

The First Five Steps to Planning a Wedding

1. **Set the Tone of Your Event.** Decide if you're having a formal wedding, a casual affair, or a theme wedding. Do you want a religious or secular ceremony? In short, you need to decide what you want your wedding to feel and look like. A good way to begin is to sit down with your partner and create a list of adjectives that describe the type of wedding that you want. Use this as a starting point. Don't forget to consider the wishes and concerns of you family, but this is your wedding and it should be what you feel is right for you.
2. **Set the Wedding Budget.** Figure out how much you already have in savings, and how much you can save each month. Talk to each of your parents and ask them if they can contribute to your wedding, and either how much they'd like to give you, or what specific things they'd like to pay for. Also ask grandparents or others that you are close too!
3. **Book the Venues for the Ceremony and Reception.** Many venues are booked a year in advance, so the further in advance you start looking, the more likely you are to get the time, date, and cost that you've planned for.
4. **Get Support.** The successful bride and groom do not plan their wedding alone - they get help! This may be from professionals, respected publications, the Internet and trusted friends who've planned their own weddings. Consider attending a bridal show.
5. **Select Your Attendants!** Attendants do a lot more than just stand next to you on the day of the wedding, now is the time to get them involved.

Now you can start looking for that special dress...we know you just can't wait to start shopping!