

ultimate guide FOR BRIDES

checklist, preferred vendors, how to save,
bridal shower ideas, wedding timeline,
and my wedding experience

wedding checklist

THE VENUE: PROBABLY THE HARDEST AND MOST TIME CONSUMING THING BUT AS SOON AS YOU CAN GET THIS FIGURED OUT YOU HAVE A DATE TO WORK TOWARDS!

PHOTOGRAPHER: AS SOON AS YOU HAVE YOUR DATE BOOK YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER! MOST PHOTOGRAPHERS BOOK OUT A YEAR OR TWO IN ADVANCE SO THE SOONER YOU BOOK THE BETTER!

*SAVING TIP: BOOK YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER ASAP, EVEN IF YOUR WEDDING IS A YEAR+ OUT, AS THEY TYPICALLY RAISE PRICES EVERY FEW MONTHS!

WEDDING DRESS + SHOES + JEWELRY
WEDDING TUX
WEDDING BANDS
BRIDESMAIDS DRESSES
GROOMSMEN OUTFITS
RING BEARER OUTFIT + PILLOW/BOX
FLOWER GIRL OUTFIT + BASKET
VIDEOGRAPHER
MAKE-UP ARTIST
HAIR STYLIST
FLORALS
GUEST LIST + INVITES + SAVE THE DATES
DJ
CATERER
BARTENDER
DRINKS + ALCOHOL
CAKE + CAKE STAND + KNIFE
DESSERTS + PLATTERS
TABLES + CHAIRS + LIGHTING + DANCE FLOOR (IF BACKYARD WEDDING)
LINENS + NAPKINS + CUTLERY + PLATES + CUPS
MARRIAGE LICENCE
CEREMONY + RECEPTION DECOR
WELCOME SIGN
OFFICIANT
GUEST BOOK + PENS
THANK YOU GIFTS
PHOTO WALL + DECOR
PARENTS GIFTS
BRIDESMAIDS GIFTS
GROOMSMEN GIFTS
EXIT: SPARKLERS/CONFETTI/BUBBLES/RICE/ETC.
SOMETHING OLD NEW BORROWED + BLUE

preferred vendors

THESE ARE PEOPLE I HAVE PERSONALLY WORKED WITH AT MY OWN WEDDING,
HAVE WORKED WITH WITHIN THE FIELD, OR HAVE HEARD GREAT THINGS ABOUT!

VENUES:

@THEPASEOVENUE

@TERCEROBYALDEAWEDDINGS

OR A BACKYARD WEDDING

PHOTOGRAPHERS:

@KILEANRYEELPHOTO LOL HI!

@PAIGEWITHEEPHOTO

@MEGANCLAIREPHOTO

VIDEOGRAPHERS:

@MYEVENTFILM

@WETHEVISUALISTS

@JACKILYNBOEHME

BRIDALS STORES:

@SCHAFFERSBRIDALAZ

@LUV_BRIDAL

HAIR STYLIST:

@BRAIDSBYELLIE__

@HAIRBYLOGANP

@ALLIES_BEAUTY (HAIR + MUA)

RENTAL COMPANIES:

@THEEVENTCO

@TOPNOTCHRENTALS

FLORIST:

@CREMEDELABLOOM

@FLORALSBYKRIS

@THEFLORALTHEORY

MAKE-UP ARTIST:

@KAILEYTHECOSMO

@EMILYMOSBYMUA

@BETHANY.MUA

FOOD:

SOME BURROS

RIGATONIS

DJ:

@VOXDJS (TYLER COLE)

@ARIZONASDJ1 (JERRY)

BARTENDER

@BARMAGIC:

how to save, where to spend

Personally, the few places I strongly believe you should invest in are your photographer, your dress, and your venue. Your photos are the only things you will take away from the wedding day and in those photos include your dress and the place in which the photos are taken: your venue.

Every other place there is a way to save some money.

