every detail is being documented with care.

As a wedding photographer, I do more than capture images - I curate an experience that ensures your day unfolds smoothly. Whether you're envisioning an intimate gathering or an editorial-style celebration, I'm here to guide you through the process, helping you feel comfortable and confident in front of the camera while ensuring every fleeting moment is preserved.

Inside this guide, you'll find tips on crafting a seamless wedding timeline, selecting vendors that align with your vision, and preparing for your photography experience. My goal? To help you walk into your wedding day with complete confidence, knowing that everything is taken care of.

So take a breath, sip your coffee (or champagne), and let's dive into creating a wedding day that feels effortless, intentional, and uniquely you.

XX KAYLA

# WHAT'S YOUR IDEAL DAY?

## DEFINING YOUR WEDDING VISION

Your wedding is a reflection of who you are as a couple. Before diving into the details, take a step back and think about the overall feel of your wedding day. Do you want an intimate, candlelit dinner surrounded by your closest loved ones, or a grand, lively celebration filled with music and dancing? Is your vision something timeless and classic, or do you prefer something non-traditional and deeply personal?

It's easy to get caught up in trends, but the best weddings are those that feel authentic to you. Rather than focusing on what you "should" do, take the time to imagine what truly matters. Think about how you want your wedding day to feel - do you envision it as a relaxed, slow paced day where you can take in every moment, or do you want an energy filled celebration from start to finish? What moments will mean the most to you when you look back in 10 or 20 years?

### Questions to Ask Yourself:

- What emotions do you want to feel on your wedding day? Think about what matters most - joy, intimacy, excitement, nostalgia.
- How do you want your wedding to look and feel? Modern and editorial? Warm and romantic? Whimsical and full of surprises?
- Which moments matter most to you? First looks, family toasts, quiet in-between moments, dancing the night away?
- What kind of experience do you want your guests to have? A multi-day destination celebration, a cozy backyard affair, or something completely different?

Once you have a clear vision, every decision becomes easier - your choice of venue, vendors, and even the flow of the day will naturally align with what feels right for you. Your wedding style will also influence how your photography is captured. Whether your priority is a documentary style approach that tells the full story of the day, a mix of candid and guided editorial portraits, or a highly curated, artistic vision, understanding what resonates with you will help create a day that feels uniquely yours.

When you define your wedding priorities early, you'll be able to make intentional choices that align with what truly matters - allowing you to create an experience that feels effortless, joyful, and completely reflective of your love story.

# YOUR VENDOR DREAM TEAM

Your wedding vendors are the creative partners who will bring your vision to life, so choosing the right ones is essential. Each vendor contributes to the overall experience of your wedding day, from the ambiance and flow to how seamless and stress free everything feels. While it's easy to focus solely on pricing and aesthetics, the best vendors are those who not only align with your vision but also communicate well, adapt to changes, and bring a level of professionalism that allows you to enjoy your day without added stress.

The vendor selection process should feel intentional and thoughtful, ensuring you're surrounded by a team that makes you feel at ease. Whether it's your photographer capturing fleeting emotions, a florist bringing your dream arrangements to life, or a planner keeping everything running smoothly, your vendors should complement both your personalities and your wedding style. Each vendor plays a unique role in shaping the atmosphere, flow, and overall experience of your wedding day. While aesthetics and pricing matter, the best vendors are those who understand your vision, communicate well, and make you feel at ease.

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Your wedding photos will be the most tangible memories from your day. Choosing the right photographer means selecting someone who not only captures stunning images but also understands the emotions, energy, and flow of a wedding day. Think about your photography style preference - do you love a more candid, documentary feel or a refined, editorial approach? Or perhaps a mix of both? A great wedding photographer will also help guide you throughout the day, ensuring you feel comfortable and confident in front of the camera. Ask to see full wedding galleries (not just Instagram highlights) to get a real sense of their work.

## VIDEOGRAPHY

While photography captures still moments, videography preserves the movement, voices, and emotions of your wedding day. A beautifully crafted wedding film can transport you back to those heartfelt vows, the sound of your guests cheering, and the quiet in-between moments you might have missed. Decide whether you prefer a cinematic highlight film, documentary style coverage, or a combination of both. A skilled videographer will complement your photography without being intrusive.

