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A careful consideration of a handful of variables specific to couples' weddings can help them craft timelines that make their big day go smoothly.

WEDDING PLANNING

Factors to consider when planning your wedding day timeline

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The notion that timing is everything is applicable in many situations, perhaps none more so than on a couple's wedding day.

Many couples spend months, if not years, planning their weddings in the hopes that all that hard work will ultimately result in a day they will cherish forever. The sheer volume of things to do on a wedding day can make couples feel overwhelmed.

Those feelings can be over-

come by emphasizing timing on the day of the wedding. Wedding day timelines will differ depending on variables that are unique to each couple's wedding, but the following are some factors to consider as couples organize the big day.

Venue(s)

The schedule couples adhere to on their wedding day will be greatly affected by their choice of venue. Does the venue have somewhere on premises for the couple and

their party to get ready? Are the ceremony and reception being held at the same venue?

Before creating a timeline, consider the location of the ceremony and reception venue(s) and the accommodations each provides. Getting to and from multiple facilities won't be an issue if couples choose a multipurpose venue where they can get ready, tie the knot and dance the night away all in one place.

Couples who will be moving from venue to venue throughout the day must

build the time it takes them and their party to get about into their timelines.

Wedding party

The size of the wedding party also bears consideration when planning a wedding day timeline. Large parties will require more time to get ready, and that should be factored into couples' timelines.

Large parties also may be harder to corral and transport from place to place, so couples should build some ex-

tra time into their timelines to account for that. Small wedding parties can be easier to manage, so couples with small parties may be able to begin their timelines a little later in the day than those with large wedding parties.

Weather

Weather is the most unpredictable variable couples need to plan for on their wedding days. As the wedding day approaches, couples can monitor the day's forecast and then make any necessary

changes to account for inclement weather.

Getting around in a rainstorm will likely take longer than moving about on a sunny day, so some minor tweaks to the timeline may be necessary if storms or another type of inclement weather is in the forecast.

Couples can access wedding day timeline templates on various websites. But it's important that couples remember that their weddings are unique, so online guidelines might not be realistic.



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WEDDINGS

How to give weddings a modern touch

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No two weddings are the same. Some couples go to great lengths to personalize their weddings, while others make a few minor tweaks to traditional components to make ceremonies and receptions more reflective of their style and the sentiments they hope to convey.

Embracing modern trends is one way couples have looked to set their weddings apart from traditional ceremonies.

There are no rules governing weddings, and that affords couples certain freedoms as they seek to incorporate a modern sensibility into the festivities.

For example, couples can modernize certain components of their weddings while remaining loyal to more traditional elements, or they can fully embrace a modern aesthetic. That choice of how modern to make a wedding is up to the cou-

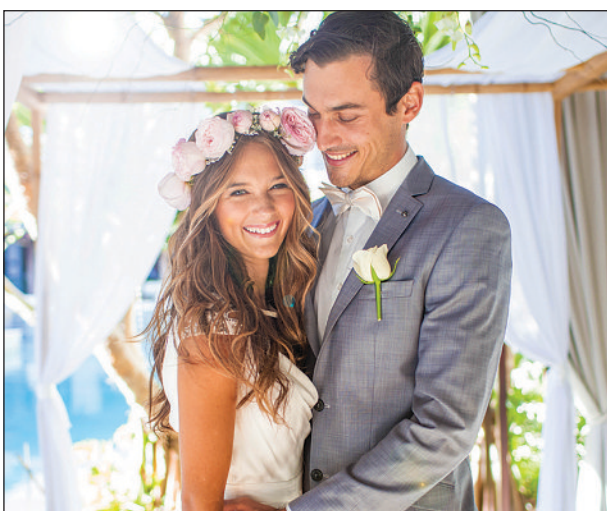
ple tying the knot, but the following are some ways to give weddings a modern touch.

Leave a small carbon footprint

Eco-conscious couples can embrace an environmentalist ethos when planning their weddings by doing everything they can to eliminate waste and promote conservation.

Send electronic invitations and save-the-date cards in lieu of paper alternatives and choose a reception venue that serves only locally sourced food and beverages.

