



Wedding Reception Planning Checklist

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12–9 Months Before the Wedding

- ■ Secure your reception venue
- ■ Confirm catering is included or book a separate caterer
- ■ Reserve bar service or confirm beverage package
- ■ Book DJ or live band
- ■ Review venue capacity with realistic dance floor space
- ■ Confirm what rentals are included
- ■ Identify additional rental needs such as linens or specialty chairs

8–6 Months Before

- ■ Finalize estimated guest count
- ■ Begin reception layout planning
- ■ Request sample floor plan from venue
- ■ Choose reception style (plated, buffet, stations)
- ■ Select overall design direction and color palette
- ■ Research lighting options (candles, uplighting)
- ■ Review food and beverage minimum requirements

5–3 Months Before

- ■ Finalize dinner menu selections
- ■ Confirm bar package details
- ■ Confirm cake or dessert plan
- ■ Order reception decor and signage
- ■ Draft detailed reception timeline
- ■ Confirm rental order quantities
- ■ Discuss vendor arrival times with venue

2 Months Before

- ■ Create preliminary seating chart
- ■ Confirm final floor plan with venue
- ■ Review timeline with DJ or band
- ■ Confirm staffing levels with caterer
- ■ Order place cards or seating chart display
- ■ Plan guest comfort details (flip flops, blankets)

2–3 Weeks Before

- ■ Submit final guest count
- ■ Finalize seating chart
- ■ Confirm timeline with all vendors
- ■ Confirm vendor meals
- ■ Review rain plan if applicable
- ■ Confirm transportation schedule if needed

Week of the Wedding

- ■ Deliver decor and personal items to venue if permitted
- ■ Prepare emergency kit
- ■ Confirm payment schedule and gratuities
- ■ Assign point person for vendor coordination
- ■ Confirm final reception timeline copy with DJ, caterer, and photographer
- ■ Pack cake serving set, toasting glasses, or personal items

Day of the Reception

- ■ Confirm vendors have arrived
 - ■ Ensure seating chart is displayed
 - ■ Confirm bar is set before cocktail hour
 - ■ Confirm timeline cues with DJ and catering captain
 - ■ Relax and enjoy your reception
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Planner Tip:

The most successful wedding receptions are not the most expensive — they are the most organized. Confirming logistics in advance protects your timeline, your budget, and your guest experience.