Places we saved:

Florals: I paid for my bouquet, flower crown, husbands boutonniere, greenery on the welcome sign and florals on the photo wall. For the remaining florals (bridesmaids bouquets, groomsmen's boutonnieres, greenery for tables, pedals for floral girl, etc.) I got from trader joes

Cake: I got a three tiered white cake from Sams club for \$70 and added my own florals. Also for desserts we just made our own to save on this as well.

Food: instead of paying an insane amount per head for a caterer, we had some burros catered. I would highly recommend looking into restaurants and seeing if they offer catering!

Bartender: We personally got two kegs from total wine and made our own mixed drinks so we didn't have to pay for a bartender. We also got the alcohol from Costco which made it way cheaper and any thing that you don't drink you can return!

Linens: Instead of using a rental company, I found linens online at wholesale for a quarter of the price. I ordered mine from efavormart.com and still have them so if you'd like to purchase them let me know lol

Silverware + cups: I got mine from target! The spritz line is AMAZING and so affordable! We also got pitchers and dispensers from here and they were super cute for the mixed drinks!

Officiant: we had my brother marry us for FREE! It is free to become ordained online and made this such a personal touch for us! Highly recommend!

IF YOU CAN, GET A CHASE SAPPHIRE CREDIT CARD, DO IT!
WE PUT ALL OF OUR WEDDING PURCHASES ON THIS CREDIT CARD, PAID THEM OFF RIGHT AWAY, AND WAS ABLE TO GET ONE OF OUR FLIGHTS TO HAWAII ENTIRELY FREE THROUGH THEIR AWARDS. THEY HAVE A BUNCH OF INCENTIVES TO GET YOUR TO EARN MORE POINTS BUT IF YOU ALSO SAY I REFERRED YOU AND YOU'LL GET 50,000 POINTS (\$500 VALUE). YOU CAN THEN REFER YOUR FRIENDS AND GET MORE POINTS TOO!

bridal shower ideas

games

- How well do you know the bride? Questions about the bride.
- Who am I? Write a memory of you and the bride and have the bride guess who!
- Whose more likely, husband or bride?
- Advice for the bride
- How old am i? Pictures of you at different ages.

*question examples are on pinterest!

food + drinks

Brunch style:

Waffles/pancakes, donuts, bacon, eggs, potatoes, fruit, etc.

Lunch:

Sandwiches, chips, salads, fruit, finger foods

Bubbly bar:

Mimosas, Fruit infused wine, Cranberry vodka

Italian soda bar:

Raspberry creme, Vanilla Dr. Pepper, tigers blood (strawberry + coconut), etc.

wedding timeline

The biggest thing I suggest is making your timeline revolve around the time the sun sets the night of your wedding, that way your photos have the best lighting possible.

getting ready w/ girls + first look w/ dress: 30 min

getting ready with guys: 15 min

first look with f.o.b.: 10 min

ceremony: 15 - 30 min

*about 1 1/2 - 2 hours before sunset

cocktail hour

(during cocktail hour: family photos: 15 - 30 min

bridal party photos: 15 - 30 min

bridal photos: 30 min)

