
A PRINTABLE FROM AESTHETIQUE

The 12-Month Wedding Timeline

*A clear month-by-month checklist for the bride
who wants to enjoy her engagement.*



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A note before you begin

Most timelines treat your wedding like a project to manage. This one assumes you'd rather enjoy your engagement. Use it as a guide, not a rulebook. Skip what doesn't apply. Move things around. Industries vary, families vary, and the right pace is the one that lets you sleep at night.

The point isn't to do everything — it's to do the right things at the right time, and rest in between. We've kept the lists short on purpose. If a month feels light, that's the gift. Take the walk. Have the long dinner. The wedding will keep.

When you're ready, begin where you are. Twelve months out is ideal; ten is plenty; six can absolutely work. Cross things off as you go.

— *The editors at Aesthetique*

12+ Months Out · The Foundation

- Have the budget conversation — with your partner first, then with anyone contributing. Agree on a working number before booking anything.
- Draft a guest list (rough is fine). The size shapes every other decision.
- Choose a season and a general date range, not a specific Saturday yet.
- Begin photographer and venue research — start a single folder of names you like.
- Insure the engagement ring. A small line on your homeowner's or renter's policy is usually enough.
- Tell close family and your wedding-party shortlist that you're planning, even if you don't ask them yet.

Nothing here needs to happen this week. The work is mostly conversational.

10–12 Months Out · Lock the Big Three

- Book the venue (ceremony and reception). Highest-demand vendors go first.
- Book the photographer.
- Book the officiant — religious, civil, or a friend getting ordained.
- Set your wedding party. Ask in person or by phone if you can.
- Confirm your final wedding date now that the venue is locked.
- Open a wedding-only checking account or sub-account, and route all deposits through it.

Once these four are in place, the rest of the year becomes much quieter.

8–10 Months Out · The Shape of the Day

- Begin dress shopping. Order lead times often run four to six months.
- Send save-the-dates, especially for a destination or holiday-weekend wedding.
- Book the florist.
- Book the caterer (or confirm in-house catering details).
- Book a planner or day-of coordinator if you're using one.
- Reserve hotel room blocks for out-of-town guests.
- Start the wedding website — keep it simple: date, location, travel, RSVP later.

Save-the-dates are mostly for guests booking flights. If everyone is local, you can wait.

6–8 Months Out · The Details Begin

- Design and order invitations. Allow four to six weeks for proofs and printing.
- Build the registry. Two stores plus one cash fund covers most needs.
- Choose ceremony music and processional/recessional songs.
- Book the hair and makeup trial.
- Schedule a cake or dessert tasting and book the baker.
- Book transportation for the wedding party, if needed.
- Begin shopping for wedding-party attire.

If a vendor pushes for a quick yes, you can almost always take a night to think.

4–6 Months Out · Send and Confirm

- Mail invitations — eight weeks before the wedding is the standard.
- Finalize the menu with your caterer, including dietary alternatives.
- Order wedding bands. Engraving adds two to three weeks.
- Confirm and book the honeymoon (or postponement, if you're delaying it).
- Order day-of stationery: programs, menus, place cards, signage.
- Buy or rent the groom's and groomsmen's attire.
- Begin writing thank-you notes for engagement and shower gifts as they arrive.

Mailing invitations is the moment the wedding stops being abstract. That's normal.

2–4 Months Out · Fittings and Fine-Tuning

- Begin dress fittings — typically two to three appointments.
- Research your marriage license requirements (waiting periods vary by state and country).
- Schedule final walkthroughs with the venue and key vendors.
- Begin a first draft of vows, even if it's just a list of things you want to say.
- Start the seating chart in pencil.
- Confirm rehearsal dinner location and guest list.
- Choose readings and confirm readers for the ceremony.

Vows are easier to write in fragments over weeks than in one long sitting.

1-2 Months Out · Bring It Together

- Final dress fitting.
- Follow up on missing RSVPs — a kind text is fine.
- Finalize the seating chart.
- Write your vows.
- Confirm the timeline with every vendor in writing.
- Hair and makeup trial, if you haven't done it yet.
- Order breakfast and lunch for the getting-ready morning.
- Confirm the rehearsal-dinner headcount.

If you can, take one full weekend off from wedding tasks this month.

2-4 Weeks Before · The Practical Errands

- Apply for your marriage license.
- Give the caterer and venue a final headcount.
- Pick up the dress and steam it (or have it steamed).
- Pack an overnight bag for the wedding night and the morning after.
- Write thank-you notes for the wedding party.
- Confirm payment amounts and gratuities for vendors; put cash in labeled envelopes.
- Break in your shoes around the house for an hour or two.

Do the marriage license early in this window. Lines and waiting periods are real.

The Week Of · Slow Down

- Sleep. Hydrate. Eat normally.
- Don't try new skincare, treatments, or workouts.
- Drop off welcome bags at the hotel.
- Pack for the honeymoon if you're leaving soon after.
- Pick up the rings; confirm the best person has them for the rehearsal.
- Host or attend the rehearsal dinner.
- Set out everything you'll need for the morning before bed.

Almost everything that goes wrong this week is fixable. Almost nothing is worth losing sleep over.

The Day Before · Rehearsal

- Walk through the ceremony with your officiant and wedding party.
- Eat a real meal. Not just appetizers.
- Hand the rings to the best person.
- Confirm wake-up times with anyone getting ready with you.
- Charge your phone. Set out chargers for the morning.
- Get to bed early — even if you don't sleep, the rest helps.

If something is unfinished tonight, it almost certainly does not need finishing.

The Day Of

- Wake gently.
- Eat breakfast.
- Drink water.
- Breathe.
- Marry the person.

Everything else has been handled, or it doesn't matter today.

A final note

If you've made it this far, you already have what most timelines can't give you: a sense of pace. The rest is mostly showing up — to the fittings, to the dinners, to the long Sundays where nothing about the wedding gets done.

If this was useful, you'll feel at home with The Aesthetique Edit — our bi-weekly Sunday newsletter. We send it every other Sunday. Read past issues at aesthetique.style.

We're also putting together the full Aesthetique Wedding Planner — a longer, sturdier version of this checklist with worksheets, vendor questions, and a budget tracker. It's coming later this year.

The Aesthetique Edit

A bi-weekly Sunday newsletter on quiet style, slow living, and the things worth keeping.

Read past issues · aesthetique.style

— *With care, the editors at Aesthetique*