## PLANNER OR COORDINATOR

A wedding planner is an invaluable asset if you want a seamless, stress free planning experience. Planners handle logistics, manage vendors, and bring your vision to life while ensuring everything stays on track. If a full-service planner isn't in your budget, a wedding coordinator is a great alternative. A coordinator steps in closer to the wedding day to finalize details, create a timeline, and ensure everything runs smoothly so you can relax and enjoy your day.

## FLORIST

Florals set the tone for the entire wedding aesthetic. Whether you envision an elaborate floral installation, classic bouquets, or minimalistic arrangements, a talented florist can bring your vision to life. Beyond just choosing flowers, your florist will help design centerpieces, ceremony arches, and other decorative elements that enhance the ambiance. Consider your venue, colour palette, and season when working with your florist to create something cohesive and breathtaking.

## VENUE

The venue is one of the most significant choices you'll make, as it dictates the backdrop, lighting, and overall feel of your wedding day. Consider whether you want an outdoor, indoor, modern, rustic, or historic space. Does it have great natural light? Will there be enough space for photos? How does it align with the overall mood of your wedding? Some venues come with built-in amenities, while others are blank slates that require more planning.

## HAIR & MAKEUP

Your wedding day look is just as much about feeling good as it is about looking good. Professional hair and makeup artists ensure you feel confident, radiant, and camera ready all day long. Look for artists who specialize in long lasting bridal makeup and hairstyling that complements your personal aesthetic. A trial session before the wedding is highly recommended to test different looks and ensure you feel your best.

Tip: Do both on the same day so you can see exactly what you look like for your wedding!

## CATERING & BAR SERVICE

Food and drinks are a key part of the guest experience. A well planned menu can elevate your celebration and leave a lasting impression. Consider whether you want plated service, buffet-style dining, or food stations. Do you prefer a formal sit-down dinner or a more casual cocktail style reception? If you're including a bar, decide whether you want a full open bar, signature cocktails, or wine and beer service.

## MUSIC & ENTERTAINMENT

The right music can set the tone for your entire celebration. Whether you want a live band, DJ, or curated playlists, your entertainment choices will shape the energy of the reception. Think about the kind of atmosphere you want to create - live music can feel elegant and immersive, while a DJ might keep the dance floor going all night. Don't forget to discuss special songs for key moments like your first dance, parent dances, and grand entrance.

## RENTALS & DECOR

For venues that require additional styling, rental companies provide items like specialty chairs, lounge furniture, table settings, and drapery to bring your vision to life. Whether you're going for a sleek, minimal look or something opulent and romantic, rentals allow you to customize your wedding space with unique elements.



# FIRST LOOK VS. NO FIRST LOOK

## FIRST LOOK

A first look is a private moment before the ceremony where you and your partner see each other for the first time. It allows you to have a quiet, emotional moment together before the day picks up. Many couples find that it helps calm nerves and lets them be more present when walking down the aisle. A first look also means you can get wedding portraits done before the ceremony, freeing up time to enjoy cocktail hour with guests. If you love the idea of sharing this intimate moment without the pressure of a crowd, a first look might be perfect for you.

## NO FIRST LOOK

Choosing to wait until the ceremony to see each other for the first time builds excitement and anticipation. It creates a powerful, emotional moment when you finally lock eyes at the altar. For couples who love tradition and want that cinematic grand entrance, skipping the first look enhances the experience. It also allows for a more relaxed morning without needing to start photos early. While this means taking portraits during cocktail hour, it ensures that the first moment you see each other is shared with all your loved ones, making it even more special.



# HOW TO PLAN YOUR TIMELINE?

## TIME TO PLAN A DAY AROUND YOU.

A well planned wedding timeline is the key to a seamless, stress free experience. Without a solid timeline, the day can feel rushed, chaotic, or unorganized, and that's the last thing you want on such an important day. While every wedding is unique, having a structured timeline ensures everything flows smoothly, giving you time to truly enjoy each moment.

Your wedding timeline will depend on your ceremony time, whether you're doing a first look, the season, and personal preferences. Here's a breakdown of key elements to consider when structuring your day:

### Morning: Getting Ready & Pre-Ceremony Moments

- Start the day early. Factor in extra time for hair, makeup, and getting dressed.
- Choose a well lit space. Natural light makes all the difference for those beautiful, dreamy getting ready photos.
- Build in buffer time. Running behind is common, so padding your schedule will keep things relaxed.
- Don't forget details. Have your rings, dress, shoes, invitations, and florals ready for detail shots.

