

THE *Offbeat Bride* WEDDING CHECKLIST

Ok, don't lose your shit, we can do this together.

Obviously, no one wedding checklist could ever work for everyone, but this one is hopefully a bit more slanted toward nontraditional interests. It assumes you've got roughly a seven-month engagement, so you may need to tweak dates depending on your timeline.

Also, please understand that we're absolutely not saying you have to do everything on this list. If you made the choice not to do something for your wedding (like, say, favors) you get the satisfaction of immediately striking it off the list and moving on! Fuck yeah.

Let's get started.

First things first

- Sit down with your partner and figure out general vision for your wedding. **Indoors? Outdoors? Silly? Formal?** Of course you'll find an obscene amount of inspiration at offbeatbride.com
- Decide on a budget and figure who might be helping. Choose wisely, grasshopper, and remember that **if family pays**, family may want to control.
- If you're considering a wedding with a lot of community contribution, start **talking to friends and family** about who might want to help with different parts of the wedding.
- Pick your wedding date and time, and finalize after okaying with **venue** and important guests.
- If you're hiring **vendors**, start doing your homework on what services you'll need, and who can provide it.
- Sign up for our private forum at tribe.offbeatbride.com
- Buy a copy of *Offbeat Bride: Creative Alternatives for Independent Brides*

Once you know what you're doing

- Scout out **venues** and book one as soon as you can.
- Make preliminary **guest list** and decide on your wedding's approximate size. Get lists from both sets of parents, too.
- Start talking to **caterers**, if you're using one.
- Start a **notebook/file folder** to keep all your wedding planning paperwork in one place.
- If you're having a **wedding party**, choose your peeps.
- If you're hiring a **caterer**, pick one and determine price per head and menu.
- Start looking at wedding outfits—whether it's a **dress, suit**, or **something else** that makes you feel gorgeous and fancy.

- Start investigating any ethnic customs or **cultural traditions** you might want to incorporate into your ceremony or reception.
- Decide on and meet with your **officiant** to discuss ceremony structure.
- If you plan to use frequent flyer miles to travel to your **honeymoon** destination, consider booking your flight now.

6 Months before wedding

- Finalize your **guest list**. (This can be harder than you might expect.)
- Find an **officiant** who suits your style and spirit.
- Consider **music** at your reception. Even if you're not into dancing, some background tunes are nice.
- Narrow down your **outfit choices** and make a final decision.
- If you're doing a **gift registry**, start registering for gifts.
- Think about how you might want to wear your **hair**.
- Figure out who's making your dessert, whether it's **cake, cupcakes, wedding pie**, or something else.
- Lock down **photography plans**. Even if it's just a friend, get a solid commitment.
- Figure out if you're doing **coordinated outfits** for your wedding party attendants, or just asking them to pick out their own clothes.
- Think about **flowers**. If you're **hiring someone**, send a deposit to reserve their services.
- Make sure everyone helping with the wedding knows **what you're expecting of them**.
- Send **save the date cards** (also known as STDs—ha!) to guests. You can use postcards, email, or even just a phone call.
- If you and/or your partner are **changing your names**, research the name change process and cost.

5 Months before

- Confirm your **cake** (or non-cake) plans.
- If you're doing a **wedding party**, confirm what everyone's wearing.
- Lock down your wedding outfit and your partner's attire.
- Book ceremony **musicians** and send deposit.
- Work on **invitation wording** and **design**.
- Finalize **menu** and service details with caterer.
- Launch your **wedding website**, if you're doing one.

4 Months before

- If you're doing flowers with a **florist**, lock it down with them.
- If you're renting stuff (tables, chairs, tents, farm animals) confirm it with the vendors.
- Book rehearsal-dinner site, if you're doing one.
- Figure out where you're sleeping on your wedding night, and make reservations if necessary.
- Compile packages for out-of-town guests** with hotel reservation and city information, and send 'em out via snail mail or email.
- Book your **honeymoon flights** (if not using frequent flyer miles) and make all your other travel reservations.

3 Months before

- If you haven't **registered** yet, be sure to do so before any upcoming pre-wedding parties.
- Consider specific **ceremony and reception decoration** needs like a chuppah, aisle runner, etc.
- Purchase** or **make** your invitations.
- Start addressing invitations. Aim to send them out at the two-month mark.
- Talk to people you'd want to do special performances or **readings** as part of the ceremony.
- Get anything you need for an international honeymoon (passport, birth certificate, visas, vaccinations, etc.).
- Send out invitations.

