

Wedding Planning Guide



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Welcome!



First, thank you truly for being here.

If you're reading this, it means you love and value my work, appreciate my art, and trust me to tell your story, all in one beautiful day. That means more to me than I can put into words, and I'm truly honored to be part of this chapter of your lives.

I am here to guide you, support you, and help create space for you to be fully present on one of the most important days of your life. The most powerful images happen when you feel relaxed, prepared, and deeply connected to each other and to the moment you are in.

This guide was created to do exactly that.

Inside, you will find everything you need to know about how we will work together, how to plan a photography friendly timeline, and how to set yourselves up for images that feel natural, emotional, and timeless. My hope is that this guide answers your questions before they even arise and helps you feel grounded and confident as you move through the planning process.

There is no right way to have a wedding, only your way. Whether your day is quiet and intimate or full and celebratory, my intention is always the same. To document your story honestly, beautifully, and with care.

Take your time as you move through this guide. Save it, revisit it, and lean on it whenever you need clarity or reassurance. And always know that I am here every step of the way.

I cannot wait to tell your story.
With so much gratitude,

Kiran Melwani

My Philosophy

Wedding photography, to me, is about so much more than images. It's about storytelling. I focus on capturing candid, natural moments that reveal real emotion and the joy, the connection, and the love that shows how deeply excited you are to start this new chapter together. Every photo is meant to feel honest, timeless, and true to you.





Defining Your Wedding Priorities

Your wedding day will move faster than you expect, and it's easy to get caught up in timelines, traditions, and expectations. This section is here to help you slow down and identify what truly matters to you. When your priorities are clear, every decision, from the schedule to the small details and becomes easier, and your day unfolds with intention, presence, and joy.



Money-Saving Tips

Prioritize Your Must-Haves

Decide what aspects of your wedding are non-negotiable. Whether it's photography, your venue, or your catering, focus your budget on the things that will create the most lasting memories.

Simplify Decor and Details

Invest in a few meaningful statement pieces rather than filling every surface. Seasonal flowers, versatile decor, and heirloom items can add elegance without overspending.

Consider Timing and Day

Off-season or weekday weddings often come with reduced venue and vendor costs. Sunset times may vary, but these choices can give you beautiful light while saving money.

DIY Thoughtfully

Select projects that are enjoyable and manageable. Invitations, signage, or small decor elements can add a personal touch without adding stress.

Combine Services or Packages

Many vendors offer packages or discounts for bundling services. Consider combining florals, rentals, or photography add-ons to get more value.

Focus on Guest Experience

Rather than spending on extras that guests won't notice, invest in quality food, drinks, and ambiance. Guests will remember how the day felt more than the quantity of details.

Leverage What You Already Have

Family heirlooms, vintage items, or personal collections can enhance your wedding aesthetic without adding cost.

Above all, remember that your wedding is about your connection, not perfection. Smart, intentional choices will save money, reduce stress, and allow you to focus on the moments that truly matter.



The Experience Phase 1

Engagement Session Planning



We begin by planning your engagement session together, thoughtfully choosing the timing, location, and overall atmosphere. A get to know you questionnaire allows us to connect and shape an experience that feels natural and personal.

Ongoing Communication

Throughout the planning process, open and intentional communication ensures you feel supported, informed, and at ease every step of the way.

Wedding Preparation Conversations

As your wedding day approaches, we connect to walk through details, priorities, and any changes. These conversations bring clarity and calm leading into your day.

Timeline Creation

Your timeline is built with intention, guided by light, flow, and space. The goal is a day that feels unhurried and allows moments to unfold naturally.

The Experience Phase 2

Timeline Review

We review the final timeline together to ensure everything feels aligned and thoughtfully paced.

Wedding Day Final Outline

A refined photography outline is created, covering key moments, family groupings, and meaningful details so your day unfolds seamlessly.

Editing and Delivery

Your images are carefully edited in a timeless, true to tone style. A curated online gallery is delivered within six to eight weeks of your wedding day.



Engagement Sessions:

Engagement sessions with me are designed to feel effortless and deeply personal. Rather than poses, I focus on guiding you into moments that allow your love to naturally unfold. I'll encourage you to slow down, be present with one another, and simply exist together while I quietly capture what's real with stolen glances, the gentle touches, the laughter that turns into something tender. My goal is to preserve the emotion you feel in this season of your love, creating images that don't just show how it looked, but how it felt.







