

*easy* weddings

# Planning Guide

Everything you need to know about your wedding budget, suppliers, and planning your wedding.

# Congratulations

Before we dive in, congratulations on your engagement! We're truly looking forward to helping you plan your wedding.

If you're thinking now would be a good time to reach for a new bottle of your favourite bubbly, we couldn't agree with you more.

We just need to clear some things up quickly and fill you in on what wedding planning is really like. You've probably already had a dozen people tell you how much \*fun\* planning a wedding is; how much you're going to \*love\* picking out clothes and flowers and all the other details.

While some people do truly enjoy wedding planning (like us!), it's not all roses and champagne. At times, it can be downright annoying with all the spreadsheets, decision making, and constant communication not just with guests but also with suppliers.

The good news? **We're here to help.**

Our Wedding Experts designed this guide to help you DIY plan your wedding. If you'd like help selecting your dream venue or your supplier team, we're here to help.

Our Wedding Concierge is available to build a personalised plan for your wedding. We'll save you time, money, and so much stress! And at the same time, you'll get the best thing you can imagine — your dream wedding day, brought to life in the easiest way possible.

**Need help planning your wedding? Our custom wedding packages are easy & include a wedding expert you'll love.**

Free Consult



# Contents



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# Your Wedding Budget

Everyone's favourite topic

Not a single couple has ever been excited about the topic of their wedding budget, no matter how much money they have available to spend. It's about as un-fun a topic as any, and yet, it's also the most valuable (pun intended) conversation you can have at the start of planning your wedding.

There are a gazillion reasons that putting together a wedding budget feels like a monumental task, not the least of which is that most couples have never planned a wedding before. Also, hosting 100+ guests over many hours of eating and drinking sounds like the kind of costly endeavour that requires a cringe-worthy spreadsheet.

It doesn't have to feel impossible. We've gathered all the data you need to make a plan that works for you. To ensure your wedding budget isn't one of the wedding elements you feel most stressed about, we need to be realistic.

Whatever your financial situation, you'll likely have a few conversations to tick off your budget planning list before you dive into the numbers.

For some couples, it's a matter of what's the most realistic expense based on their collective income, keeping in mind that they may be simultaneously saving for other major life expenses like a home. For others, who have family members contributing to their wedding fund, this step may require a series of conversations to sort out how much money is realistically going to make its way into the pot.

Here's the thing. Whatever the total number you're working with, you'll start by dividing it up into categories. This will allow you to easily prioritise every element of your wedding festivities and make smart decisions about how you spend your budget throughout the planning process.

Many couples find it helpful to know what the norm is for each budget category. This is where we come in handy. Remember when we said we didn't like secrets? We've done the research — and continue to do it, year after year — and we're going to share this info with you.

## HOW TO RANK YOUR PRIORITIES

After the champagne toasts have fizzled and the celebratory news of your engagement has settled, it's time to explore your wedding priorities as a couple.

We'll start with a musts vs. wants list.

### 📌 **Musts:**

All the wedding elements you find most important.

### ✅ **Wants:**

All the wedding elements that aren't a necessity but would be nice to have.

Once you've decided what you'd like to include, assign each category a level of importance.

For some couples, food and cocktails are the absolute most important consideration on their list. For others, it's all about how good the event looks, and style is the top priority. Some couples place photography at the top of their list. You do you.

Prioritising your list is the one task no one else can do for you. It really comes down to what \*you\* value in your wedding experience. And by you, we don't mean your distant Aunty Betsy's must-have advice or even what your parents want. This part is about you as a couple.

Your wedding priorities list is designed to help you stay true to your vision as you navigate each decision throughout the planning process.

We encourage you to take your time with this step, as it's the start of the most important conversations you'll have as a couple about your wedding vision.

# Avg costs of a wedding

Before you read any further and risk spilling your glass of bubbly, let's talk about the figures below.

Rather, we hope you'll use this to talk through what pricing works best for you and your wedding.

The information in this table represents two budget sets:

1. The average amount of money Australian couples actually spent on their wedding last year, based on data we've collected from thousands of couples across the country.
2. Estimated costs to go with the premium option for each supplier and element.

These numbers are here to guide you through your priorities list as you allot funding to each wedding expense category. While you won't commit to an exact price until you have quotes in hand, going through these expenses in detail should help you determine your own budget allocation.

