

YOUR WEDDING TIMELINE

How to plan the perfect timeline

Planning your wedding day timeline can seem like quite a daunting task at the start. You may have only been to a handful of weddings before and aren't sure how long things take so it can be tricky to start to create your own wedding day timeline.

Fortunately, I've been to a lot of weddings and I can help you with my advice on planning your UK wedding day timeline. Having a great wedding day timeline ensures your day has a good flow to it, there's no rushing around or any long lulls in the day where nobody knows what to do.

I strongly recommend having the wedding timeline written on a board somewhere around your venue so your guests know the plan.



YOUR WEDDING MORNING

Usually you'll be getting ready with your bridesmaids either in your home, a hotel or your venue's bridal suite.

If possible, try to avoid having too many people in the room - only your bridesmaids, photographer, make-up artist/hairdresser and maybe your mum should be in the room with you. Too many people can create a stressful environment and create a lot of clutter in your photographs.

As a photographer, I tend to arrive around 2 hours before your ceremony and the best thing for your photography is to have a clean and tidy room.

Aim for all of you to have hair and make-up finished (minus touch ups) 1 hour prior to when you want to leave to go to your ceremony. If anything runs over you have that time as a buffer.

It also allows for any gifts to be given and have final photographs taken before you all put on your dresses too!



YOUR CEREMONY

A traditional church ceremony in the UK can take anywhere between 45-90 minutes depending on how many hymns, readings or speeches your vicar does.

A civil ceremony takes around 30 minutes with readings or as short as 15 minutes without readings!

Personally, I think the best time for your wedding ceremony in the UK depends on the season you're marrying in as the sun sets at different times.

May/June/July/August - 2pm

March/April/September/October - 1:00pm

December/January/February - 12:00pm

This is to allow your wedding day to flow nicely from day to evening without having long periods of waiting or rushing to fit everything in.



CONFETTI

You walk out of your ceremony first and the likelihood is that your guests will want to stop in the entrance, say hello and congratulate you. If you have more than a handful of guests this can take up a lot of valuable time during your drinks reception.

Instead, I normally recommend leaving your ceremony and taking a walk together away from where your guests are exiting.

This is the perfect chance to have some time together to let your ceremony sink in whilst I gather your guests and organise everyone for the confetti shot.

You both can then emerge, enjoy your confetti aisle and be greeted and congratulated by your guests afterwards.

Then we can capture those wonderful candid moments of everyone congratulating you.



YOUR DRINKS RECEPTION

I recommend around 2 hours of reception time here. The majority of your photos happen within this time so it's important there's enough time to get them done - especially if you're having a winter wedding where it will be dark once you've finished eating.

If you are worried about your guests being bored or hungry in this time, provide canapés, a drinks station and consider having some entertainment. You could have garden games, live music or even a magician. Whilst this is happening, your guests are enjoying themselves and it gives some great opportunities to capture informal, candid photographs of your guests celebrating your day.

I typically let you mingle for half an hour or so to capture those candid moments I know you desperately want, before starting your formal group photographs. You'll have given me a list of your group photographs prior to the day and we also assign a member of your family or a friend to gather people to make the process quicker too.

I take your couple portraits at the end of your drinks reception. The venue will want to seat your guests for breakfast 15 mins before you're needed to join them. If take you away 30 mins before your wedding breakfast, your guests only miss you for 15 of those. It also means the venue grounds are clear for us to use for photos.



YOUR WEDDING BREAKFAST

If you're having a 3 course wedding breakfast for around 80 guests then allow around 2 hours for service. This will depend a little on how fast your servers are but it's a good ball park.

Traditionally, the speeches happen after you've eaten but more frequently we're seeing them happen before your food is served.

By having them before you eat, it means the tables are clean and tidy for your speeches photos, the speakers can enjoy their meal without nerves and most of the formalities are over before you eat so you can enjoy the table wine better!

The order they usually go in is: Father of the bride, Groom, and then Best man. But you can do your speeches in your own way and them spoken by anybody and in any order you want!



THE EVENING

The first dance is what opens the dance floor for the evening party to start so it's a great idea not to leave it too long after your evening guests have arrived. Once you've had your first dance, all your guests can let their hair down!

If you haven't yet cut your cake, it's a good idea to do this just before your first dance. That way, your venue can serve with your evening food whilst your dance floor is packed.

As well as dancing, your evening can be full of other entertainment too. I've seen magicians, casino games, dance-floor-limbo, a glow-in-the-dark face paint stand, photo booths and beer pong tournaments!

Sparklers are always lots of fun for autumn and winter weddings if your venue allows them. Some venues offer fireworks or a fire-pit to light up your evening too.

Tip - Be sure to check how many hours you have your photographer for and don't plan anything into your evening timeline after they've gone if you want professional photos of it.



EXAMPLE TIMELINE

To help you plan yours

11:00 - Photographer arrives
12:00 - Portraits & reveals
13:00 - Ceremony
13:30 - Confetti & candid
14:00 - Drinks reception & entertainment
14:30 - Formal group photographs
15:00 - Candid
15:30 - Couple portraits
15:45 - Guests to be seated for wedding breakfast
16:00 - Couple to enter breakfast room
16:15 - Speeches start
16:45 - Dinner is served
18:45 - Tea & Coffee
19:30 - Evening guests arrive
20:00 - Cake cutting and first dance
20:15 - Music & dancing
21:00 - Photographer leaves
23:00 - Last orders

HONEYDEW MOMENTS