Prepare For Your Engagement Session

Your session will take place during golden hour, the hour just before sunset. This light is:

- Soft, warm, and flattering
- Perfect for romantic, natural images
- Ideal for neutral tones and soft fabrics

Because of this lighting, warm and muted colors work especially well.



Tips for engagement prep

Pack 'em up

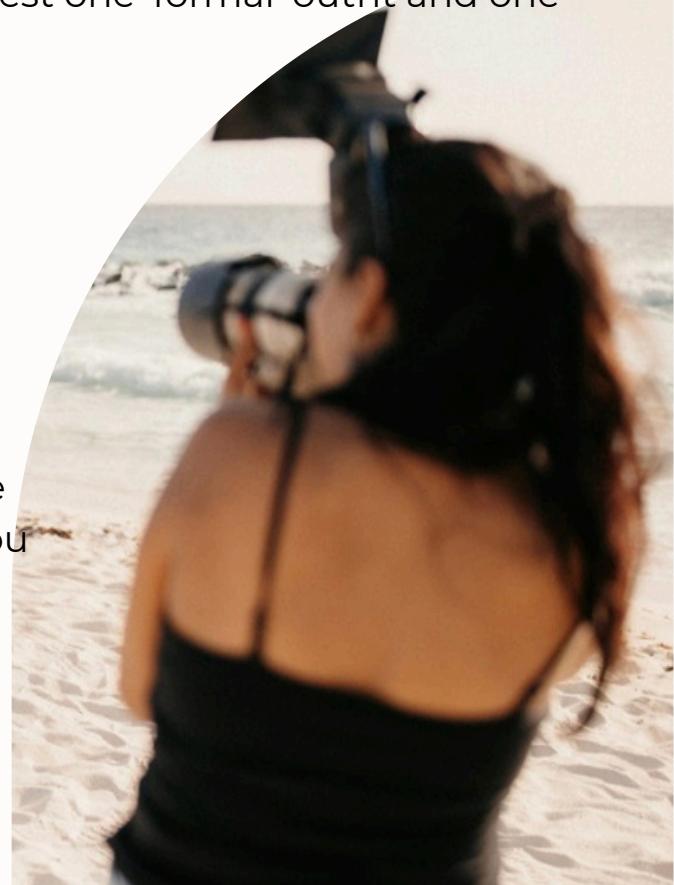
Bring all of the things that you might need! That includes makeup touchups, deodorant, water, snacks, whatever you need to maintain your fabulous-ness.

Bring an extra outfit

Your engagement package includes 2 outfits, so bring a change of clothes if you want to! Depending on your preferences, most couples like to switch it up for their second outfit. I typically suggest one 'formal' outfit and one 'casual' outfit for your session.

Props

Yes PLEASE bring all the props you want! Champagne (for those classic champagne pop shots), blankets, puppies, whatever you want to bring I am 100% down for.



What to Wear

Neutrals & Earthy tones work best!

You don't want your outfit to distract from you two awesome people!

Oftentimes, a brighter color will reflect weird tones onto your skin. Neutral and earth toned outfits make photos a certain aesthetic that truly make you two pop! A little pop of colour is okay with accessories but you don't want it to take away from the real focus, which is YOU!

accessorize + layer

Add accessories like hats, scarfs, blankets, necklaces, your favourite shoes even, can add some fun looks to bringing out your personality during the session!



Get Glammed Up

Hair, Make-Up & Nails



I highly suggest scheduling your hair / makeup trial for the day of your session! Professional hair and makeup are not required for your engagement session, but many couples choose to have it done to feel confident and polished. A great option is using this session as your hair and makeup trial, allowing you to see how everything photographs and make any adjustments before the wedding day.