For more budget insights, check out these articles:

[easyweddings.com.au/articles/common-wedding-budget-oversights/](https://easyweddings.com.au/articles/common-wedding-budget-oversights/)

[easyweddings.com.au/articles/how-to-discuss-wedding-budget/](https://easyweddings.com.au/articles/how-to-discuss-wedding-budget/)

This is by no means a minimum spending guideline.



## Ceremony Venue

For a ceremony, you can expect to pay for an outdoor permit (appx. \$800) or venue hire fee (appx. \$1,500). Typically, this covers the booking of the space and sometimes includes furniture. This number will vary based on the location and the venue. Some places waive this fee with a minimum spend, others may inflate it.

Photo: Riverstone Estate

\$800 - \$1500  
Avg Cost

\$1500 - \$3500  
Premium Cost



## Reception Venue

This is likely to be the biggest number in your budget. Venue pricing may include:

Hire of the space; staffing; food & drinks; cutlery, crockery, & glassware; linen; cleaning; and AV equipment.

\*This price is based on 100 guests for a sit-down style wedding (approx. \$160 per head)  
\*\*This price is based on 100 guests for a cocktail style wedding (approx. \$140 per head)

Photo: Sandalford Wines

\$14000\*\* - \$16000\*  
Avg Cost

\$30000  
Premium Cost



## Celebrant

When searching for your marriage celebrant, we suggest meeting them face-to-face. Many couples choose their celebrant based on their personality, calmness, and good humour. You can expect rates of \$600-1,000 though busy times of year may be more expensive.

Photo: Carla Davern

\$800  
Avg Cost

\$1500  
Premium Cost



## Planning Services

A full-service wedding planner can spend up to 300 hours planning your wedding and will charge higher rates (\$10k+), while partial planning services are more common (in the \$3-5k range).

Photo: Vanessa Rossini Events

\$3000  
Avg Cost

\$8000  
Premium Cost



## Photographer

On average, photographers spend 8 hours on the day with you plus additional hours scouting photo locations and editing photos. When looking at photography quotes, look at the quality of photos to ensure that this meets your standards and style. One of the biggest wedding regrets we hear from couples is not investing properly in their photography.

Photo: Veri Photography

\$3500  
Avg Cost

\$5000  
Premium Cost



## Videographer

Video is often slightly more affordable than photography, but only slightly. Again, there's the time spent filming plus a lot of time spent editing.

Photo: Lavan Photography & Videography

\$800  
Avg Cost

\$1500  
Premium Cost



## Couples' Outfits

Attire costs can range depending on what your style is and what brands you buy, but the average expenses fall around \$1,500 for groom attire, \$2,600 for bridal attire, \$700 for accessories.

Photo: Luv Bridal & Formal - Designer Direct

\$4800  
Avg Cost      \$8000  
Premium Cost



## Hair & Makeup

Many brides choose to have hair and makeup for themselves plus a couple of other key people. Usually, the bride is a higher price than the others, as a stylist will spend the most time with the bride.

\*Bride +3 others

Photo: Tahlia Tropeano Makeup Artistry

\$800\*  
Avg Cost      \$1600  
Premium Cost



## Bridal Party Outfits

A dress, suit or suit hire priced under \$200 each is considered reasonable for the wedding party to pay. An item between \$200 and \$500 should generally begin a conversation over splitting the bill. If the couple has chosen formalwear that costs more than \$500 each they should offer to pay for it

Photo: Ferrari Formalwear & Bridal

\$800  
Avg Cost      \$2000  
Premium Cost



## Wedding Hire

Many venues come with some furniture (tables and chairs) included. Dry hire venues do not include any furniture and you'll need to bring in the basics. In addition to the items, pricing may include preparation of the hire items, loading for transport, set up on the day (as per your instructions), pack down on the day, unloading from transport and staffing.

Photo: Black Label Events

\$3500  
Avg Cost      \$5000  
Premium Cost



## Marquee

Pricing for marquees range depending on size, type, location, availability, and a variety of styling options. Flooring, lighting, side walls, drapery, short installation timelines, and more can affect this cost.

Photo: Marquee Monkeys Event Hire

\$10000  
Avg Cost      \$20000  
Premium Cost



## Bomboniere

We generally budget about \$5/guest on the conservative side. Of course, that number can vary greatly depending on your taste. A nice bottle of wine from your wedding venue's vineyard might cost something like \$25/guest.

