



WEDDING PLANNING GUIDE



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PHOTOGRAPHY

Congratulations, you're engaged! WOOT!

Thank you for checking out this wedding planning guide that I created to try to help couples navigate the task of making their big day the best day of their lives.

I am here for you even if you don't hire me to capture your wedding, but I hope you do!

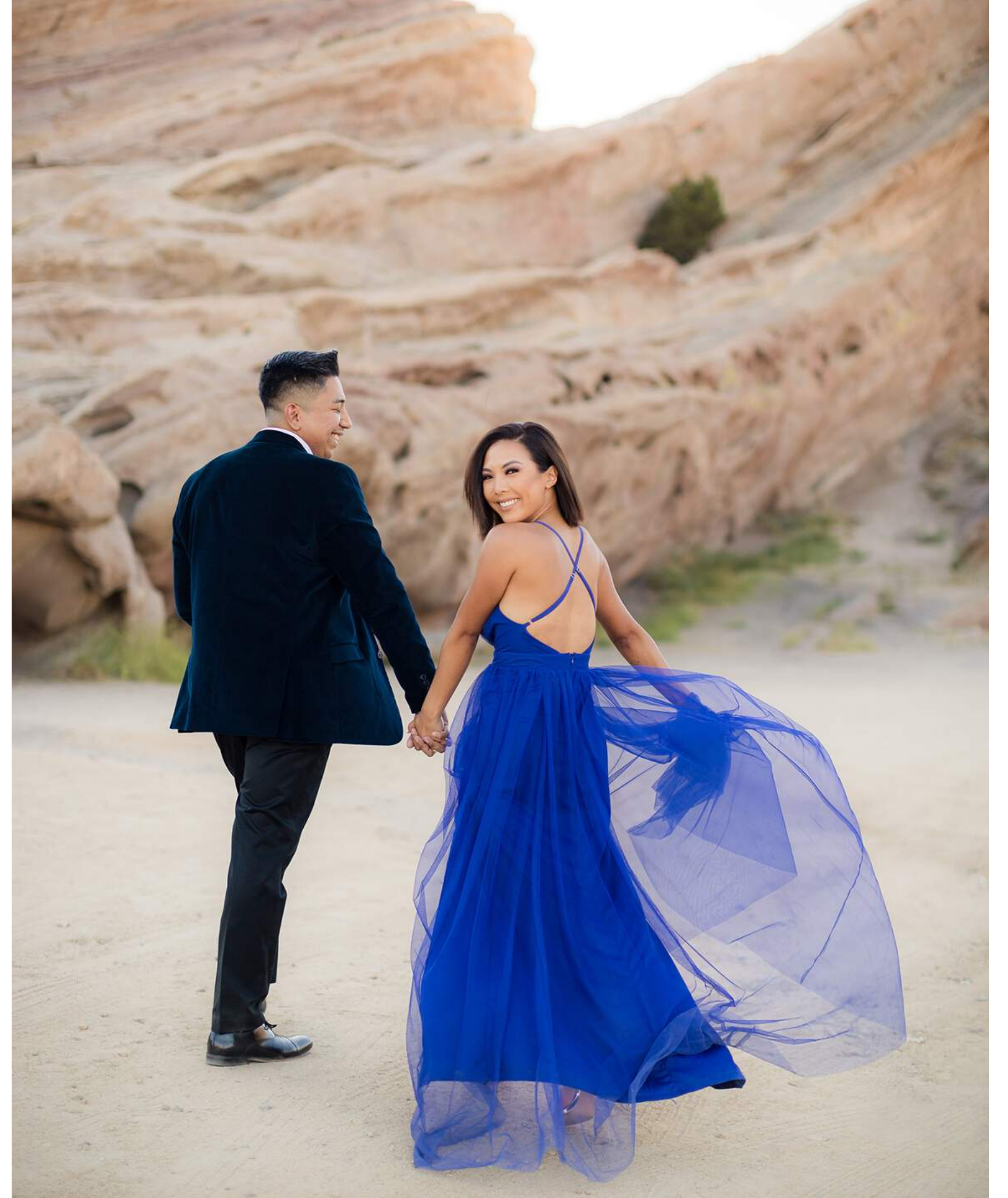
ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS

So you've locked your wedding date, venue, and you have a photographer booked. Now it's time to have some fun! I include an engagement session in all of my wedding collections not only because they're so much fun and to get pretty photos of my couples, but also to create working relationship with each other.