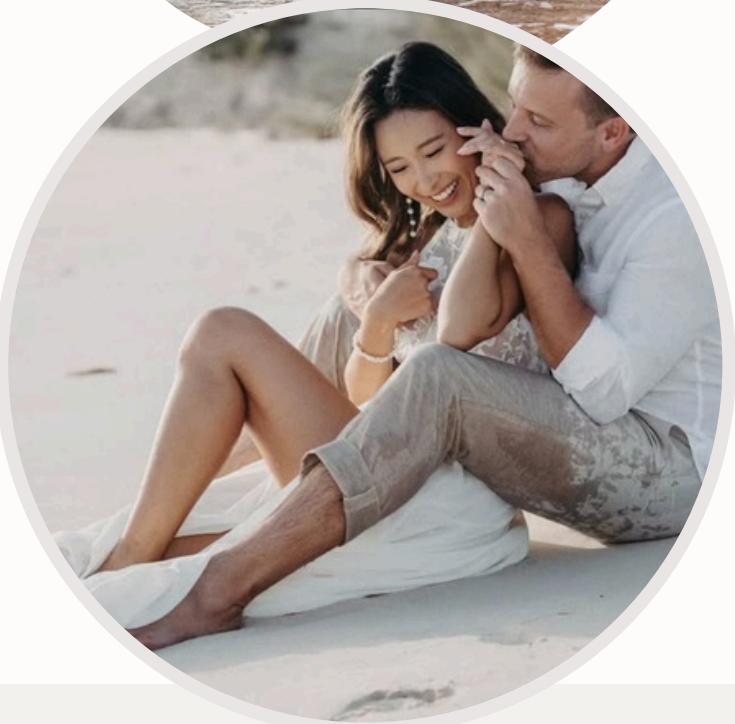
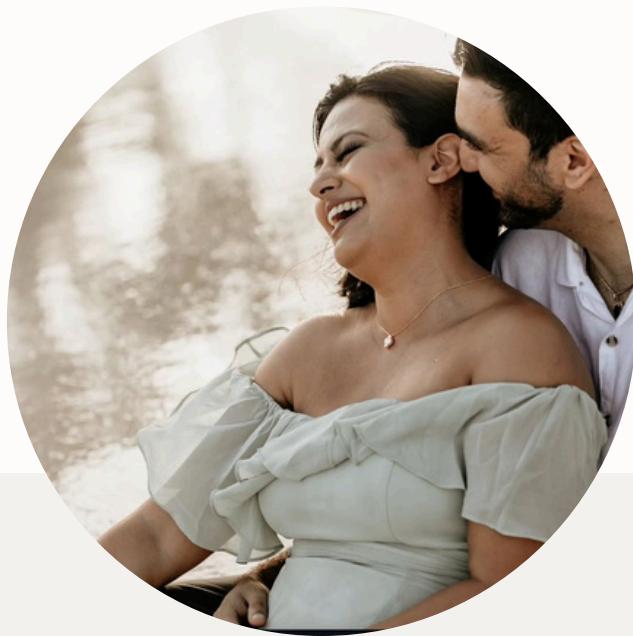
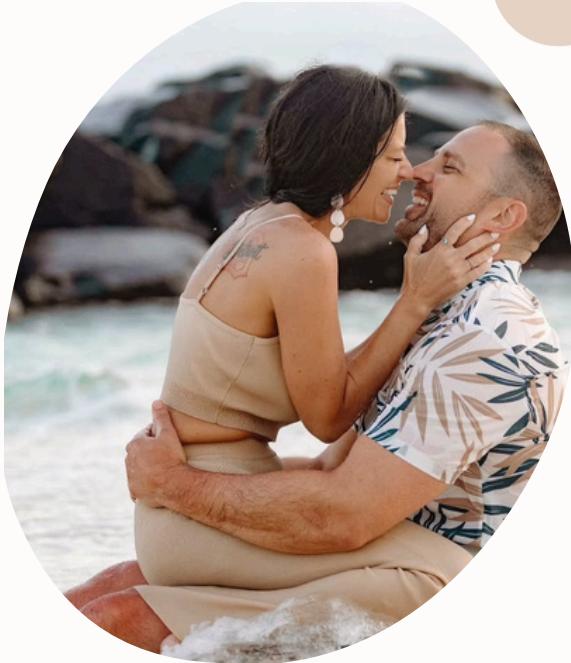
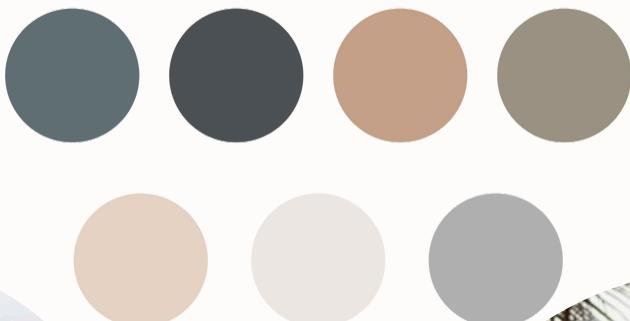
If you do opt for professional styling, aim for a look that feels like an elevated version of yourself. Soft, natural makeup and hair with movement tend to photograph timelessly and help you feel comfortable throughout the session.

