

Couples & WEDDING GUIDE



Shoot Preparation & Wedding Day Guide

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A romantic wedding photograph of a couple in formal attire sharing a kiss. The groom is in a dark suit, and the bride is in a white lace dress with a long veil. They are standing in front of a tree with pink blossoms. The background shows a dry, hilly landscape under a clear blue sky at dusk. A soft, out-of-focus light source is visible behind the couple.

*Relax...this is gonna'
be easy.*



*It doesn't have to be
so dang stressful*

Wedding planning all too often isn't the serene stroll through the dress and cake shops that it's cracked up to be in the movies, but capturing your big day shouldn't be one more stress you have to endure.

Taking photos can be intimidating, but I promise, you've got nothing to worry about because my photography philosophy is crafted around you!

My sessions are laid back and super easy and this guide will help walk you through some of the particulars as well as answer some questions you might already have!

Think of your session, not as a scary appointment to keep, but more like a few friends hangin' out and getting some great pictures while we're at it!

MY PHILOSOPHY

LET'S *unleash* THE TRUE YOU

*Let's hang out. Take some photos.
And capture that spark.*

All too often photo sessions end up being about picking the "ideal" outfit and stressing about looking "perfect".

Not this time.

During your session my main priority is cultivating a relaxed space for you to truly be yourself. No fake stuff. Just you guys sharing simple and real moments together.

Being a photographer doesn't mean I've never been on the other side of the camera. It's awkward and you feel dumb. I get it.

That's why I'm here to help.

I'm always guiding my couples through simple and casual interactions that produce real emotions and genuine images.

No phoney smiles. No awkward prom-like poses.

I promise.

So don't stress because every couple is unique so there's no pressure to fit into any boxes.

All you gotta' do is show up and be you.





ENGAGEMENT SESSIONS *and* WHY THEY ROCK

I love engagement sessions. They're so great for a bazillion reasons, but a big one is it's a rad way for us to chill and get to know one another better before your big day! Me and my camera are gonna' be your official third wheel for your wedding day, so it's best we break the ice before then, and engagement sessions are a great way to do this.

But my favorite thing about engagement sessions is the time it allows for couples to relax and take a step back from all the craziness of planning their nuptials and just enjoy some time with each other. My hope is that your session will feel more like a date than an appointment with me to take pictures. I want you guys to do whatever sounds relaxing and fun to you!

Grab some bubbly, take a hike, bring your pup, whatever is fun, whatever is YOU. ..let's do that thing.

Generally for engagement sessions we choose someplace that is beautiful and perfect for you guys and we meet there and shoot until we lose light.





THE *big* DAY

HERE'S *the* RUNDOWN

In order to make sure your day goes as smoothly as possible, we gotta' be on the same page and do a little prep beforehand.

I always ask my couples for a few things prior to the wedding day, one of those being an itinerary. Just to give you a lil' rundown of how things usually flow I've added an example timeline for you to take a look at.

Even with tireless planning and prep stuff happens and often that perfect itinerary gets derailed.

Don't fret, I got your back!

Being a photographer means being a master of flexibility and improv, so I will do my best to pick up the pace and help get your big day back on track.

Don't forget. Whatever happens, this is your big day and nothing can change that. So roll with the punches and remember you're marrying the love of your life and the rest is just gravy.

9:00 am

Bridesmaid hair + makeup begin

11:00 am

*Bride's makeup and hair begin
Wedding details photographed*

1:45 pm

Groom begins getting ready

3:00 pm

Put dress on

3:30 pm

First looks with dad + bridesmaids

3:45 pm

First look with your boo

4:00 pm

Bridesmaid + groomsmen photos

5:00 pm

Ceremony!

6:00 pm

Family + Group photos

6:30 pm

Couples portraits

7:00 pm

Sunset

7:15 pm

Grand Entrance into reception

7:30 pm

Dinner Begins

8:30 pm

Dancing & Reception events





BREAKIN' IT *down* A BIT MORE

BRIDESMAID HAIR + MAKEUP BEGIN: Typically don't shoot anyone "Getting Ready" until they're almost completely ready. Cause lets be honest, no one wants photos of themselves with their hair half curled and on eye of makeup done!