2 Months before

- Work on **vows**, particularly if you're **writing your own**.
- Research local marriage license, civil union, or domestic partnership requirements.
- Make sure the wedding party has purchased their outfits and accessories.
- Take a few minutes to tell every member of your wedding party that you love and appreciate them. These people are important!
- Arrange **wedding-day transportation** for you, your wedding party, and guests (as needed).
- Snag wedding bands.
- If you're doing **favors**, buy them now or else **get crafting!**

6 Weeks before

- As you receive gifts, be sure to update and/or add items to your registry list and record everything you get.
- Confirm reservations for out-of-town guests.
- Arrange parking for the reception.
- Order liquor, wine and/or champagne if they're not included in your catering contract.
- Make sure you've got all your accessories, like **veil and shoes**.
- Begin writing the **ceremony program** if you're having one.
- Tell your partner you love them at least once a day as things get increasingly crazy.
- Do you want a **guest book**? Now's the time to get one.
- Set aside some time to write **thank-you notes** for gifts received at any showers or other pre-wedding parties.
- Finalize vows.
- Make sure you and your partner's wedding outfits fit both of you comfortably.

1 Month before

- Do trial runs of various vanity routines (**hair, makeup, henna**, wedding night genital piercing jewelry, whatever); schedule wedding-day appointments.
- Finish and print **ceremony programs**, if you're doing 'em.
- Get marriage license and make appointments for blood tests (if necessary). Check when the license expires.
- If you're DIYing your reception music, work on your **playlist**. If not, work on a list of "must-play" (and "must-not play") songs for your **DJ or band**. Back up your music and the rest of your hard drive, while you're at it.
- Discuss music with any ceremony musicians, and agree on final choices.
- Confirm wedding night and honeymoon reservations.
- Have a follow-up meeting or phone call with the officiant to go over ceremony timing and details.
- Do paperwork for official documents if you and/or your partner are changing your names.
- Work out wedding day timing and details (who will get the bride there, where the wedding party will dress, etc.) and draw up a schedule.
- Get final pre-wedding haircut, if needed.
- Call or email wedding party to relay critical info related to rehearsal and wedding (dates, times, directions, duties). Tell them again how much you love them, while you're at it.
- Get a head start on **thank-you notes** if you can.
- Finalize any special preferences, readings, or other ceremony details with your officiant. Put it in writing if you can.

2 Weeks before

- Harass guests who haven't RSVPed for the wedding and rehearsal dinner.
- Give final head count to the caterer. Confirm set-up instructions and menu items.
- Call your **venue** location manager and make sure your **vendors** all have access to the site when they need it.
- Confirm head-count, delivery time, and location with the baker (or whoever else is making your sweets).
- Make extra sure that everyone who's helping you with the wedding gets yet another special, pointed thank-you or a gift.
- Determine any wedding day assignments for members of the wedding party, and make lists/info sheets as needed.
- If you're doing a **seating chart**, figure it out now. Warning: this can take longer than expected.
- Confirm all final payment amounts with your vendors.
- Confirm location, date, and time with photographer; **create your "must-take" photo list**.
- Touch base with your officiant and give him/her rehearsal details and wedding day schedule.
- Confirm delivery locations, times, and final arrangement count with florist.
- Make sure your partner has their wedding attire all ready to go and fitted.
- Send transportation providers a schedule and addresses for pickups on wedding day.
- Prepare your **toasts** or thanks to friends and family.
- Distribute wedding-day directions, schedule, and contact list to all parents, attendants, and vendors.
- Designate who will meet, greet, and handle each vendor on the wedding day.
- Procure sedatives for night before wedding. Give them a trial run.

1 Weeks before

- Put together an overnight bag for your wedding night (toothbrush, vibrator, etc.) and designate someone to deliver it to the hotel for you.
- If you're the more froofy type, get a manicure and pedicure and confirm wedding day beauty appointments.
- Designate someone to collect the wedding gifts (and any cash) brought to the party.
- Confirm date, location, time, and playlist with band/DJ and/or ceremony or cocktail hour musicians.
- Leave a copy of your honeymoon itinerary with someone in case of emergency.
- Put final payments and cash tips in marked envelopes and give to a designated family or friend to distribute on the wedding day.
- Prepare a wedding day freakout **"Oh shit!" kit** (aspirin, makeup, safety pins, mints, Cliff bar, etc.).

1 Day before

- Rehearse the ceremony with officiant and wedding party.
- Confirm all specific honeymoon travel plans (including transportation to airport, etc.).
- Assemble both your and your partner's entire outfits.
- Set your alarm and arrange for backup.
- Make sure your vows are memorized or have a print-out ready.
- Take a sedative and/or masturbate. You need to rest, and either or both will help you sleep.

The day of

- Set aside special time during the day to step aside and breathe for a few seconds. This will help fight wedding day memory loss.
- Confirm with people who you expect to give/lead toasts at the reception.
- Take a moment to thank your parents and tell them you love them.
- Relax, smile, and enjoy the day! Even when shit goes wrong, it'll just make for great stories later.

After the wedding

- Mail letters and/or **gifts** to your parents and other special helpers to thank them for their help and support.
- Make sure all vendor bills have been paid in full.
- Confirm when you can expect wedding photos and/or video.
- Within two months of your wedding, send all **thank-you notes**.
- Submit your wedding to Offbeat Bride: offbeatbride.com/submissions
- Meet us for gossip and good times over at our sister site, Offbeat Home & Life at offbeathome.com It's like Offbeat Bride, but for the rest of your life!