During your engagement session, you'll get the hang of getting photographed by a professional and learn what works and even more importantly, what doesn't work. So on your wedding day, we know exactly what you want. I kind of look at engagement sessions as a training day for my couples, lol!

Engagement sessions can be scheduled almost any time prior to your wedding date but I usually recommend you schedule your session about 4-6 months prior to your wedding date. While some weekends work, capturing engagement sessions on a weekday are usually ideal, especially if you're wanting to capture your session at a popular location. We want to minimize the amount of people around you guys as much as possible. Scheduling your sesh on a weekday definitely helps with that.

As time of day, that's almost always going to be at "golden hour" which is about 1-1.5 hours prior to sunset. This is how we capture all those golden tones!



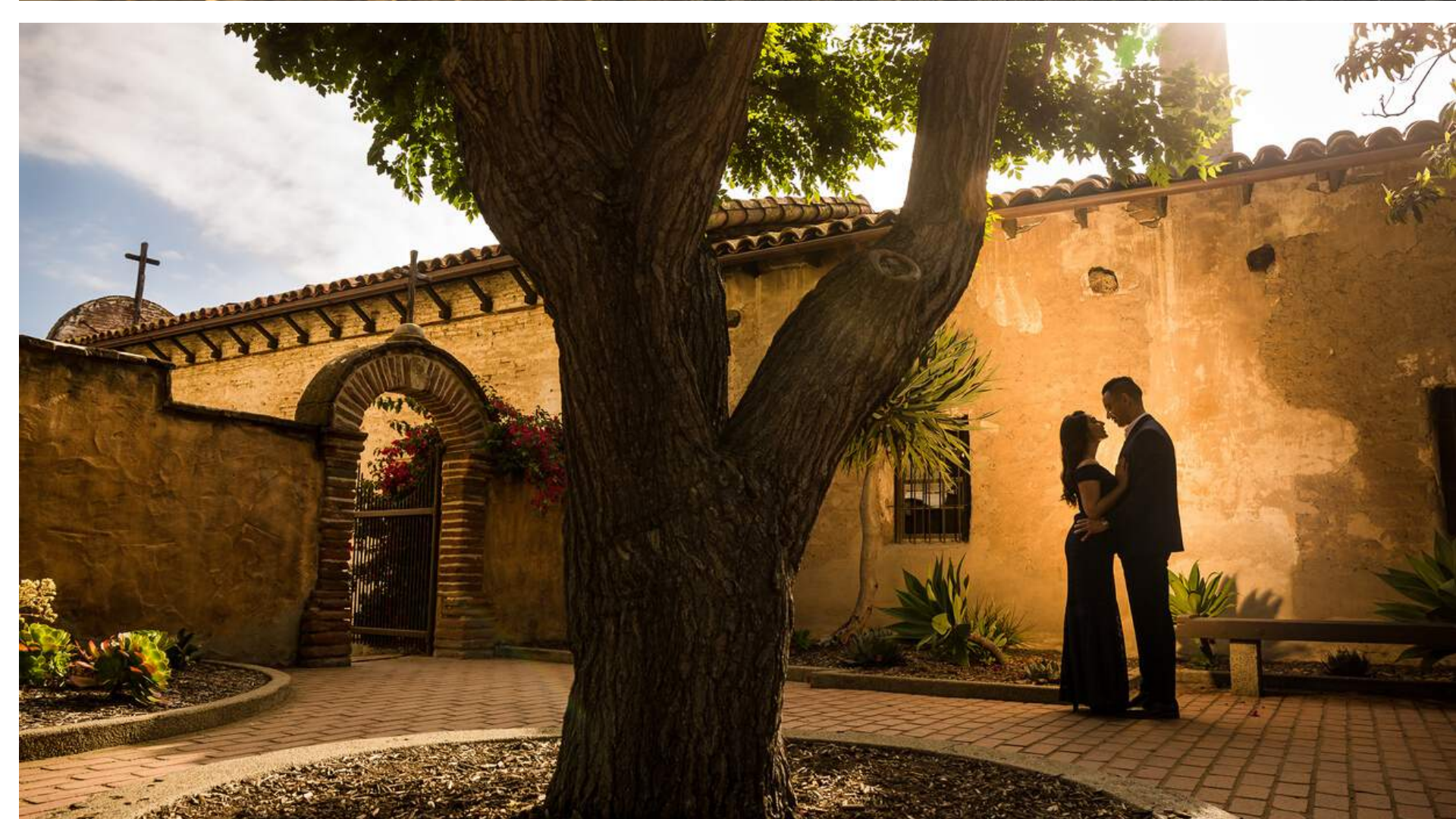
WHAT SHOULD I WEAR?