\* Based on \$5/guest for 100 guests. \*\* Based on \$25/guest for 100 guest

Photo: Mindful Moments Candles

\$500  
Avg Cost      \$2500  
Premium Cost



## Wedding Cake

Cake pricing ranges across the board, especially depending on location, but many couples report spending between \$5-10 per slice on cake for 75-125 guests

Photo: Dragonfly Cakes

\$550  
Avg Cost      \$800+  
Premium Cost



## Transport

Transportation costs really vary based on location, but the average cost couples reported using transport for the wedding party only. The premium option includes transport for guests.

Photo: HF Wedding & Hire Cars

\$1300  
Avg Cost      \$4000  
Premium Cost



## Stationery

Save-the-dates, invitations, ceremony programs, and thank you notes can all be done through a professional stationer, or you might opt to just have a few pieces mailed and some sent digitally based on your budget.

\*60 invitations & save-the-dates

Photo: Lala Design

\$1000\*  
Avg Cost      \$2000+  
Premium Cost



## Ceremony Music

For a ceremony, you can expect to pay for an outdoor permit (appx. \$800) or venue hire fee (appx. \$1,500). Typically, this covers the booking of the space and sometimes includes furniture. This number will vary based on the location and the venue. Some places waive this fee with a minimum spend, others may inflate it.

Photo: Riverstone Estate

\$680  
Avg Cost      \$1500  
Premium Cost



## Reception Music

Hiring a DJ is typically the lower cost option for reception music. Many couples do a combination of some live music during part of the reception followed by DJ for dancing. Pricing may or may not include lighting and sound systems.

Photo: Hey Jack

\$1800  
Avg Cost      \$3500  
Premium Cost



## Florals

Flowers range widely in pricing. If you want orchids, peonies, and hydrangeas, expect a more expensive floral quote. In addition to flowers, pricing may include labour, materials and transport.

Photo: Thrive Flowers & Events

\$1600  
Avg Cost      \$5000  
Premium Cost



## Additional Decorations

This could include custom elements, lighting, drapery, arbours, and more.

Photo: Two Tribes Events

\$1600  
Avg Cost      \$3000+  
Premium Cost



## Photo Booth

Most couples hire a photo booth for only a portion of the reception, so you can usually factor in about 4-6 hours of hire here, which is what the average reflects. Additional customisation and prop hire can drive the cost into higher end pricing.

Photo: Memorable Photo Booths

\$1500  
Avg Cost      \$3500  
Premium Cost



## Wedding Rings

Some couples don't consider this part of their wedding budget, but it's up to you whether to include it in your budget planning.

Photo: Michael Hill Jeweller

\$1500  
Avg Cost      \$3500+  
Premium Cost



## Accommodation

At the very least, you'll probably want to book a room somewhere special for the two of you on your wedding night. At the most, you might cover accommodation for a few key guests.

Photo: InterContinental Sanctuary Cove Resort

\$1000  
Avg Cost      \$3000  
Premium Cost

Yes, some of these numbers are truly shocking when you see them for the first time, especially if you're not used to big-ticket purchases. Yes, some of these numbers may be out of your comfort zone. No, you don't have to decide right this second how you're going to allocate your wedding funds.

In looking to cut costs, one of the things many couples instantly want to negotiate is labour costs. Unfortunately, there's usually not much wiggle room there, as these costs might cover things like staffing, distance travelled, time required, prep time, loading access restrictions, and more.

So, when it comes to cost cutting, we usually recommend going back to the priorities list and trimming your plans based on what's most important to you.

Starting to feel overwhelmed? Our Wedding Experts can help by giving you personalised recommendations that fit your style and budget.



# Selecting your wedding date

A common mistake we see couples make is choosing a wedding date before their budget is set. What you may not realise is that your wedding date makes a difference to your budget. Why?

The reasons are twofold:

1. A longer engagement gives you more time to save for your wedding.
2. Saturdays during peak season are always going to be the most expensive dates not just for your venue, but for many of your suppliers too.