In lieu of wedding favors, which tend to be individually wrapped, make a donation in guests' names to a local environmental group and share that information with loved ones. When picking a hotel for guests, find lodging that incorporates sustainability into its day-to-day operations.



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There's no shortage of ways for couples to give their weddings a modern touch.

Retire certain traditions

Couples need not feel pressured to incorporate traditions that no longer reflect modern sensibilities. It's up to couples to determine which traditions to retire, but customs like the garter toss

and bouquet toss may no longer resonate with modern couples or their guests.

In addition, brides who want to be walked down the aisle by both of their parents, as opposed to just their father, should not hesitate to do so.

Look for a modern venue

One of the most awe-inspiring ways to give a wedding a modern touch is to choose a venue that reflects a modern aesthetic.

Vaulted ceilings, white walls and floor-to-ceiling windows can create a clean, modern feel. Outdoor ceremonies also can create a modern ambiance.

Adjust your attire

Black tuxedos and white wedding dresses are among the first things to come to mind when imagining traditional weddings.

Couples can stay formal but embrace a more modern look by choosing more colorful tuxes for grooms and groomsmen and picking a wedding gown with a flair of color.

Brides also can allow bridesmaids to pick their own bridesmaid dresses to expand the modern look even further.

FLOWERS

How to find your wedding florist

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Weddings join the lives of two loving individuals so they can share their future with one another.

Various elements help make weddings both momentous and magical.

Some weddings adhere to themes that are designed to make an impression and showcase couples' personalities.

Floral arrangements are key components of wedding themes, as they help to establish ambiance at both the ceremony and reception.

Flowers can easily help couples achieve a desired vibe, whether that's rustic, romantic, modern or even whimsical.

Skilled florists may use a variety of flowers and foliage, as well as dramatic displays to help create the couple's wedding day vision.

According to an internal study from the wedding advice and planning resource The Knot, which surveyed more than 27,000 couples who got married in 2019, the average cost of wedding flowers was \$2,000 in 2019.

However, the cost of floral arrangements can vary depending on the scope of the arrangements and choice of flowers, including whether they're in season or not. It is essential for couples to spend time vetting potential florists to find one who will produce their desired vision at a price that fits their budget.

These guidelines can make the process go more smoothly.

Establish your theme early on

Floral arrangements will complement and enhance other elements of the wedding, including color scheme and the wedding theme.

If your wedding theme ties into a specific season, you will work with the florist to find blooms and other pieces that coordinate.

For example, winter weddings with white, ice blue and silver color schemes may coordinate with white ranunculus flowers, dahlias, dusty miller foliage and viburnum berries.

Bring swatches and photographs to consultations

It is easier to explain color palettes to a florist with examples in hand.

Show the florist the types of arrangements you prefer and have actual fabric swatches from bridesmaid gowns or groomsmen vests so that colors can be complemented.

Create a list of desired items

Florists may sell items a la carte or have packages of common floral pieces for wedding celebrations.

Types of floral arrangements include bridal bouquet, bridesmaids' bouquets, maid of honor bouquet, corsages for mothers/grandmothers, boutonnières for groomsmen and fathers/grandfathers, flower girl headpiece, petals to sprinkle, table centerpieces, altar arrangements, pew or chair decorations and cake decorations.

Go easy on aroma

Tread lightly when selecting blooms that have strong aromas. They may be beautiful, but many people are sensitive to smells.

Allergies also may be exacerbated by flowers with strong aromas. Discuss options with the florist before proceeding.

Explain your budget

Research the average cost of floral arrangements and let the florist know what you can afford.

This can help the florist narrow down options or make substitutions that fit your theme and your budget.



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CUTTING COSTS

Savings strategies for weddings

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The question was popped; the engagement ring presented.

What's the next step on the road to the wedding? Saving should definitely be on couples' minds.

A wedding is likely the most costly party couples will ever throw. According to The Knot's 2019 Real Weddings Study, the average cost of a wedding in 2019 was \$33,900.