BRIDE'S MAKEUP AND HAIR BEGIN: I recommend giving yourself and your artist extra time so you aren't rushed or stressed

WEDDING DETAILS PHOTOGRAPHED: Wedding details include the dress, shoes, invites, tie, etc. As well as shooting any other moments happening.

GROOM BEGINS GETTING READY: I'll typically pop in with the groom for about 15-20 minutes to get plenty of getting ready shots of him

PUT DRESS ON: One of the most magical parts of the day! Give yourself a little extra time here too so there's no stress.

FIRST LOOKS WITH DAD + BRIDESMAIDS: These additional first look options are a fun way to include your girls and Dad/Grandfathers.

FIRST LOOK WITH YOUR BOO: This is obviously totally optional! Don't feel pressured to do a first look. Do it your way!

BRIDESMAID + GROOMSMEN PHOTOS: I recommend having this extra cushion time here because people wander and it gives time to wrangle the groups together.

GUESTS USHERED TO CEREMONY: This is when we hide you away from your guests. This time can change depending on your schedule + venue layout.

CEREMONY!: I recommend starting the ceremony 1.5 to 2 hrs before sunset. This gives you perfect light for the rest of the evening.

FAMILY + GROUP PHOTOS: Family photos are such an important part of the day! Provide me a small list of group photos I wouldn't typically do.

COUPLES PORTRAITS: Here's where all the romantics happen. The sun has started setting which means perfect lighting for the photos too!

SUNSET: Take this time in between portraits and grand entrance to bustle your dress, freshen up & get ready to party.

GRAND ENTRANCE INTO RECEPTION: This is when I'll be shooting reception details, candid, and your entrance!

DINNER BEGINS: I'll eat when you eat so I don't miss any moments. Make sure to clear this with catering in advance please.

DANCING + RECEPTION EVENTS: Time to drop it low. I typically have all the photos of the day that I need within 30 to 45 minutes after the party dancing with everybody starts! Dancing photos tend to start to all look the same.

SPARKLER EXIT: Not everyone does exits, so if you don't feel like doing one, then I will just bounce once I feel I get all of the dancing + partying photos you want and need!



-Clean Spaces-

Designating a "clean space" that doesn't get overtaken with luggage, shoes and everything else is key to getting the best images possible. I'll help toss stuff to the side if it gets cluttered but having this space will really keep the focus on the moment rather than the distracting clutter.

Bring a nice hanger for your dress as well! Anything simple, such as a plain wooden hanger will work, as long as it's not a crappy plastic one from a department store!

DEFINING *the* MOOD

Getting ready images are some of my favorite moments of the wedding day. The anticipation of marrying the love of your life, the jitters, the tears, the giggles are all the special memories you'll want to vividly remember in later years. That's why choosing an intentional "getting ready" space is so crucial and it really sets the mood for the rest of your day.

-Intentional Spaces-

Choosing a special space to get ready in is crucial to keeping the focus on the excitement and joy of the day. Rather than stressing about packing up your luggage last minute from the random hotel bathroom you booked to get ready in with dull yellow light from the overhead, compare that to a thoughtful space with lots of natural light and intentional spaces for your wedding details to be shot (dress, shoes, rings, etc.), maybe even a porch to step out and get some fresh air. Choosing a space like this will not only make for great pictures but help you focus on the day rather than what time you have to check out of your room.

-Good Light-

Light, light, light. It's the big three of good photography right?! Well you're gonna' get a little crash course and you'll be a dang pro at noticing the best light for photos by the end of this! If possible find a space near a window, this will give us the softest most lovely light for catching all the little highlights on the skin and details. Also make sure you leave the overhead lights off if possible. We don't want any random greenish yellow lights interfering with the beauty of the natural light. No worries if you forget, I'll make sure they're off!



A romantic wedding photograph of a couple embracing on a cliff. The bride, with curly hair and a long veil, is wearing a white lace dress. The groom, with a beard, is in a dark suit with a white boutonniere. They are looking at each other and about to kiss. The background shows a vast ocean and distant hills under a clear sky.

LET'S *talk* CEREMONY



LIGHTING & unplugged CEREMONIES

When choosing your ceremony location, people typically only think about the backdrop and forget to think about the light at the time of day that your ceremony will take place, which is way more important for you and your guests' comfort and for the quality of the photos!