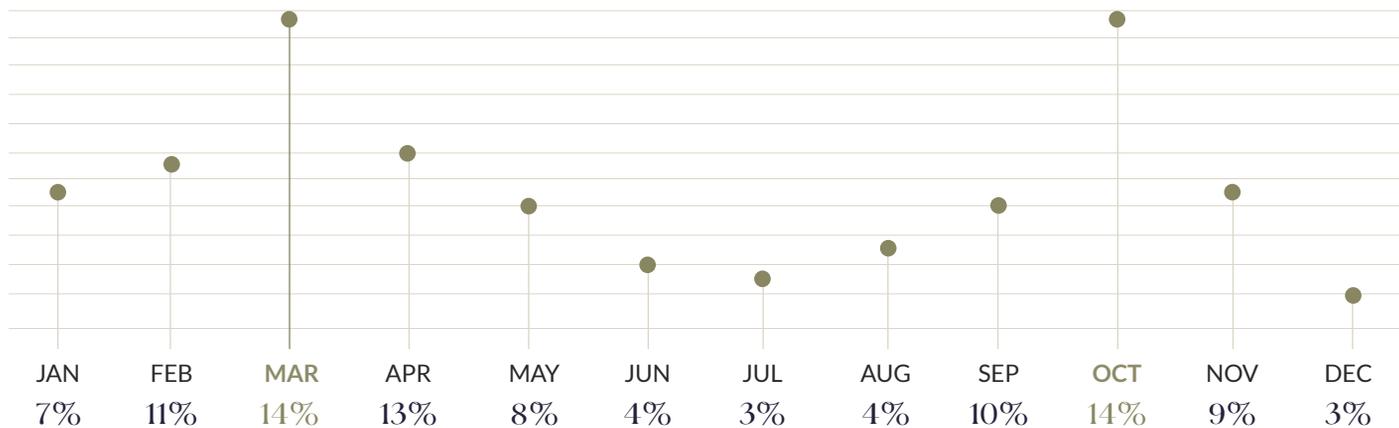
We recommend booking your venue and suppliers 12 to 18 months in advance of your wedding date if you'd like to host your wedding during peak season. In the cooler, less busy months, venues and suppliers are likely to have more availability, so 6 to 12 months of wedding planning time should be enough.

If you're after a short engagement, you can definitely lock in a venue and suppliers in less time. You may end up compromising on the date or day of the week given the shorter notice, but it's simply a matter of working with what's available.

Before you get attached to a specific wedding date, it might be worth having a few options in mind so you can be flexible about the day when scouting venues. Before you write off the idea of a non-Saturday wedding, it might be worth asking your venue to quote other days for comparison's sake.

Weekday weddings are becoming more and more popular every year, and we're loving this trend. Think about this way: Years from now, everyone will remember your wedding, but what they won't remember is the day of the week it was on. We encourage you to consider your options and select a day that works for you instead of worrying too much about outside influences.

## The most popular month of the year to get married



## The most popular day of the week to get married





# We're all about the *vibe*

Let's skip the obvious, which is that you want it to be fun and happy. You're going to reflect immense amounts of joy no matter what the details are like. Promise.

Instead, let's focus on the overall feel of the day. What view do you want to look out to while exchanging your wedding vows? Do you want to spend the night dancing outside under the stars? Or do you prefer to feel like you and your guests have a whole museum to yourselves for the evening?

When we start talking about the vibe of your wedding, there are three things we're considering: A comfortable timeline for a seamless guest experience, a design scheme that feels like your own slice of paradise, and that warm feeling you get when you walk into a room filled with all your favourite people.

We want your wedding to feel like you stumbled into some kind of room filled with magic. We also want your guests to bask in that warm, glowy feeling. That feeling is exactly why we plan weddings.

It's easy to get caught up in the inspiration gathering stage, pinning every photo that resonates with your style, but we encourage you to instead focus those efforts on the bigger picture of the overall experience.

## Timing Matters

Once your budget is set and date selected, we'd suggest drafting the timeline of your wedding day.

Your wedding flow should be a driving force for many of the decisions you make, as a comfortable, relaxed occasion is exactly the kind of wedding your guests will remember. A relaxed timeline doesn't imply a casual wedding; even the fanciest occasions should have a feeling of ease for your guests.