Your hands will naturally be featured as you hold hands and show connection, so taking a moment to do your nails, even in a simple neutral tone, helps keep the focus on your engagement ring.

As always, choose what makes you feel like you. Comfort and confidence will always shine through in your photos.

Neutrals + Earth tones

color palette example



Do's & Don'ts

Yes Items

- neutrals and earthy tones
- denim jeans and jackets
 - cute hats
- minimal patterned dresses
- flowy dresses or skirts
- chunky knits and layers
- boots or blundstones



Leave at home

- Bright neon colours
- bright primary colors (red, royal blue, yellow, grass green)
- restricting fabrics (stiff clothing means stiff photos)
- anything with logos or writing
 - running shoes or sneakers
 - sunglasses
- Ball caps that hide your face
- Hair elastics on wrists



Timelines are Important

Timelines are more than just a schedule. They are the framework that allows your wedding day to flow naturally, calmly, and beautifully. A thoughtful timeline ensures that there is space for every meaningful moment without feeling rushed, giving you the freedom to be present with each other and your loved ones.

With a clear timeline, we can plan for light, transitions, and emotional moments, capturing images that feel effortless and authentic. It helps prevent stress, keeps everyone on the same page, and ensures that nothing important is missed, from family portraits to candid interactions.

A well-planned timeline also allows for flexibility. Weddings rarely go exactly as imagined, but having a plan in place gives room to adjust while maintaining a sense of calm and structure. When your day has rhythm, the photography feels seamless, natural, and reflective of how it truly felt.

In short, timelines are essential because they create space for presence, connection, and timeless storytelling. They allow you to fully live your day while we capture every detail with care and intention.



Plan your photography timeline before your wedding planning timeline

Your photography-first timeline should be created before your wedding planner finalizes the full day schedule. Photography captures the moments that tell the story of your wedding day, and putting it first ensures that light, emotion, and connection are prioritized.

If we wait until the full planner's timeline is set, photography may be squeezed into limited windows, rushed, or scheduled during less flattering light. By planning photography first, we create breathing room for portraits, family photos, and candid moments, allowing your day to flow naturally.

Starting with a photography timeline also helps your planner design a schedule that supports both your vision and your story. It ensures that logistics, vendor timing, and transitions all work in harmony with how your day will be documented.

Timing



So the question is... how much time do you need? Oftentimes, my clients have no clue how much time to give for each event (which is totally understandable if you've never planned a wedding before!) Let's chat about how much time I'll need to get you the best photos possible.

You'll want to keep in mind that travel time might affect your timeline, so plan your travel between locations accordingly.



Lighting, and Sunset Timing

Golden hour is the brief window just after sunrise or before sunset and is one of the most magical times of day for capturing engagement and wedding photos. During this time, the sun sits low in the sky, creating soft, warm light that naturally flatters skin tones and adds a romantic glow to every image. Unlike harsh midday sunlight, golden hour light is gentle and diffused, helping to minimize shadows, squinting, and unflattering highlights.

For engagement sessions, golden hour creates an intimate, dreamy atmosphere that enhances genuine connection and emotion between couples. The warm hues and subtle backlighting add depth and movement, turning simple moments into timeless images. Whether walking hand in hand or sharing a quiet laugh, golden hour helps tell your love story in the most authentic and beautiful way.

On a wedding day, golden hour portraits of the bride and groom are often some of the most cherished images from the entire celebration. This time allows couples to step away briefly, slow down, and soak in the joy of being newly married while being photographed in the most flattering light possible. The result is romantic, cinematic images filled with emotion and the photos that feel as special as the moment itself.

