



## Prioritizing Your Wedding Expenses

### **How to prioritize your wedding budget...**

Congratulations, you're engaged! Wedding planning can be fun, exciting, and stressful. Especially if the bride and groom aren't on the same page. The average wedding in the United States costs around \$26,000! No matter what your wedding budget, I believe you can create your dream wedding with a little creativity, as well as careful, and intentional planning. In order to ensure that you allocate your wedding budget appropriately, I recommend you rank the wedding elements that are most important to you, and what you want to remember about your wedding day (other than getting married :)

No matter what traditions state, I think it's imperative to plan the wedding you want, and not do what's expected just because it's how things have always been done. Feel free to skip, change or eliminate anything from your budget that you have no attachment to.

### **Start by ranking the following elements...**

Technically, you can have an endless list of things to pay for depending on how extravagant you want to get, but start with the basics. Both the bride and groom should rank these elements by importance. See where you align and where you don't. This is a great starting point and creates a perfect guide for wedding planning.

**Wedding Date:** Depending where you live, certain times of the year can be a lot more expensive. This element can definitely affect your budget.

**Wedding Location:** Where do you want to get married? Are you wanting to get married where you currently live, where you grew up, a destination wedding you've always dreamed of? There is a lot to consider when choosing a wedding location. Where do your families live?

**Wedding Invitations:** Do you want traditional invitations sent out, postcards, email invites, etc. How important is the element when inviting your guests?



**Ceremony Venue:** How important is the ceremony venue to your event? Is there a venue you've always dreamed of? The wedding venue often sets the tone for your event. Your family church, a rustic barn in the country, an elegant ballroom, a country club, a sandy beach, a romantic backyard, or even a chic warehouse. There are SO many options and this choice immediately sets the vibe for the entire event.

**Reception Venue:** Most receptions now take place in the same location as the ceremony, but not always. You might get married on the beach or in your church and then head somewhere after with more space to celebrate.

**The Wedding Dress:** Have you always dreamed of a designer gown, or the big "Say Yes to the Dress" moment you see on TV? Maybe you want to opt for a vintage style, or the dress your mom wore. Usually where you choose to get married helps determine what kind of dress you'll purchase as well.

**The Food:** Some weddings have endless amounts of food, and some serve punch and cake. The options are endless. What would you like to eat on your wedding day, and what type of food do you want to serve?

**Drinks:** Is this a dry wedding, cash bar, BYOB, full service, or something in between. This item can eat up a LOT of your budget! If you find a venue that allows you to bring in your own beer and wine, it can save you a TON of money!

**Flowers:** You can have as many or as few flowers as you'd like. From the bouquets, to the ceremony, and of course the centerpieces. How many blooms do you want at your wedding, and even more important what type? Exotic flowers are very expensive, and may not be in season. Consider what type of flowers are in bloom for the time of year you want to get married.

**Wedding Cake:** Do you even like cake? Do you have an extravagant design you want, something simple, or an alternative dessert all together.

**Music:** The music options are also endless, you can hire a DJ that can handle everything, while some may want to opt for live musicians for their ceremony, cocktail hour, and reception.



**Decor:** This can be inclusive of so much! Centerpieces, table numbers, card boxes, photos, candles, draping, the possibilities are endless. Are you looking for a simple look, or have something specific in mind?

**Transportation:** How do you want to arrive, or leave your wedding? From vintage cars, horse drawn carriages, flashy sports cars, limos, and so much more. Is this something that's important to you?

**Photography:** To me, this is the most important vendor on your wedding day other than your officiant, but some just want a couple shots to capture the moment. Where does it rank for you?

**Videography:** Do you want a special video capturing the entire day that you can share with your children later? A lot of times the videographer catches moments you miss, and documents from getting ready, to the final farewell. It's an amazing keepsake to have.

**Wedding Planner:** Do you want to pay for someone to help you manage and plan out all the details of your event? This role can help find venues, control your budget, negotiate contracts, and make everything happen on your wedding day so you can just enjoy it. Usually the cost is about 10% of your total wedding budget, but some wedding planners have ala carte services, or offer Day of Coordination as well.

**Extras:** This is another area where you can list a million ideas that will make your wedding stand out. How important are the "extra" elements to you? Flower canons, dancers, food trucks, fireworks, wedding favors, special send off, and the list can go on and on...



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### Wedding Priority Worksheet

*Print 2 copies, one for the bride and one for the groom. Make sure you read through all the categories before you start the ranking process.*

ELEMENT	OVERALL RANK
<b>WEDDING LOCATION</b>	
	<b>SUB-RANK (1-5)</b>
Bride's Home Town	
Groom's Home Town	
Where you currently reside	
Destination Wedding	
Specific Location	

ELEMENT	OVERALL RANK
<b>WEDDING DATE</b>	
	<b>SUB-RANK (1-5)</b>
Winter	
Spring	
Summer	
Fall	
Specific Date	

**ELEMENT**

**OVERALL RANK**



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<b>WEDDING INVITATIONS</b>	
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<b>ELEMENT</b>	<b>OVERALL RANK</b>
<b>CEREMONY VENUE</b>	
	<b>SUB-RANK (1-5)</b>
Church	
Outdoors: Beach/Mountains/Desert	
Ballroom	
Country Club	
Specific Location	

<b>ELEMENT</b>	<b>OVERALL RANK</b>
<b>RECEPTION VENUE</b>	
	<b>SUB-RANK (1-5)</b>
Specific Location	
Ballroom/Hotel	
Rustic Barn	
Family Property	
Alternative Venue: Rooftop, Warehouse, Etc.	

<b>ELEMENT</b>	<b>OVERALL RANK</b>
<b>WEDDING DRESS</b>	



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ELEMENT	OVERALL RANK
<b>FOOD</b>	

ELEMENT	OVERALL RANK
<b>BAR &amp; BEVERAGES</b>	
	<b>SUB-RANK (1-5)</b>
Non-Alcoholic Drinks Only	
Beer & Wine	
Beer, Wine & Specialty Cocktail	
Full Bar (restrict the hours)	
Full Bar for Entire Event	

ELEMENT	OVERALL RANK
<b>FLOWERS</b>	

ELEMENT	OVERALL RANK
<b>WEDDING CAKE</b>	

ELEMENT	OVERALL RANK
<b>WEDDING DECOR</b>	
	<b>SUB-RANK (1-5)</b>
Ceremony Space	



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Centerpieces	
Lighting	
Dance Floor	
Signs/Easels/Extras	

ELEMENT	OVERALL RANK
<b>WEDDING RENTALS (IF NOT PROVIDED BY YOUR VENUE)</b>	
	<b>SUB-RANK (1-5)</b>
Chairs	
Linens	
China & Flatware	
Tables	
Tent	

ELEMENT	OVERALL RANK
<b>PHOTOGRAPHY</b>	

ELEMENT	OVERALL RANK
<b>VIDEOGRAPHER</b>	

ELEMENT	OVERALL RANK
<b>MUSIC</b>	
	<b>SUB-RANK (1-4)</b>



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DJ	
Band	
Live Ceremony Music	
Cocktail Hour Music	

ELEMENT	OVERALL RANK
<b>WEDDING PLANNER</b>	
	<b>SUB-RANK (1-3)</b>
Full Event Planner	
Day of Coordinator	
Ala Carte Event Planner	