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Do you want to get ready for the wedding together or with your friends/family?
- How do you feel about sneaking in a moment together before the ceremony to take some photos and calm your nerves?
- Will your ceremony include any readings?
- Do you envision a seamless flow from your ceremony into your reception?
- After the ceremony, what would YOU like to do?
- How long do you need for photos? (hint: we usually schedule an hour for this)
- Is cocktail hour something you'd like to include in your day?
- Would you like to change outfits at any point during the festivities?
- Are you going to have a sit-down dinner or a cocktail style reception?
- Do you want to have a moment during the reception to yourselves to take it all in?
- Is cutting your wedding cake with everyone gathered around important to you?
- Will you include any forms of entertainment at your reception besides music?
- Will anyone give toasts?
- How do you want to end the night?
- Have you factored in any time to check in with your guests individually?

## Design your wedding day

If we were to sit down at happy hour with your friends and family, how would they describe you as a couple? We want your wedding to be a reflection of that.

Let's say your friends describe you as a couple that loves to go camping with friends, and is always up for a late-night pub crawl. That's the perfect recipe to host an outdoor wedding at a vineyard in the country and bring in a bell tent with a secret whisky bar or espresso martini cart for anyone who wants to escape the crowded dance floor.

Designing the aesthetic of your wedding day isn't just about selecting the perfect flowers for your bouquet; it's about creating an atmosphere that feels like your own. Some of the factors to consider are the setting, dress code, colour palette, music, lighting, floral decor, furniture, and catering.

Interested in more golden nuggets of inspiration and wisdom? Head to our [Real Weddings](#) for photo inspo and to see how other couples have used their wedding venues to create memorable weddings.



Not sure how we can help make selecting a venue easier than ever?

