



THE ULTIMATE

# WEDDING TIMELINE GUIDEBOOK

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plan a stress free + on time wedding day!

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# WHAT MAKES A GREAT TIMELINE

*Some timelines work - Some don't. Here's the difference!*

Ah the wedding day timeline - Perhaps the most overlooked yet essential part of the wedding day!

Think of your wedding day timeline as the foundation for your day. It ensures events happen on schedule, people arrive when they need to, and everything you've worked so hard to plan takes place at precisely the right moment.

In reality no wedding day goes 100% to plan, however the right timeline will budget for hiccups and allow enough breathing room to recover.

As a photographer I've seen a LOT of wedding timelines - The good, bad and ugly. A poorly planned timeline can lead to wedding day disasters, and far more stress than necessary.

So what makes for a great wedding timeline? Great timelines budget for all the variables, and allocate the right amount of time (plus wiggle room) for each part of the day. Figuring this out can be tricky when you've never done it before! Following are some of the best examples of great timelines, and advice to create your own.

Ready? Lets go!

# FIRST LOOK VS TRADITIONAL TIMELINES

45%

Couples choosing to do a first look

65%

Couples choosing a traditional timeline

# SHOULD YOU HAVE A FIRST LOOK?

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*There is no doubt having a first look is growing in popularity, but whether or not you choose to incorporate one is a personal decision. Either way, we have examples of both styles of timeline for you in this guide.*

*Choosing a first look offers a couple timeline advantages:*

- 1) It allows you to take your photos earlier in the day, when your makeup is fresh & the weather tends to be cooler*
- 2) First looks get 95% of your photos finished before the ceremony. This means once your ceremony & family photos are finished, you can hang out and enjoy being with your family & friends, rather than run off for a big long photoshoot.*

# HOW MUCH TIME SHOULD I BUDGET FOR...

## TIMING TIPS

### A few tips when allocating time for each part of the day:

The following timeline examples should give you an idea of how long to budget for each event, however there are no hard and set rules!

You can prioritize your time on the things that matter most to you.

- 1) Always budget 5 extra minutes wiggle room before + after to allow for unexpected delays.
- 2) Make sure to account for traffic + travel times in between each portion of the day. Even if you're at one venue for the entire day, you'll still need time for guests to walk from one location to another etc.
- 3) The more people, the longer your transition times. Bigger groups of people take longer to move, get seated, organize etc.
- 4) Break it down! The more you break down each part of the day into specific activities, the more accurately you'll be able to estimate how long things will take. For example, when planning the ceremony, write out each step. Groom + groomsmen enter: 2 mins. Bridesmaids enter: 3 mins. Bride enters: 3 mins etc. Then combine your totals. This will give you a far more accurate idea of how long each event takes, and also uncover any possible hiccups ahead of time.
- 5) Aim to have all hair done and makeup 75% finished by the time your photographers arrive

## FIRST LOOK #1

Photography - 9hrs, 2 Photographers. 1pm-10pm  
Photographers Arrive @ 1:30  
Groom Preps 1:00-1:45pm - (Address here)  
Bride Preps- 1:00-1:45pm - (Address here)  
First Look - 2:00pm - 12 mins away - Head to the dock or rest area on either end of Yellow Lake (Depending on the sun)  
First Look Location = (Address here)  
Next Photo Location = (Address here) (5 min drive)  
Final Location = Valley Overlook - (Address here) (5 min drive from Ceremony Venue)  
Back at Grist Mill by 4pm  
Ceremony - 4:30pm-5:00pm @ (Address here)  
Family Photos - 5:15-5:30 - 5 min walk to reception venue.  
Dinner Served - 6pm  
Speeches - 8:10pm  
Sunset Photos - 8:45-9:10  
First Dance - 9:20pm, followed immediately by parents dances.  
Cake Cutting - 9:45pm  
Garter - 9:50pm  
Dance Party - To follow  
Photography Finished - 10pm