This is the #1 question asked by brides and while it doesn't seem like a simple answer, it really is. Just *do you!* Wear clothing you're comfortable with. Obviously don't dress as if you just got out of bed, dress up a bit but don't feel the need to dress to the nines if that isn't who you are. But having said that, if dressing up is your thing, then absolutely do that! Honestly, there's no wrong answer, just try not to over think it.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

As mentioned before, expect to meet up around 1.5 hours prior to sunset to take advantage of the best light of the day. Expect to have a blast, seriously! Engagement sessions are supposed to be fun. I've found that most couples are a bit nervous at the beginning but after a few minutes all those feelings go away. I usually tell my couples to plan on bouncing around their engagement session location being silly, romantic, and everything in between. We're basically hanging out and capturing some awesome photos!







**NOW LET'S
TALK ABOUT
YOUR
WEDDING!**

Ideal Wedding Photography Timeline

Odds are that you've received countless advice from friends, family, and even some other wedding professionals regarding your wedding timeline. One thing that I've found throughout the years is that each and every wedding is different & unique in its own way. However, I've also found that while every wedding is different, if we (emphasis on "WE") plan accordingly, the wedding day will run that much smoother if enough time is allotted for every important moment to be captured. Weddings can sometimes be stressful, so let's alleviate some of that stress by following some of the suggestions below.



Getting Ready

Suggested Time: 60-90 Minutes

I recommend scheduling at least an hour for the groom and about an hour and a half for the bride. This is usually plenty of time to capture all the fun candids, details, final makeup/hair, and time to get the dress or suit on.

For my brides, I always add a few extra minutes in the timeline to get in the dress, the last thing that you want to feel is rushed on your wedding day.





First Look

Suggested Time: 15-20 Minutes

The actual time needed for the first look isn't really 15-20 minutes, most of them are done within a 5, but I like scheduling a bit more time within the so we can capture some of the more formal portraits of the bride and groom.

Once those are captured, this will allow us to spend more time photographing the more romantic and/or artistic photos later in the day.

Ceremony & Detail

Suggested Time: 15- 20 Minutes

Shooting all the pre ceremony photos is usually done about 30 minutes before the start of the ceremony. This is the time that I usually schedule for ceremony detail shots to be captured. 20 minutes is plenty of time to capture your wedding ceremony setup (florals, programs, guestbooks, etc.)





Family Photos

Suggested Time: 20 Minutes

Family photos are some of the most important photos of the day. Whether they are captured before or after the ceremony, enough time should be scheduled in the timeline to allow for all of the family photos requested to be captured.



20 minutes is usually plenty of time to photograph every parent, sibling, grandparent, and every other combination in between.

Wedding Party

Suggested Time: 60-90 Minutes

Depending on the size of the wedding party, an hour or so should be enough time to capture these photos.

I usually photograph all the bride/bridesmaid photos and groom/groomsmen photos before the ceremony and then capture the larger full wedding party photos after the ceremony.





Couples Photos

Suggested Time: 60 Minutes

Whether you choose to have a first look or not, I almost always recommend scheduling at least an hour of time to capture the most important photos of the day, the ones of the newlyweds.

As mentioned before, the last thing you want to do is feel rushed, because believe me, it absolutely shows in photos. Having an hour of time to capture your wedding photos allows us to not only get some awesome photos, but it also gives you a time to take a breath.