**CALL ABBEY - 1800 155 122**

## Real Wedding Inspiration →

### Bohemian Bliss

ANNA & KRIS



### Luxe Coastal Feels

MADDI & DAN



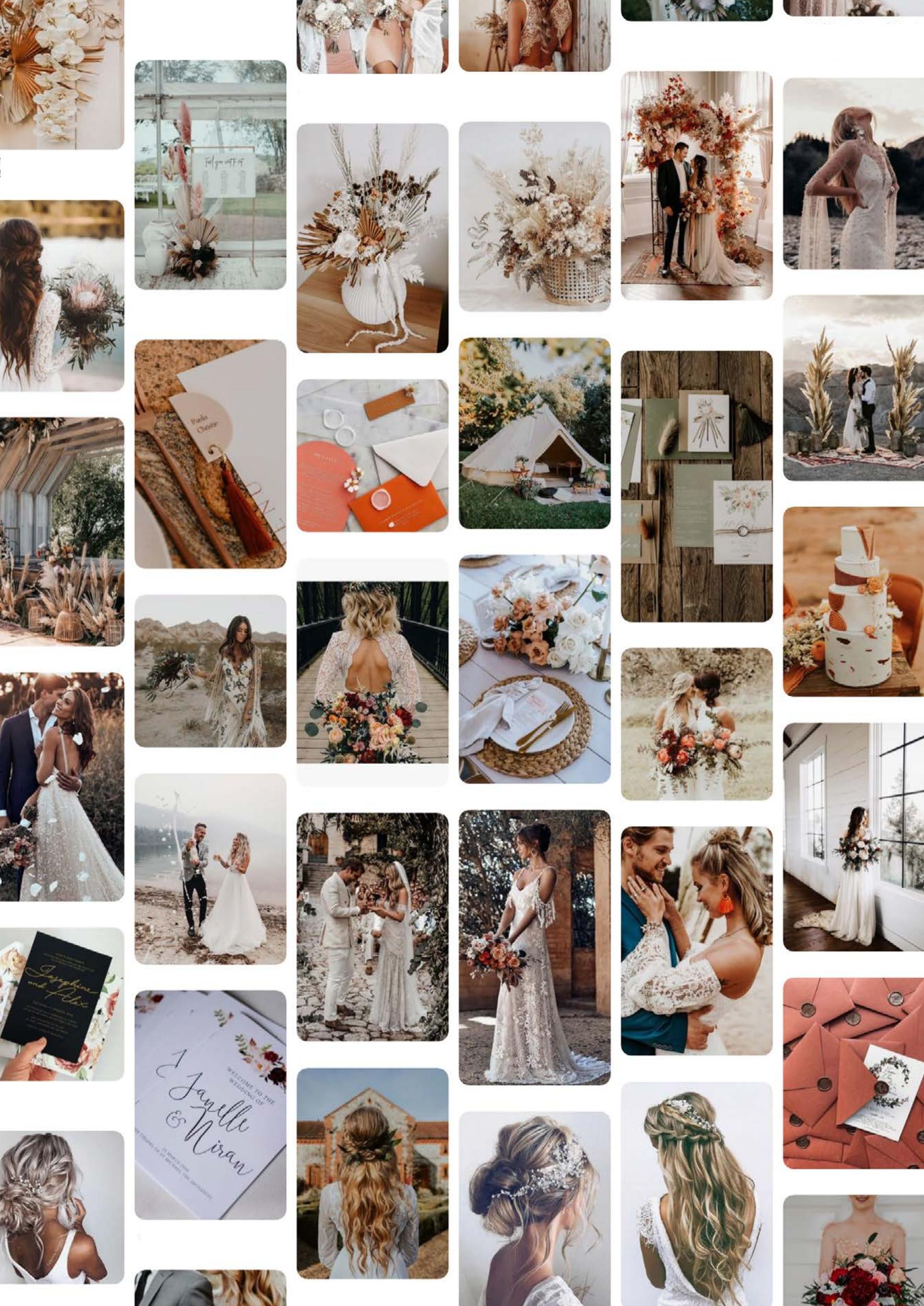
### Vintage Wedding

ASHLEIGH & NATHAN

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Even if you're on a budget, you can still incorporate thoughtful design elements into your wedding day. Here are some ideas that don't cost anything extra:

- Use playful wording in your invitations and other guest communications
- Choose a venue that feels like someplace you'd actually hangout in your free time
- Prioritise your sense of humour in your wedding ceremony
- Pay attention to the lighting scheme at your venue and use it to create warmth in the space
- Incorporate small surprises for your guests (this can be something as simple as giving your specialty cocktail a silly name)
- Encourage your guests to mingle
- Get the music right for all parts of the day
- Add a special treat to the turndown service for guests staying at a hotel
- Plan a fun send-off for the nights' end
- Send a message to your guests the morning of your wedding to set the mood
- Have family members greet your guests as they arrive
- Bring in lawn games for guests to play during canapé hour





# When to *book* your key suppliers

You don't want to book your suppliers so far in advance that you're not ready to start planning your wedding, but you also don't want to wait so long that their calendars are too full. The sweet spot is usually somewhere in the middle.

Generally speaking, we advise our couples to lock in their key vendors as soon as they've chosen a date and a venue. Without that important information in place, it'll be hard to lock in any suppliers.

Haven't selected a venue or suppliers yet? Let's talk about it first. This is a critical step in planning your wedding, and it's the step we're fully equipped to handle for you if you use our wedding packages.

Most suppliers take bookings up to two years out. Here are the time frames we recommend for booking your wedding team. We can work within whatever timeframe works best for you



# Q & A

## Questions to ask your key suppliers when enquiring

Suppliers have many talents, but mind reading isn't one of them (unless of course you're hiring a psychic for your wedding). Let them know all your details upfront and ask the right questions from the start. In our experience, being organised is the best way to skip the endless email chains with suppliers.

Here's what they need to know from the very first point of contact:

- Your names
- Your wedding date or preferred dates
- Estimated guest count
- Location of your wedding and venue if chosen
- Your budget (including whether it's a flexible range)

As for what you need to know, here are the questions we recommend asking..



## Venue

- Is our preferred date available?
- Do you have a minimum spend or minimum guest numbers requirement?
- What is the maximum number of guests we can have?
- Do you have different package options for food and beverages?
- Can we have our ceremony onsite? If so, is there an additional cost?
- If our ceremony is outdoors, can we use one of the spaces as our wet weather plan?
- What time does our event have to conclude? Is this flexible?
- What's included in the venue hire fee?
- Are there any additional rules and/or costs we should know about?
- Can we bring in our own suppliers or do we have to hire from your list?
- When can we come in and see the space?



## Photographer & Videographer

- Is our preferred date available?
- Can you please provide us with your package options and pricing?
- What package would you recommend based on our location?
- Do you charge a travel fee?
- When can we expect our photos/video?



## Celebrant

- Is our preferred date available?
- Can you perform the type of ceremony we'd like? (include personalised details)
- Can you please provide us with your pricing?
- Does pricing include a PA system?
- Do you charge a travel fee?
- Can we have a wedding rehearsal?
- Can you help us with our vows?
- Can we see a sample ceremony script or speak with a previous client?