## FIRST LOOK #2

Photography - 10 hrs, 2 Photographers, 10:30am-8:30pm  
10:30 - Photographers arrive @ Bride & Grooms locations.  
11:30 - Photog leave grooms for ceremony details b4 guests arrive.  
12:00 - Leave for first look (30 min drive)  
12:30 - First look - parents will pray over couple. Address = \_\_\_\_  
1:00 - Photoshoot + Wedding Party Photos  
3:00 Ceremony (30 mins)  
3:40 Family Photos (15 mins)  
3:30-5:00 Cocktail Hour (10 mins from reception)  
5:15 - Guests enter reception area / get seated  
5:30-5:45 - Bridal Party Entrance  
6:00 - Dinner Served  
7:00 - Cake Cutting  
7:15 - Sneak outside for sunset photos (15 mins)  
7:30 - Speeches (x4, 7 mins each)  
8:00 - Bouquet & Garter  
8:05 - First Dance  
8:10 - Parent Dances  
8:15 - Dance Party  
8:30 - Photography finished

## TRADITIONAL #1

7 hrs photography, 1 photographer, 1:30-8:30

10:00-1:40 - Hair, makeup, preps 95% done by 1:30  
1:30 - 2:00 - Photograph Bride Preps - in dress @ 1:45  
2:00 - 2:30 - Photograph Groom Preps  
2:30 - 2:50 - Drive to ceremony location - (Address here)  
3:00 - 3:35 - Ceremony  
3:45 - 4:00 Family Photos  
4:00 - 5:30 Photoshoot  
5:30 - 6:00 - Drive to reception (Address here)  
6:15 - 6:30 B&G Enter Reception  
6:30 - 7:00 speeches (6 x 5 mins each)  
7:10 Cake Cutting. Play reception timeline by ear because its a very small group.  
7:45 - 8:00 - Sunset photos outside reception (30 sec walk)  
8:00 - 8:30 - Dance Party  
8:30 - Photography Finished

## TRADITIONAL #2

Photography 9 Hrs, 2 Photographers, 11:20-8:20

Photograph groom preps @ 11:20. Leave for brides @ 12:00  
Photograph bride preps @ 12:15-1:15  
Bride in Dress: 12:30-12:45  
Bride leaves for ceremony @ 1:15  
Ceremony: 2:00pm Invitation start time = 1:45pm  
Organize + Take Group Photo - 2:30-2:35  
Family Photos: 2:45-3:00  
Photoshoot: 3:00pm-4:45pm (15 min drive)  
Cocktail Party Begins: 5:00pm  
Dinner Served: 6:30  
Speeches (6 x 7 mins each): 6:45 - 7:30  
Sunset Photos Outside - 7:35 - 7:50  
First Dance: 8pm followed by parents dance  
Dance / Party: 8:10pm onwards  
Finish Photography Time: 8:20





# CREATING YOUR TIMELINE:

*Now that you've seen the examples, its time to make your own!*

Now that you have a few timeline examples to draw from you'll have a much better idea of how long to budget on average for certain events, and which kinds of things need to be included on your timeline. Here's a few tips to create your own:

1) Start with the big picture in mind, then break each event down step by step. This will help you make a plan that budgets enough time for each portion of the day, and uncover any small details or hiccups you may have missed.

2) Try to think through what portions of the day your vendors will need planned out. The examples above are optimized for photography, so they include the items needed for photographers, but you'll want to budget in timing details for your other vendors.

Things like when the makeup artist should arrive and when they need to be done are crucial to plan ahead of time - Many a wedding timeline has been ruined by hairstyling or makeup going an hour (or more!) overtime. Planning this ahead and clearly communicating with your vendors makes sure these timing issues don't happen.

3) Start rough + refine over time. You will never be able to 100% nail down everything with your first draft, so don't stress about it too much. You're simply putting a rough framework in place and then you can tweak it to perfection as you go. This is the most effective (and stress free!) method that wedding planners use too!

*That's it!*

YOU'RE WELL ON YOUR WAY  
TO CREATING THE PERFECT  
WEDDING TIMELINE.

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*Pat yourself on the back - You're one step closer to your dream day*