### First Look (Optional) & Couple Portraits

A first look allows you to share an intimate moment with your partner before the ceremony. It also provides an opportunity for couple portraits before the day gets busy. If you opt for a first look:

- Plan at least 30-45 minutes for this moment, including time to compose yourselves afterward.
- Consider scheduling family portraits after the first look to save time post ceremony.



# HOW TO PLAN YOUR TIMELINE?

## PART 2

### Ceremony Timing & Considerations

- Plan around the best lighting. Outdoor ceremonies should avoid harsh midday sun; late afternoon is best for softer, golden light.
- Keep guests in mind. Ensure your ceremony is scheduled at a time when guests will be comfortable (especially in extreme heat or cold).
- Allow buffer time. If your ceremony is set to last 30 minutes, schedule an extra 10-15 minutes to accommodate unexpected delays.

### Cocktail Hour: Where the Magic Happens

Cocktail hour is the perfect time to capture candid guest interactions, reception details, and final wedding party portraits. If you didn't do a first look, this is when couple portraits will take place.

- Plan at least an hour. This gives guests time to mingle while we capture essential post-ceremony portraits.
- Have drinks & appetizers ready. Guests will appreciate a little refreshment while they wait for the reception to begin.

### Reception: Dinner, Speeches & Special Moments

Your reception is the celebration part of the day, and a well planned timeline ensures everyone enjoys it. Consider:

- Grand entrance: If you want a fun introduction, plan a few extra minutes for coordination.
- Dinner service: Buffet style tends to be quicker, while plated dinners take longer.
- Speeches: Keep them short and sweet - around 5 minutes per speech is ideal.
- Cake cutting & formal dances: Schedule them at a natural transition point (after dinner but before guests hit the dance floor).

### Golden Hour Photos

Golden hour - the hour before sunset - is the best time for soft, dreamy portraits. Planning a quick escape during this time allows for:

- A change of scenery (if possible)
- Romantic, cinematic lighting for portraits
- A few quiet moments alone together amidst the celebration

### Late Night Celebration & Send Off

- Plan for extra dancing time. If having a DJ or band, set aside at least 2-3 hours for open dance.
- Consider a formal exit. Sparklers, confetti, or even a vintage car getaway make for stunning end-of-night photos.
- Have a backup plan for tired guests. Offering late night snacks or transportation can make things easier for guests staying late.

8 HOUR PACKAGE WITHOUT A  
FIRST LOOK:

1PM - PHOTOGRAPHER ARRIVES  
AT AIRBNB FOR FINISHING  
TOUCHES ON GETTING READY  
PHOTOS

2PM - CEREMONY

2:30PM - FAMILY + WEDDING  
PARTY PHOTOS

3:15PM- COUPLES  
PORTRAITS/COCKTAIL HOUR

4:30PM - DINNER

5:30PM - TOASTS

6:30 PM - GOLDEN HOUR PHOTOS

7:15PM - CAKE CUTTING +  
DANCING

9PM - PHOTO COVERAGE ENDS

8 HOUR PACKAGE WITH A FIRST  
LOOK:

1PM - PHOTOGRAPHER ARRIVES  
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TOUCHES ON GETTING READY  
PHOTOS

2PM - FIRST LOOK + COUPLES  
PORTRAITS

3PM - FAMILY + WEDDING PARTY  
PHOTOS

4PM - CEREMONY

4:45PM - DINNER

5:30PM - TOASTS

6:30 PM - GOLDEN HOUR PHOTOS

7:15PM - CAKE CUTTING +  
DANCING

9PM - PHOTO COVERAGE ENDS

# PREP FOR YOUR PHOTOGRAPHY SESSION

## ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS: YOUR TRIAL RUN

Engagement sessions are a fantastic way to get comfortable in front of the camera before your wedding. They help you build a connection with your photographer (me!), allow you to see how I work, and help us figure out which angles and poses feel most natural for you as a couple. Plus, they provide stunning images you can use for save-the-dates, your wedding website, or prints around your venue.