## Florals

- Is our preferred date available?
- Can you work within my budget?
- Do you travel to (venue name)?
- How does your process work?
- How involved are you with other design elements like furniture, linens, and lighting?



## Bridal Gown

- Do I need to make an appointment? If so, are there any costs?
- Do your dress prices include alterations?
- How many fittings do you recommend?
- How far in advance do I need to order?



## Musicians

- Is our preferred date available?
- Can you please provide us with your package options and pricing?
- Do you charge a travel fee?
- Are we able to see you play live before booking?
- Is your sound system included in pricing?



## Hair & Makeup

- Is our preferred date available?
- Can you please provide your package options and pricing?
- Do you charge a travel fee?
- Do you offer trials before the day? If so, what's the cost?
- How many stylists will we need for the number of bridesmaids?



## Caterer

- Is our preferred date available?
- Can you provide sample menus for us?
- Have you worked with (venue name) before? If not, are you comfortable working there?
- How does your process work?
- Will we be able to taste your food at any point before the wedding?
- Do you provide bar service as well as food? If not, can you recommend someone for this?
- Can you provide a sample budget so we can get an idea of your pricing?
- Do you think you can work within our budget of X for X people



## Wedding Planner

- Is our preferred date available?
- Can you work within my budget?
- Can you please provide your package options and pricing?
- How does your process work?
- How involved are you with design elements?
- How involved are you on the wedding day?
- What's not included in your fee



# How is wedding planning going to *affect* you?

We have no idea how you're going to feel about wedding planning. You might love it. You might think it's a laundry list of chores. You might find that you sit somewhere between enjoying it and feeling it's too consuming.

What we can tell you is that every couple has a different experience of the whole process. As wedding planners, we feel it's our job to give you realistic expectations. Planning a wedding takes time. It can also bring up a lot of emotions for many couples and their families.

The biggest challenge for most couples is finding a way to wade through many options quickly and make good decisions. This is where our Planning Team can really help you cut the time you spend on planning by more than half.

Want to take back your time? Let us coordinate everything for you. We know our venues and suppliers backwards and forwards, and we know exactly how to assemble the best team for your budget and style.

**Fun fact:** There are thousands of venues and suppliers vying for your business when you're planning a wedding. Thousands! Think about that. There will always be someone who's willing to work for less, so we like to remind couples that it's not about shopping for the bargain rate of the bunch; it's about assembling a team you know will knock your wedding out of the park because they're so good at what they do.

## Time is on your side. Isn't it? Hang on to your emotions

If you're planning your wedding over the span of more than eight months, time really is on your side. What's wrong with that? We'd love to say nothing, but too much time can be a detriment, especially if it allows you an excuse to avoid making decisions and sticking to your plans.

We want to work with you to use your time effectively. In our experience, we've found that these things are not an effective use of your valuable time:

- × Reaching out to suppliers and venues before you've set a budget, date, and guest list
- × 10+ venue enquiries
- × 5+ enquiries to each supplier category
- × Falling into a Pinterest/Instagram/inspiration hole
- × Stalling on making decisions
- × Asking too many people for their opinions
- × Changing your mind after decisions are made

No matter how much chill you pride yourself on having, planning a wedding is emotional. It can be simultaneously joyful, stressful, exhausting, and exhilarating.

That said, beware some of the major emotional triggers we see:

- Figuring out the budget and how to stick to it
- Culling your guest list while pleasing everyone who has a say in it
- Difficult family dynamics
- Everyone else's opinions
- Planning your seating chart
- Wishing certain people were more involved or less involved

Our best advice for riding the emotional wave is to know who your most dependable wedding advisors are, and stick to only relying on them to help troubleshoot your wedding. Interested in learning more about the rollercoaster of wedding planning emotions? [Read our article.](#)

Yes, planning a wedding can be emotional. Yes, planning a wedding can drive you crazy at times. Yes, we want to hold your hand through the process and make it feel less hectic and more enjoyable. Yes, we're one hundred percent certain it's all going to feel worth it when you get to the end of your wedding celebration and feel that sense of pure magic we told you about.

Let us make planning your wedding easy!

Schedule a time to speak with us and start planning your dream wedding.

Wishing you all the best and can't wait to hear from you soon!

*the wedding experts*

Take the quiz

Free Consult