Planning your timeline around golden hour ensures you receive stunning, timeless photographs that you'll treasure for a lifetime. It's more than just good lighting and it's the perfect blend of beauty, emotion, and artistry.



Weather Backup



Weather is one of the few things on your wedding day that is completely out of your control, but planning ahead ensures it won't impact the flow or mood of your celebration. Light rain, strong sun, or unexpected wind can all create challenges—but with preparation, they can also create beautiful, unique moments.

Having a backup plan for outdoor events is essential. Identify covered spaces, tents, or indoor options with your venue. Knowing where to pivot keeps your day calm and allows us to continue capturing meaningful moments without stress.

Flexibility is key. Even the most carefully planned day can have surprises. By building buffer time into your timeline, you allow for adjustments without feeling rushed. This flexibility ensures that everything from portraits to ceremony transitions happens smoothly.

Weather can even enhance your imagery. Soft rain can create romantic reflections, overcast skies provide beautiful even light for portraits, and golden hour sun can produce unforgettable glow. By staying adaptable, your photos will reflect the real, authentic day—rain, shine, or everything in between.

Ultimately, planning with flexibility and backup options ensures that your wedding day feels effortless. You can focus on connection, joy, and celebration, while I capture it all beautifully.



Details

Detail shots are the quiet moments that anchor your wedding story. They capture the pieces you chose with intention, the textures you touched, and the heirlooms that hold meaning long after the day has passed.

Your invitation suite, rings, shoes, florals, and personal items set the tone for your wedding day. Photographing them at the beginning allows your story to unfold naturally, from the smallest details to the biggest moments.

To ensure these images feel elevated and cohesive, I photograph details in natural light and style them thoughtfully, paying attention to color, texture, and composition. These images not only complete your gallery, they preserve the feeling of your day in a timeless, editorial way.

Detail Checklist

- wedding dress
- bridesmaid dresses
- bouquet
- cufflinks or tie
- Rings & ring boxes
- Invitations
- programs
- florals
- jewelry
- perfume
- veil or accessories
- shoes
- makeup
- ribbon
- meaningful keepsakes



The Bride Getting Ready

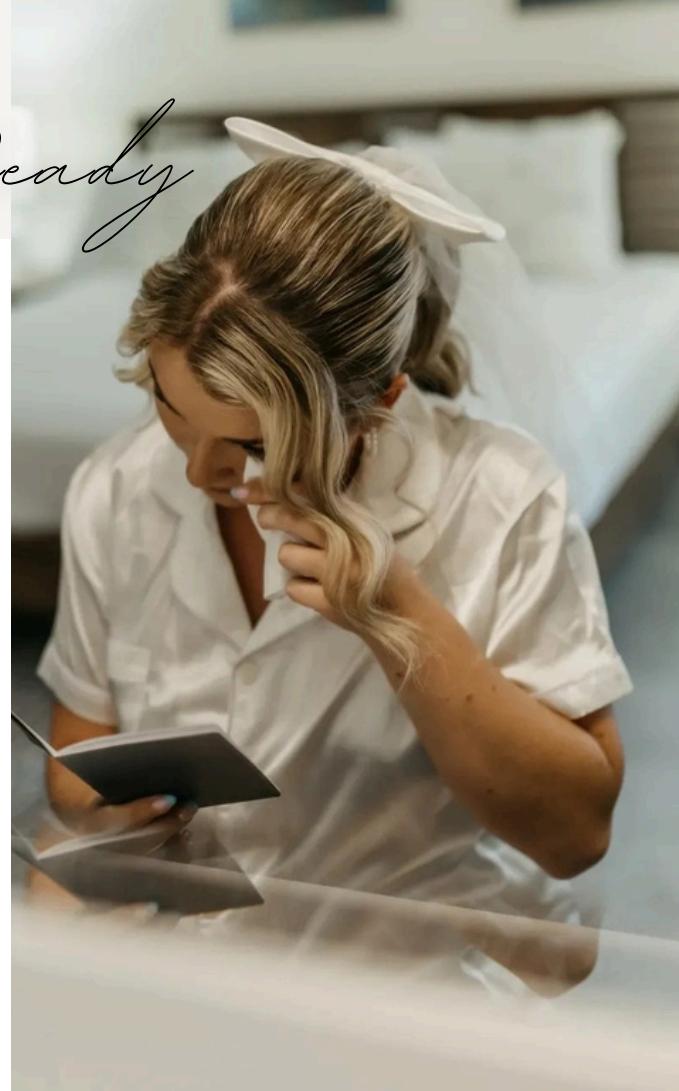
Getting Ready Photos on Your Wedding Day