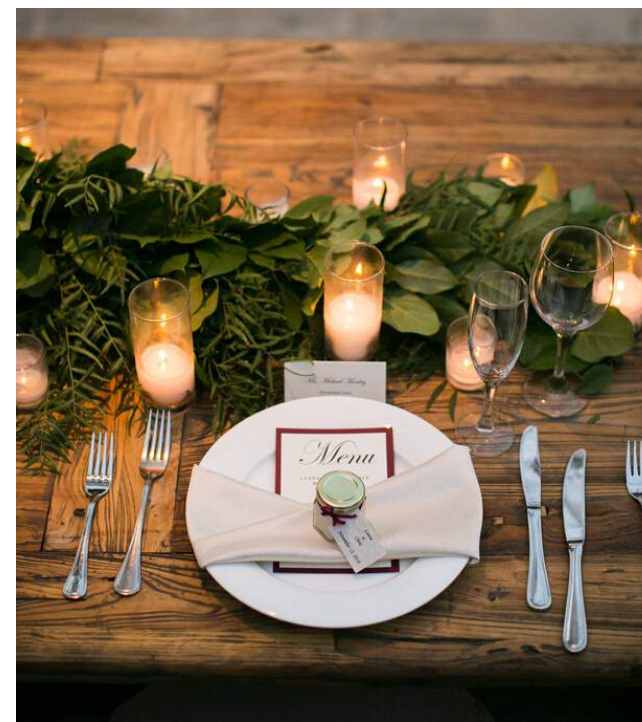


Reception Details

Suggested Time: 15 Minutes

Similarly to ceremony detail photos, about 15 minutes is needed to capture all the details of your wedding reception before guests are allowed to enter the area.

This time is usually scheduled right after the couples session is finished after the ceremony depending on when the reception area is completed.



Let's put it all together. Here are a couple sample timelines with and without a first look.

Photography Timeline with First Look

10:00 Groom Prep
10:30 Groom and Groomsmen Photos
11:00 Bride Prep
12:30 Bride Begins to get in Dress
1:00 Bride & Bridesmaid Photos
1:30 First Look + Bride and Groom Photos
2:00 Ceremony Setup Photos
2:30 Ceremony (60 minutes)
3:35 Family Photos
3:50 Wedding Party Photos
4:00 Bride & Groom Photos
4:20 Reception Detail Photos
4:35 Grand Entrance
4:40 First Dance
4:50 Parent Dances
5:00 Dinner/Toasts
6:00 The Party Starts!

Photography Timeline w/out First Look

10:30 Groom Prep
11:00 Groom and Groomsmen Photos
11:30 Bride Prep
1:00 Bride Begins to get in Dress
1:30 Bride & Bridesmaid Photos
2:00 Ceremony Setup Photos
2:30 Ceremony (60 minutes)
3:35 Family Photos
3:50 Wedding Party Photos
4:00 Bride & Groom Photos
4:20 Reception Detail Photos
4:35 Grand Entrance
4:40 First Dance
4:50 Parent Dances
5:00 Dinner/Toasts
6:00 The Party Starts!



Getting Ready Tips

- Make sure you keep all of your details in one place so that when it's time to photograph them, we're not running around searching for things.

-Large windows are your friends. The more the better! The last thing you want to do is get ready inside a dark room or even worse, a dark and small restroom. I want you to be in the best light possible, and being in a room with at least one large window will help.

-Make sure that your florals (bouquet & boutonnieres) are delivered to your room prior to getting into your dress and the groom getting into his suit/tux.

-This one should go without saying but try to keep the room relatively clean while getting ready. I know that can be a little difficult with makeup, hair, and a bunch of people in your room, but it does make for better photos if we don't have a lot of random stuff all over the place in the background.

-Try to refrain from putting any jewelry on prior to putting on your dress. Not only will your photographer want to take pictures of everything, but there are also photos to be captured of you putting them on after the dress.

-Write each other notes and/or give each other gifts to open after each other gets dressed. I like sitting my groom and bride down after they're in their wedding gear and have them read a note from the other and open a gift. It doesn't have to be something extravagant (or it can!), it's just a nice touch to remember what this day is all about.





Tips on Timing

I send a questionnaire out to all of my couples a couple months prior to their wedding. From the answers given, I create a suggested timeline for photos. Most photographers don't do this, so if yours doesn't, remember a few things when creating a timeline.

Always give yourself cushion time for almost EVERYTHING! No matter how well planned a wedding is, things always tend to not go totally as planned. That's not to say that your wedding is going to go off the rails, just plan accordingly so that if certain things do run late, you're still not rushing. The last thing you want to do on your wedding day is stress about being on time.

Lastly, if you are moving from one location to another (or several) on your wedding day. Plan a lot more time than you would think to get to point A to B. Just because Google Maps says it's only a 15 minute drive, doesn't mean that's going to be the case on your wedding day. I usually add at least 15 minutes to the travel time when moving locations. You should do the same.

THE
FIRST LOOK





WHAT IS A FIRST LOOK ANYWAY?

A First Look is when a bride & groom decide to schedule a time on their own (w/their photographer) to see each other before the bride walks down the aisle.