There are many different costs associated with weddings. Some are predictable, while others are unexpected.

Investopedia says the vast majority of couples budget too little for their weddings and also end up spending more than they had planned.

Various strategies can make it easier to save for a wedding and avoid a post-

wedding financial hangover.

Get informed

It's impossible to budget for a wedding and ultimately save without knowledge of what services and items cost in the region where you live.

A wedding in New York City will be expensive, while a wedding in Mississippi will cost a lot less, indicates SuperMoney's guide to wedding costs.

Conduct some research and find out what photographers, florists, transportation providers, reception halls, and wedding wardrobe vendors charge for common services.

This will paint a vivid picture of what a wedding may cost in your area.

Flesh out the budget

Once you have gathered estimates, you can then fig-



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Saving for a wedding can be challenging. But various strategies can help couples plan their dream weddings without breaking the bank.

ure out a financial goal.

This also is when you can determine where to rein in spending and where you might want to splurge.

If having a video memory

of the wedding is not a top priority, you can skip videography services.

If you have a special flower that you like, you may want to budget more

for that bloom even if it isn't in season.

Set up a dedicated savings account

One of the easiest ways to save for big-ticket items like a wedding, home purchase or other financial goals is to use an automatic savings account that may be available through your bank or employer.

An automatic savings plan will pull a set amount from a personal checking account into a savings account through auto-draft.

The bride and groom can link individual checking accounts to one savings account to contribute jointly.

Avoid overspending

An analysis of your spending habits will likely reveal areas where you can scale back so you can devote more funds to wedding savings.

Do you need a takeout coffee in the morning or can you brew a pot at home? Might you be able to scale back on streaming services? Do you feel comfortable buying less expensive store brand groceries over name brands?

Small cost savings can quickly add up.

Add up gifts

Factor in deduction of expenses that other people will commit to covering for wedding expenses, but only if you have concrete confirmation.

A parent may host the rehearsal dinner. One's relative may offer to pass down an antique wedding gown to wear.

But rather than simply removing these gifts from your savings calculations, keep them as a safety net to put toward unforeseen expenses.

VENUES

Unique locations to host a wedding

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When tying the knot, couples continue to do so in familiar venues.

Houses of worship, hotels and country clubs remain wildly popular wedding venues.

Couples who want to stray from that norm often look for unique locations to say, "I do," and there's no shortage of special spots to do just that.

Rooftop venues

Few backdrops inspire the awe of city skylines, especially when couples wait to get hitched until night has fallen and buildings have lit up.

Rooftop restaurants and bars have undergone a resurgence in recent years,

and these facilities are tailor-made for city-dwelling couples who want an enviable backdrop for their nuptials.

Many such establishments are even affiliated with hotels, which can simplify wedding planning.

Museums

Couples who want their guests to take a stroll through history before they watch the happy couple stroll down the aisle can consider tying the knot at a local museum.

Many museums offer a variety of ceremony and reception options. The vaulted ceilings and airy quality of many art museums make them an ideal place to host large gath-

erings.

The unique decor of such facilities guarantees couples will get some awe-inspiring photos on their big day.

Vineyard/winery

Oenophiles will no doubt love the idea of getting hitched at a vineyard or winery, but even people without a taste for wine can appreciate such locales.

Sprawling fields and expansive skies make vineyards and wineries an ideal place to tie the knot, and guests will no doubt enjoy the unique surroundings.

Stadiums

Couples who first bonded over their love of

a particular sport and/or favorite team can incorporate that into their nuptials by getting married at a stadium.

Professional and collegiate teams typically offer wedding and reception packages, and guests may appreciate the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hang out on the field where their favorite athletes play.

Historic homes

Another go-to option for history buffs, historic homes and mansions can make for memorable places to get married.

Such homes tend to have a classic appeal, making them ideal for couples who want traditional weddings that call to mind the gran-



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A vineyard can provide an idyllic backdrop for a wedding.

diose ceremonies of bygone eras.

Couples have an endless array of options when looking for wedding ven-

ues. Some outside-the-box options can impress guests and make for memorable ceremonies and receptions.



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