Getting ready photos are an incredibly meaningful part of your wedding story, capturing the quiet, emotional moments before the day truly begins. These images document the anticipation, excitement, and heartfelt connections shared with your closest people before you walk down the aisle. From the final touches of hair and makeup to the deep breaths taken before slipping into your dress or suit, this part of the day is filled with raw, genuine emotion.

These moments often include some of the most touching interactions and parents seeing their child all dressed up for the first time, friends sharing laughter and happy tears, handwritten letters being read, or a quiet pause to reflect on what the day means. They help preserve the full experience of your wedding day, not just the ceremony itself.

Getting ready photos also allow your photographer to capture important details you may have spent months planning, such as your dress, shoes, rings, invitation suite, and personal heirlooms. These details help set the tone for your wedding gallery and create a beautiful, cohesive story from start to finish.

Beyond the images themselves, this portion of the day allows for a slower, more relaxed atmosphere, giving you time to ease into being photographed and feel comfortable before the big moment. When you look back at your wedding photos years from now, these images will remind you not only of how everything looked, but how it felt in those final moments before saying "I do."



Groom Getting Ready

The groom's getting ready moments are just as meaningful as the bride's. This time is often quieter and more grounded, allowing the anticipation of the day to build naturally.

From putting on a suit or tuxedo to tying a tie or fastening cufflinks, these small moments capture character, style, and the calm before the celebration begins. Candid interactions with groomsmen, family, or close friends often provide some of the most relaxed and authentic images of the day.



Consider Lighting

Lighting is KEY, especially when I'm capturing indoor events. For your getting ready photos, be sure to think about how the lighting will affect your images. A dark hotel room is going to be harder to photograph in, so consider having big windows near your getting ready space.



have a clean
space

A clean, uncluttered space sets the tone for beautiful getting ready photos. Natural light, clear surfaces, and neutral surroundings allow the focus to stay on you and the moments unfolding. Before photography begins, take a few minutes to clear countertops, bedside tables, and floors of bags, food, water bottles, and extra clothing. Place personal items out of sight and gather anything you don't want photographed into one area.

A calm, intentional space not only photographs better, it helps the morning feel more relaxed and present.





First Looks

Both options are beautiful. The right choice depends on what matters most to you and how you want your day to feel.