This usually happens about an hour or so before the ceremony away from family and friends. I've found that when a couple does a first look, it gives them an opportunity to really take the moment in and not worry about anything else going on other than this beautiful moment that they are sharing with each other.

As you can imagine, this gives me, the photographer, an awesome opportunity to capture that raw emotion that sometimes is lessened when others are around to witness it during the ceremony. Especially with my grooms, I've found that they let their emotional guard down a lot more if no one else is around. Quite a few let the water works go, and I know most brides love that!

Not sold on a first look? That's totally cool, too! Waiting to see each other at the ceremony is awesome as well.

But now you know, the First Look is an option!

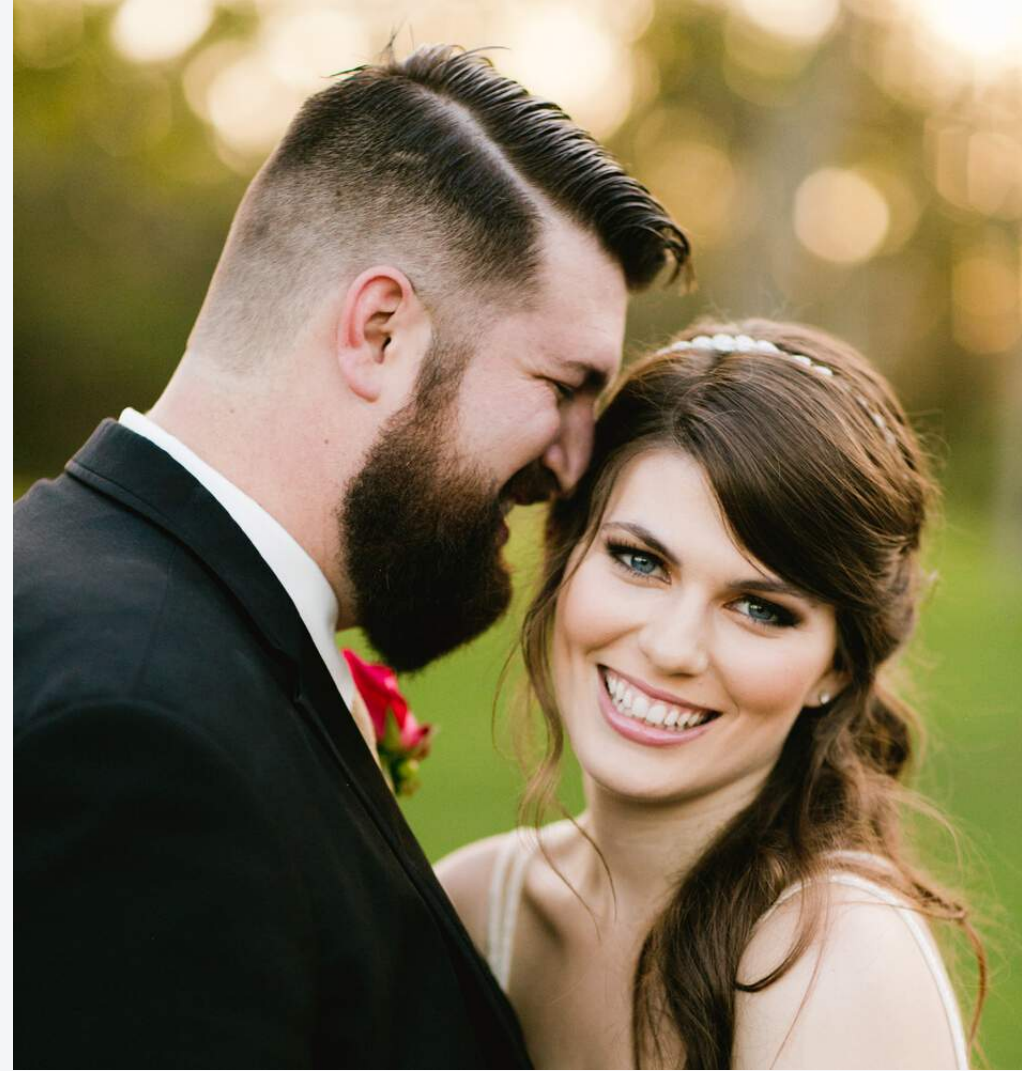
The Ceremony

It's finally here! This is what it's all about. You get to marry the love of your life in front of everyone that's important to you. Regardless of how your day has gone up until this point, this is the most important part. Don't ever lose sight of that. While details are important, those things don't matter much in the long run. Saying "I do" does. So enjoy this awesome day, whatever it looks like!