## WEDDING PORTRAITS: TRUST THE PROCESS

Your wedding portraits shouldn't feel like a long, drawn out photoshoot. My approach is to make this time enjoyable, relaxed, and efficient so you can get back to celebrating. Whether we carve out time for a first look or plan portraits after the ceremony, I'll guide you into natural poses that don't feel forced, ensuring your photos feel authentic to you.

## CREATING A SHOT LIST FOR FAMILY & GROUP PHOTOS

Family and group portraits are some of the most requested images, but they can easily become overwhelming if not planned properly. Before your wedding day, I'll help you create a structured list of must have groupings to ensure that these portraits are quick and stress free. Assigning a friend or family member to help gather people can also keep things running smoothly.





# HOW ARE YOU PREPARING FOR YOUR WEDDING?

## TIME TO MAKE A LIST OF WHAT TO PREPARE.

The best wedding days are the ones where couples feel prepared, relaxed, and fully present. Whether you're months away or in the final stretch, thoughtful preparation will ensure everything runs smoothly and you can enjoy each moment without stress. Here's what to keep in mind as you get ready for your big day.

Planning a wedding is more than just booking vendors and picking a dress - it's about creating a meaningful experience that reflects who you are as a couple. From finalizing details to staying grounded in the moment, this guide will help you feel confident, organized, and ready for the day ahead.

## CHECKLIST:

- **Finalize Your Timeline:** Ensure every key moment is scheduled, and leave buffer time for unexpected delays.
- **Confirm with Vendors:** Double check details with your vendors to avoid last minute surprises.
- **Prepare Your Wedding Attire:** Have everything steamed, pressed, and ready to go (including accessories and emergency kits!).
- **Assign Someone for Small Tasks:** A trusted friend or planner can handle last minute details so you don't have to.
- **Break in Your Shoes:** Avoid painful blisters by wearing your wedding shoes around the house before the big day.
- **Have a Getting Ready Playlist:** Music can help calm nerves and set the right mood.
- **Stay Hydrated & Eat Well:** Wedding days are long, and you'll need energy to fully enjoy it!
- **Pack a Wedding Day Emergency Kit:** Include items like safety pins, stain remover, band aids, and tissues for unexpected situations.
- **Relax & Enjoy:** This is your moment. Take a deep breath, be in the present, and trust that everything will come together beautifully.



# DAY AFTER SESSIONS

Your wedding day moves fast, and between the excitement, emotions, and endless celebrations, it can feel like a blur. A Day After Session allows you to slow down, soak it all in, and capture even more stunning moments without the rush of the wedding timeline. It's the perfect opportunity to create relaxed, intimate, and breathtaking portraits - without the pressures of the big day.

A Day After Session is a dedicated photoshoot the day after (or within a few days/months) of your wedding, where we take additional portraits in a more relaxed setting. It gives you the chance to wear your wedding attire again and capture stunning, stress free photos that might not have been possible on your actual wedding day.



# THANK YOU!

Planning a wedding is a huge milestone, and I'm so glad you downloaded this guide to help make the process easier. There's a lot to think about, but remember - your wedding should feel like you, not just a checklist of traditions. Whether you're just starting or putting the final touches on your plans, I hope this guide has given you valuable insight and inspiration.

This is just the beginning!

Take your time, enjoy the process, and focus on what matters most - celebrating your love in a way that feels right for you. If you ever need more tips, guidance, or resources, be sure to check back in for more helpful wedding planning content.

Wishing you the most incredible wedding day and beyond!

If you've loved what you've read and are looking for a photographer who not only captures stunning images but also helps you navigate the wedding planning process with ease, I'd love to chat! My approach is all about making sure you feel comfortable, confident, and stress free throughout your wedding journey.

If you're interested in learning more about my services or booking a session, visit my website or reach out directly. I'd love to hear about your vision and help bring it to life.

[CLICK HERE TO GET STARTED!](#)

XX KAYLA

P.S. THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE MEANT TO  
SERVE AS A SPACE FOR YOU TWO TO  
BRAINSTORM AND PLAN YOUR PERFECT DAY. USE  
THESE FOR NOTES, CREATING A MOODBOARD +  
TO DO LIST, AND KEEPING TRACK OF VENDOR  
INFORMATION!









*OUR PERFECT DAY*



# TO DO:







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