No First Look

Why couples choose no first look

The ceremony reveal feels deeply traditional and emotional

You experience the anticipation of seeing each other walk down the aisle

A meaningful moment shared in front of loved ones

Things to consider

Portraits happen after the ceremony

Timelines can feel tighter, especially with limited daylight

Less flexibility if delays occur



First Look

Why couples choose a first look

It creates space for a quiet, emotional moment without an audience

Portraits are relaxed and unrushed earlier in the day

More time together on your wedding day

Less pressure immediately after the ceremony

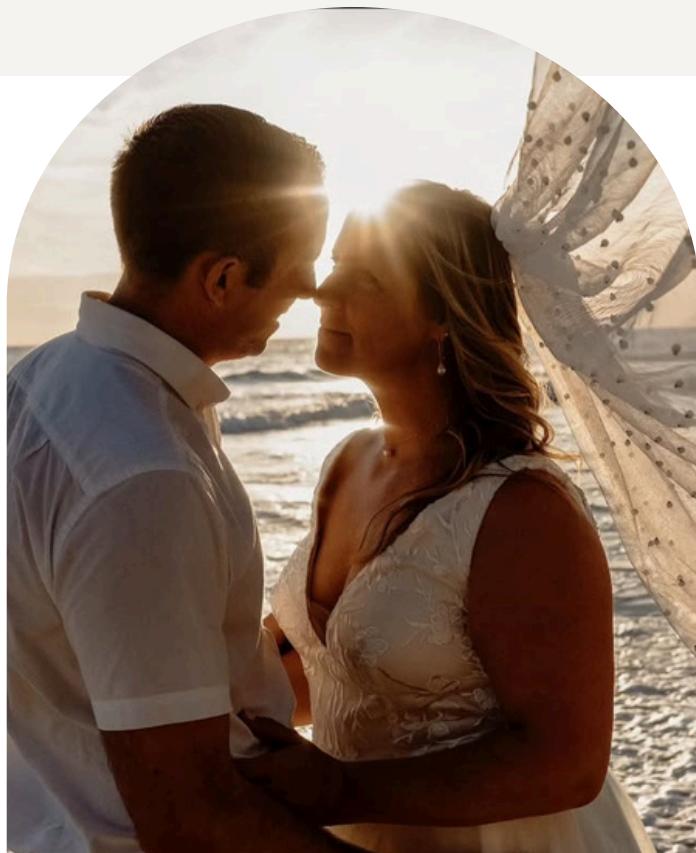
A smoother, more flexible timeline overall

Things to consider

You see each other before the ceremony

Requires planning earlier in the day

May shift some getting ready timelines earlier



Other first Looks

A first look doesn't have to be only between the bride and groom. There are so many meaningful "firsts" on your wedding day that are worth capturing in a private, intentional way.

Parent First Looks – Sharing a quiet moment with a parent before the ceremony can be deeply emotional and create some of the most memorable images of the day.

Sibling First Looks – If you have close siblings, seeing each other in your wedding attire for the first time can be a sweet and intimate experience.

Grandparent First Looks – These moments honor family and create lasting memories, capturing love across generations.

Wedding Party First Looks – For some couples, sharing a moment with their closest friends before the ceremony helps calm nerves, celebrate together, and get playful portraits early in the day.

These additional first looks allow you to connect privately, soak in emotion, and create images that tell the full story of your relationships. They also help your timeline flow more smoothly, giving us time for portraits without feeling rushed.



Couple's Portraits

One of my favorite moments of the entire wedding day is stepping away with the two of you after the ceremony to capture couple portraits during golden hour. This is usually the first quiet moment you'll have together as newlyweds and the nerves have settled, the ceremony has passed, and you can finally soak in the fact that you're married.







Wedding Party

Wedding party photos are an opportunity to capture the people who mean the most to you in a way that feels fun, relaxed, and authentic. These images celebrate friendships, family bonds, and the support system that surrounds you on your wedding day.

I approach these portraits with a balance of guidance and freedom. I will help organize poses and groupings efficiently, but I also encourage natural interaction, laughter, and movement. The goal is to reflect the personalities, energy, and connection of your wedding party rather than creating stiff, posed images.

Timing and location are key. We aim to capture these moments when light is flattering and energy is high, often before the ceremony or during a dedicated portrait session afterward. Keeping the session structured but flexible ensures that we get all the must-have shots without taking away from the flow of your day.

These photos become lasting memories of the people who celebrated with you, showcasing both individual personalities and the collective joy of your wedding party. By blending organization with spontaneity, we create images that feel editorial, emotional, and timeless.



Family Photos

Family photos are more than just a checklist on your wedding day. They are some of the most meaningful images you'll ever receive. These photos freeze a moment in time with the people who shaped you, raised you, supported you, and stood beside you long before this day arrived. Years from now, when life has changed and faces look different, these images become priceless reminders of love, legacy, and togetherness.

Family photos typically take place immediately following the ceremony. I'll have your family photo list ready during this time, and it's incredibly helpful to have someone who knows both sides of the family assist with calling out names and gathering people (this could be a sibling, maid of honor, or another trusted person).

If you prefer, family photos can also be done before the ceremony. If you choose this option, it's important that everyone is clearly informed of the time and location in advance so photos run smoothly.

If possible, I recommend asking your officiant to make a brief announcement after the ceremony, such as:

"Following the ceremony, the couple asks that all immediate family members please remain for family photos."

For anyone you'd like included in family photos, be sure to let them know ahead of time that they need to be present during this portion of the day and not wander off after the ceremony.