LOVE



ROMANTIC PORTRAITS



I'm going to be completely honest here and say that this is my favorite part of the day!

Not that getting ready photos, wedding party, family photos, etc. aren't important, they totally are. But, the romantic portraits you capture on your wedding day, to me and most of my couples, is what we look forward to the most.

It's a time to finally be alone on your wedding day. Because the rest of the time, you'll be surrounded by your guests. So it's a nice break from everything to just be you and capture some awesome portraits that you'll share for the rest of your lives.



NIGHT PHOTOS

During your reception, schedule about 15–20 minutes to sneak away so you can capture some more romantic photos at night.

Usually there's plenty of downtime as your friends & family are enjoying the party and doing the electric slide where they won't notice you stepped out for a few.



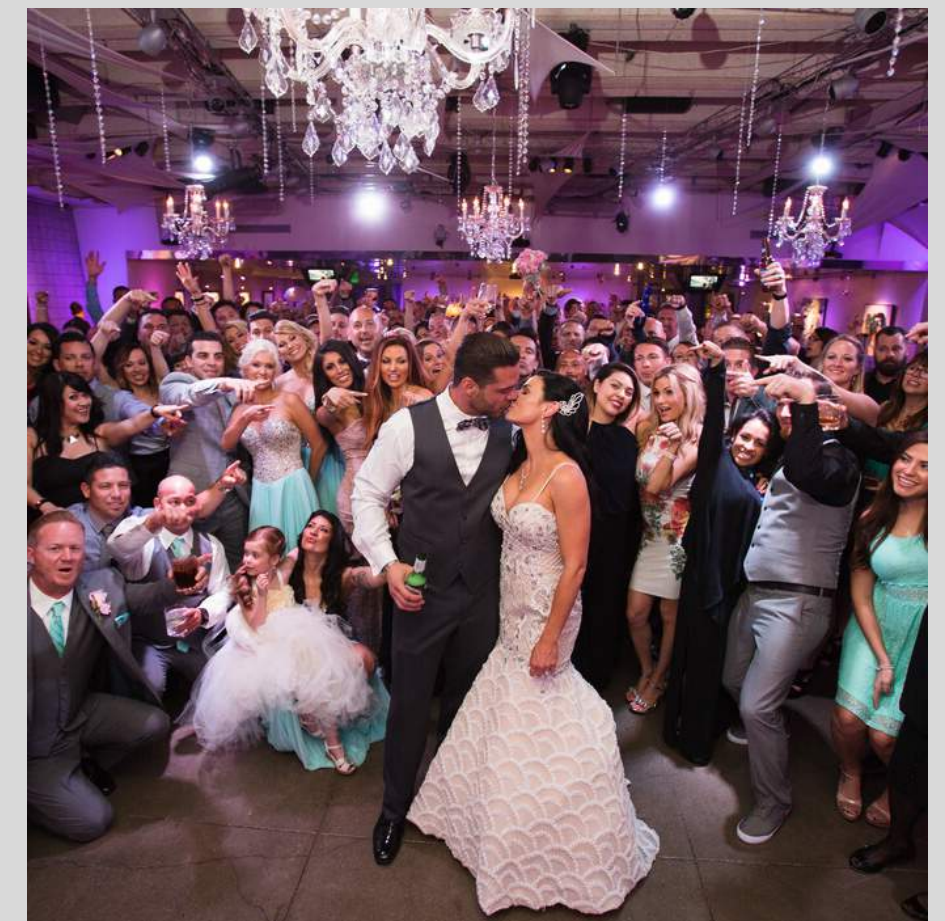
Reception Tips

So you've made things official and now it's time to party!

Of course you're going to have a first dance, maybe some parent dances, bouquet & garter tosses, and possibly a cake cutting. If that's your jam, by all means, have at it!

Now, having said that, don't feel obligated to do anything you don't want to do at your reception if you don't want to. So often I see couples just going through the motions because they feel the pressure from friends & family to do certain traditions. It doesn't have to be that way.

Remember, it's **YOUR WEDDING**, so do you! Seriously! Have a blast!



Lastly, thank you for reading through. I hope this guide helped you a bit in planning the wedding of your dreams.

If you have any questions regarding anything wedding related, please feel free to reach out. I'm here to help along the way!

Happy wedding planning and I hope to hear from you soon!

Cheers!



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P H O T O G R A P H Y