Here is a breakdown on what to know about each lighting situation.

BACK LIT

Great for photos because of the soft and yummy golden look it gives. Generally back lit is best captured in evenings or early morning when the sun is hangin' low in the sky. Unfortunately sometimes this can be distracting for guests if they are facing directly into it. If you're having a ceremony that is during the evening when the sun is still shining I would highly recommend angling the set up slightly to the side of where the sun will be setting, giving you the best photos possible and giving your guests eyes a little more comfort!

If the sun will be low in the sky but light WON'T be hitting your ceremony, I suggest facing your ceremony so that the sun (where it should be during the time of the ceremony) is on your guests backs! This means you will have an amazing pastel sky above you during your ceremony.

Remember that if you're checking out a ceremony site in the winter, the sun will set in a different location on the horizon/mountain range in the summer, so plan accordingly! You can check exactly where the sun will be in the sky and where it will be shining with the app Sun Seeker on any day of any year, so you can plan around it!

UNEVEN

Mid day and uneven light unfortunately is the most unideal lighting for photos. It creates areas of bright blown out spots while simultaneously creating dark shadows that lose detail like people's faces, decor, colors etc. Not to mention it's not super comfortable for many guests as some could be seated in shade and others are sweating out in the sun. If it's entirely impossible to avoid uneven light then angle your ceremony so that it will be backlit if possible, allowing for the best possible images.

SHADED OR OVERCAST

Probably the best case scenario for photos and comfort! Shaded means there will be even light from start to finish and preserves all details in photos like colors, your dress, and it makes your skin look great!

INDOOR

Natural light coming from a window is ideal for indoor ceremonies, avoid mixed lighting by turning off indoor lights if possible so that the ceremony doesn't look like a mix of lots of blue and yellow! If you can't use natural light only, make sure the indoor lights are bright so that the photos can have the best quality possible!

AN UNPLUGGED WEDDING

Unplugged wedding's are really amazing because they allow your guests to be truly present and in the moment with you two during your ceremony by turning off their phones and cameras and waiting to take photos once the entire ceremony and following hugs are over. A lot of people don't think about this aspect of their ceremony until they get their photos back and regret not having an "unplugged" wedding because there are stupid iPads, phones, and cameras cluttering and distracting the viewer from the real moments of your wedding! It not only straight up ruins photos, but it can ruin the experience for a lot of your guests as well.

Do you really want your grandma to be focused on figuring out how to make the zoom work when you're wiping your tears and your significant other says their vows to you? Do you want your groom to have to lean around people's iPhones in the aisle to catch his first glimpse of his bride? Or your best friends having to peek through the hands of anyone in front of them with their cameras up in the air?

There is nothing wrong with asking people to turn their phones off and be present in the moment with you during the most amazing 15 minutes of your life. Ask whoever is marrying you to announce this while everyone is taking their seats before the ceremony even begins (letting them know that they will be free to take as many photos as they want once the ceremony is over). There is a reason you are paying a photographer hundreds of dollars to capture these precious memories for you! Another idea to make sure people get all the photos they want of the day is to have a Photo Booth for guests to hop in and get photos together to remember your day. Everyone will be happy to comply, and this usually results in a much more emotional connected experience.



GROUP *photos*

For group photos, it typically works best to do them directly following or leading up to the ceremony since everyone is together and ready for photos! If you're not doing a private first look (not on the aisle) then afterwards works best. Make sure we have a spot that will accommodate the size of groups we'll be shooting. For the best photos, these spots will be in open shade, otherwise everyone might have squinty eyes and shadows on their face.



Because I don't know who is who when I show up on your wedding day, I recommend you give someone like your wedding planner or a family member a list of group photos you want and put them in charge of getting the groups together for each shot. This way we won't accidentally miss a group photo you want!

Intimacy & GUEST COUNT

So many couples I've talked to right before their wedding says they wish they would have eloped or downsized their guest list. To avoid spending your day (and a lot of extra money) on acquaintances, random extended family members, or your parents old high school buddies, decide on a number for your guest count and stick to it, whether that be 8 or 80.