Ceremony



Your ceremony is the heart of your wedding day. It's the moment where everything becomes real. The quiet nerves, the deep breaths, the tears, the laughter, the promises you make to each other. This is the part of the day where you're fully present, surrounded by the people who love you most, committing your lives to one another. Long after the day has passed, your ceremony photos will bring you back to how it felt, not just how it looked.

Tips



- Take your time walking down the aisle. This is your moment. Slow steps allow you to soak it in and give space for beautiful, emotional photos.
- Hold hands during the ceremony when possible. It creates connection, calms nerves, and photographs beautifully.
- Be mindful of your officiant's positioning. Standing slightly off to the side helps keep your faces visible during key moments like vows and the first kiss.
- Share a private smile or deep breath together before the ceremony begins. It's grounding and often leads to the most genuine images.
- Practice your first kiss. A slow, natural kiss (not rushed) makes a big difference in how it photographs. You may want to ask your officiant to step to the side before pronouncing you as a couple. This way, they won't be in the background of your first kiss.

Unplugged Ceremony



An unplugged ceremony invites your guests to be fully present for one of the most meaningful moments of your day. With phones and cameras put away, the experience feels more intimate, emotional, and connected.

From a photography perspective, it also ensures clear views down the aisle, genuine reactions, and beautifully captured moments without distractions. If you choose an unplugged ceremony, be sure to let guests know ahead of time through signage, your wedding website, or a brief announcement from your officiant.

Reception

Your reception is where the celebration truly unfolds. This is the part of the day where nerves fade, laughter gets louder, and memories are made on the dance floor. Some of the most candid, joyful, and emotional moments happen here — the hugs, the speeches, the spontaneous dancing, and the quiet moments you share in between.

Scheduled events

Things to consider for your reception schedule are:

- entrances
- speeches
- toasts
- dinner
- first dances
- cake cutting
- bouquet toss
- dances
- sunset photos
- An exit



Reception Tips



- Consider being announced into your reception. It sets the tone and gets guests excited to celebrate with you.
- If you're doing speeches, keep them earlier in the evening while guests are seated and attentive. Short, heartfelt speeches photograph and feel the best.
- Plan a few minutes alone after your grand entrance or first dance to soak it all in together.
- Keep your dance floor close to the bar or main seating area. A full dance floor creates energy and amazing photos.
- Make sure your photographer eats while you eat. This keeps them energized and ensures smooth coverage throughout the evening.
- Trust your DJ or band to read the room and keep the momentum going.
- Schedule sunset or night portraits if timing allows — these often become favorite images from the day.
- Don't feel pressure to follow traditions that don't feel aligned. Your reception should reflect you.
- Most importantly, be present. Let go, dance, laugh, and enjoy every moment — that's when the magic happens.



Sunset photos capture more than just beautiful light. They capture emotion, connection, and the magic of your day. As the sun dips low, the warm, golden tones create a soft, romantic glow that flatters every moment and every detail.

This time of day also allows for intimacy and pause amid a busy wedding schedule. It's a moment just for the two of you, a chance to reflect on the vows you've exchanged, the love surrounding you, and the start of your new life together.

Sunset portraits often become some of the most treasured images from your wedding because they feel timeless. They're filled with genuine emotion, laughter, and quiet connection — memories that will bring you back to this exact moment every time you look at them.



Cursive

Tips for Sunset



- Plan ahead: Check your ceremony and reception timeline so we can capture sunset portraits at the perfect time
- Be flexible: Weather or timing may shift the exact moment, so leave a little wiggle room
- Take a few minutes alone: Sunset photos are a perfect time to step away from the crowd and enjoy a quiet, intimate moment together
- Trust your photographer: We'll guide you with poses and locations that look natural and romantic in the golden hour light
- Enjoy the moment: These photos are about connection and feeling, not perfection — laugh, hold hands, spin, or just breathe it in











Can't Wait!!

Thank you for trusting me to capture your special day. I'm so excited to create beautiful memories and be part of your love story!

Kiran Melwani

A romantic photograph of a couple on a beach at sunset. The woman, in a long, flowing white dress, stands behind the man, her arms wrapped around his neck as they kiss. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene and creating a silhouette effect. The ocean waves are visible in the background.

*It was never about the
dress or the flowers.*

**It was always
about this
moment.**