*sunsets at end of bridal photos

bridal party entrance for reception

dinner: 1 hour

toasts: 15 min

mother + son dance 5 min

father daughter dance: 5 min

bride + groom dance: 5 min

open floor dancing: 30 min

cake cutting: 5 min

bouquet toss: 5 min

garter removal: 5 min

dollar dance/anniversary dance/special dances: 15 min

open floor dancing

grand exit: 5 min

sample timeline

EXAMPLE WEDDING: MAY 20TH, 2019

SUNSET TIME: 7:23PM

4:00PM	GETTING READY W/ GUYS
4:30PM	GETTING READY W/ GIRLS
5:20PM	FIRST LOOK W/ BRIDESMAIDS
5:30PM	FIRST LOOK W/ F.O.B
6:00 PM	CEREMONY
6:15 PM	COCKTAIL HOUR BEGINS
	DURING COCKTAIL HOUR:
	SIGN MARRIAGE LICENSE
6:20 PM	FAMILY PHOTOS
6:35 PM	BRIDAL PARTY PHOTOS
6:50 PM	BRIDAL PHOTOS
	*SUNSETS @ 7:24PM
7:30PM	RECEPTION STARTS: GRAND ENTRANCE
7:35 PM	DINNER
8:35 PM	TOASTS
8:50 PM	BRIDE + GROOM DANCE
8:55 PM	MOTHER + SON DANCE
9:00 PM	FATHER + DAUGHTER DANCE
9:05 PM	OPEN FLOOR
9:45 PM	CAKE CUTTING
9:50 PM	BOUQUET TOSS
9:55 PM	GARTER REMOVAL
10:00 PM	SPECIAL DANCES
10:15 PM	OPEN DANCING
11:15 PM	GRAND EXIT

our wedding

For those of you who don't know, Nathaniel and I had a two day wedding in which on the first day we had our ceremony about an hour and a half away and the second we had our reception in my parents backyard.

The biggest reason why we did this was because we knew that we didn't want to be in debt from our wedding, but we still wanted to have a wedding that we dreamed of. With that being said, we knew we would be having 200+ guests as both of our families are pretty large. After getting many quotes from venues that were already at the top of our budget, we decided to use my parents backyard for our reception and create a venue that we imagined!

However, I didn't want to have our bridals taken in my parents backyard, and honestly have dreamt of an elopement style wedding for so long, so by splitting the two days up we were able to get the best of both worlds.

I couldn't be happier with the way that our wedding went. The ceremony was intimate, with just our closest family and friends there. It also allowed us to get the photos that we wanted in the place that we wanted, without the stress of getting back to a reception.

I also loved that because it was two days it made our wedding feel longer. As a wedding photographer myself, I see so many weddings FLY by and I really loved that ours was two days.

This also allowed us to get a party bus before the reception, which gave us the time to hang out with our bridal party and relax a bit before knowing we would be trying to divide our time amongst 200 people.

how we did it

the ceremony location: now this didn't go smoothly at all! Our original plan was to head up north to the mogollon rim and have our ceremony with the rim view as a background but two weeks before our wedding we got a bunch of snow here in AZ and the access was closed to the rim with no telling when it would reopen...

We had to make a change quickly and luckily being a photographer I knew of some good locations. We ended up having our ceremony on the side of the freeway on the way to Sedona. It was an open area so we went there a week before and mapped out a place for our arch/aisle.

There are a lot of parks that will charge you \$1000+ to do something like this but if you can go somewhere that doesn't require a pass you can literally have your ceremony for free, as we did!

Places I would suggest:

Sunset point, mogollon rim, cathedral rock or anywhere in sedona, buffalo park in flagstaff (our brother/sister in law are doing the same thing here this summer), superstition mountains but at firstwater trail head, not lost dutchman state park as they will charge you, south mountain (tons of lookouts with views + cactus), or even canyon lake!

The reception location: I totally understand not everyone has parents that have a backyard that will accommodate 200+ people. But, maybe you know someone who does? Or you could even jump on airbnb and see if there are any spaces that you can rent for something like this! Get creative and ask around, I am sure you can find a backyard!

Once you have the backyard, you are going to need to transform the space. We personally used @theeventco and they brought in tables+ chairs, a dancefloor,, a photo wall, and hung up lights overhead to really make it feel like a venue.

We rented port-o-potty's so that my parents didn't have to have 200 people come into their house and we had my brother + his friends park all of our guests cars' at the local middle school in our neighborhood.



photos by the amazing @kinsleynicolephotography





photos by the amazing @kingleynicolephotography



vendors we used

Photographer: @kinsleynicolephotography

Videographer: @halfwaylost

(unfortunately these two are moving out of state and aren't available anymore)

Hair stylist: @braidsbyellie__

MUA: @kaileythecosmo

Florist: @cremedelabloom

Greenery: Trader Joes

Greenery on tables: ikea

Wedding dress: @schaffersbridal

Rental company: @theeventco

Food: Some Burros

DJ: @dannytellez

Cake: sams club

Linens: efavormart.com

Cutlery + cups: Target

Signs: my cute friend @ashleypickard_ made ours

Guest book: @madipdesigns

Party favors: @thebakedbee