It stinks but I see so many couples (Me and my husband being one of them!) worrying about fulfilling the desires of their guests and family members, that they forget that this is THEIR big day. I always like to encourage my couples to feel confident and free to choose anything that resonates with them and how they want to spend their wedding day, including minimizing your guest count.

There should be no guilt in downsizing your guest list! It means you can spend more time with the people that mean the most to you (and I can get more photos of them!), rather than acquaintances. Simply by pairing down your list of attendees the day stays focused more on your marriage and love rather than orchestrating an event!

More intimate moments with those who you love most, means more opportunity for me to capture it all with my camera, allowing you to relive and enjoy those memories for the rest of your lives.

Smaller, intimate weddings are truly crafted around and entirely about the couple, allowing your personalities and wacky fun desires to be made into realities!



ALL THINGS *Reception*



I cant stress to you enough how important lots of string lights can be for your reception! The brighter you can make your reception space with string lights and candles, the better your photos will turn out.

Low lit receptions end up making the photos poor quality, super grainy losing lots of detail, and usually have to be edited as black and whites to be able to make them look decent if you don't want all of them to be shot with flash (which can be disruptive during slow dances). If you have tons of string lights and candles I'll be able to edit the photos in color, they'll look better, your skin will look better, and I won't have to use flash over photos that should have a soft dreamy look. You can get a great deal on string lights at Costco and on Amazon.

Although low light can help set a stunning mood for your reception, it will certainly hinder the photos I can take without a flash. Flash has a time and a place but my favorite reception images are those dreamy, romantic images with no flash.

Not using my flash means MORE images as my camera's shutter can fire faster without a flash mounted, but more importantly it is much less distracting. You guys should be focusing on one another during your first dance rather than the blinding flash of light coming from my camera.

Colored lights such as DJ lighting also hinders the romantic and dreamy look of reception images so it's important to take those into account when planning your reception.

You might feel like you have enough lights, but Christmas string lights aren't usually bright enough. I recommend lots of bigger brighter string lights, like I'm talkin' blowing that place out like a Broadway stage baby! Restaurant patio lights are amazing and you can buy them for around \$50 at Costco!



For receptions, I'll be there for all of the scheduled events (first dance, parent dances, cutting cake, etc). Once the crazy party dancing starts to happen I'll usually shoot for about 30-40 minutes (or until I feel I've got enough, so sometimes it's longer!).

If I feel like I'll get a lot more great shots staying longer then I'll definitely stay! If the dancing dies down quickly I'll make sure to get lots of shots of the guests and be done shooting as the night typically winds down at that point or people just get more and more drunk and sweaty.

If you want me to stay longer let me know and we can figure out what will be best for your wedding and coverage! But don't worry I'll always check in with you guys before I leave and make sure we got all the photos you wanted!



REMEMBER...IT'S
ALL ABOUT
THE *love*



The thing is, even with all the prep and work that goes into your day it won't be "perfect", and that's ok! Life is often pretty messy, but don't forget that your wedding day isn't about fulfilling a list of idealized requirements seen in magazines, but rather you marrying the love of your life!

Embrace the crazy moments, because believe me there will be plenty! And try not to stress, especially over something you don't have control over. Nothing is ever "perfect" so there's no reason to exhaust yourself over making everything seem "perfect." Remember to laugh a lot and you'll be just fine!

Above all, remember this is YOUR day.

Yeah, it's important to honor your family members by doing certain things on your day or including them in different ways, but just remember this is ultimately your day and you should be doing it for yourselves and making it as meaningful as you possibly can. So often brides will get too caught up in trying to make their mom happy and they realize their wedding is something that is more meaningful only to her parents rather than her. This will be the day you remember for the rest of your life and you should make it as comfortable and fun for you two as much as you can!

Lastly, have fun and do whatever it is that makes your day YOURS. So many people get so wrapped up in caring so much about the decor, the perfect details, who's sitting where, color schemes, and other things that in the long run, don't really matter.

Remember that you're not putting on an event for your guests, they're coming to give love and feel your love. What matters most is the tender moments between you and your person, the extra tight hugs your siblings that never hug give you, your grandparents kissing your cheeks, and the connection you feel to everything and everyone around you.



