



THE BRIDE'S PLANNER

The Wedding *Countdown*

Every job, in the order it needs doing — from twelve months out to the morning of.
Tick it off, breathe out, enjoy the bit that matters.

HOMELAND FLORISTS

EST. 1979 · FAMILY RUN · NORTHAMPTON

Start with three numbers

Your total budget, your guest count and your date. Nearly every other decision here follows from those three — settle them first and the rest stops feeling like guesswork. *(Shaded boxes are the flower jobs.)*

12 months out

THE BIG DECISIONS

- ☐ Agree the total budget and who is contributing what — write it down
- ☐ Draft the guest list and get to a rough headcount
- ☐ Choose a season, then a date (have a second choice ready)
- ☐ Decide the style and scale: intimate, traditional, relaxed, black tie
- ☐ View venues — ceremony and reception. Check what's included
- ☐ Book the venue and pay the deposit. Read the cancellation terms
- ☐ Take out wedding insurance once deposits start going out
- ☐ Ask your chosen people to be bridesmaids, best man, ushers
- ☐ Open a separate account or pot for wedding money
- ☐ **Flowers:** start a folder of arrangements you're drawn to — colours, shapes, the feeling more than the exact stems

11-10 months out

LOCK IN THE PEOPLE WHO ONLY DO ONE WEDDING A DAY

- ☐ Book the photographer and videographer — the good ones go first
- ☐ Book the band or DJ
- ☐ Book the caterer if the venue doesn't provide one
- ☐ Start dress shopping — allow 6-8 months for order and alterations
- ☐ Book your celebrant, registrar or speak to your vicar
- ☐ Reserve accommodation blocks for guests travelling in
- ☐ Send save-the-dates, especially for a destination or bank-holiday wedding
- ☐ **Flowers:** book your florist. Bring your folder, your colours and your budget to the first conversation

9 months out

SHAPE AND STRUCTURE

- ☐ Book the cake maker
- ☐ Book transport — cars for you, coaches for guests if the venues are apart
- ☐ Choose bridesmaid dresses and order them
- ☐ Start the gift list or honeymoon fund
- ☐ Book the honeymoon and check passport expiry dates and visas
- ☐ Decide on your ceremony readings and who will read them



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8-6 months out

BOOKING AND BUYING

- ☐ Book hair and make-up artists — ask about a trial
- ☐ Order suits or hire morning dress; book fittings
- ☐ Choose and order stationery: invitations, orders of service, place cards
- ☐ Confirm the menu and book a tasting
- ☐ Choose your wedding rings and allow time for sizing and engraving
- ☐ Book any extras: photo booth, fireworks, evening food, childcare
- ☐ Plan the ceremony music and the first dance
- ☐ **Flowers:** confirm your quote and the final list — bouquets, buttonholes, ceremony, tables, cake flowers
- ☐ **Flowers:** ask the venue what it will and won't allow — naked flames, hanging installations, arch fixings, drop-off and collection times

5 months out

PAPERWORK AND POSTING

- ☐ Book your registrar for the ceremony date if you haven't already
- ☐ Send the invitations — six to eight weeks' notice is plenty for a UK wedding
- ☐ Set up an RSVP system you'll actually keep updated
- ☐ Confirm accommodation for both families and the wedding party
- ☐ Book a decorator or stylist if you're using one

The legal bit — England and Wales

You must give notice at your local register office **at least 29 days** before the ceremony, and you need to have lived in that district for the previous 7 days. The notice lasts 12 months. Marrying in the Church of England instead? Banns are read on three Sundays in the three months before the wedding. Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own rules — check with the local registrar.

4 months out

TRIALS AND TRY-ONS

- ☐ Give notice at the register office
- ☐ First dress fitting
- ☐ Hair and make-up trial — book it for a day you can see it in daylight
- ☐ Finalise the running order of the day with the venue
- ☐ Order favours, table numbers, guest book, signage
- ☐ Write and post the honeymoon packing list somewhere you'll find it
- ☐ **Flowers:** ask what a mock-up of your table or venue flowers would cost, if seeing it beforehand would help you picture the day. It isn't a common request, but a good florist should be able to show you something.



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3 months out

- ☐ Chase outstanding RSVPs
- ☐ Draft the seating plan in pencil — it will change
- ☐ Confirm the timings with photographer, band, cars and caterer
- ☐ Buy gifts for parents, the wedding party and each other
- ☐ Book any beauty appointments: nails, tan, brows, teeth
- ☐ Write your vows if you're writing your own

2 months out

- ☐ Final dress fitting with the shoes and underwear you'll actually wear
- ☐ Give final numbers and dietary requirements to the caterer
- ☐ Print orders of service, menus and place cards
- ☐ Confirm the honeymoon booking and arrange travel money and insurance
- ☐ Break in your shoes around the house
- ☐ **Flowers:** confirm the final order and delivery times. Tell your florist who is on site to receive them

1 month out

- ☐ Pay remaining balances — most suppliers want them four to six weeks out
- ☐ Finalise the seating plan and send it to the venue
- ☐ Hold the rehearsal and brief your readers and speakers
- ☐ Confirm transport times, pick-up points and phone numbers
- ☐ Write a one-page timeline and share it with every supplier
- ☐ Delegate: who collects what, who returns hired items, who pays the band

The week before

- ☐ Collect the dress, suits and rings
- ☐ Pack for the honeymoon; check in for flights
- ☐ Assemble an emergency kit: plasters, safety pins, tissues, painkillers, stain remover, a phone charger, flat shoes
- ☐ Confirm the final headcount with the venue
- ☐ Put cash in labelled envelopes for tips and final payments
- ☐ Eat properly and get some sleep — it does more than any product
- ☐ **Flowers:** confirm the delivery address and access for the morning, and where bouquets should be left to stand in water



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The day before

- ☐ Drop off anything the venue is setting up: favours, cards, cake stand, signage
- ☐ Lay out everything you're wearing, down to the earrings
- ☐ Give the rings to the best man
- ☐ Charge every phone and camera
- ☐ Read your vows out loud once

The morning

- ☐ Eat breakfast. Genuinely — most people forget
- ☐ Keep bouquets somewhere cool and out of direct sun until you leave
- ☐ Hand the timeline and the emergency kit to your chief bridesmaid
- ☐ Give your phone to someone else after the ceremony
- ☐ Ten minutes alone together at some point in the day. Everyone says the same thing afterwards: it goes fast

Where the money usually goes

A rough split of a typical UK wedding budget. Yours will differ — but if one line is wildly out of proportion, it's worth asking why before you commit.

WHERE IT GOES	SHARE OF BUDGET
Venue hire, food and drink	45-50%
Photography and video	10-12%
Dress, suits, hair and make-up	10-12%
Flowers and styling	8-10%
Music and entertainment	5-8%
Cake, stationery and favours	4-5%
Rings	3-4%
Transport	2-3%
Registrar or church fees	2-3%
Contingency — keep this untouched	5%



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What you'll actually be asked for

Most brides arrive at a florist unsure what a wedding flower order even consists of. This is the whole list — tick what applies to your day and you've written your brief.

The order

- ☐ Bridal bouquet
- ☐ Bridesmaid bouquets — how many
- ☐ Flower girl posy, basket or hoop
- ☐ Buttonholes — groom, best man, ushers, fathers, grandfathers
- ☐ Corsages or wrist flowers for mothers and grandmothers
- ☐ Ceremony: aisle ends, arch, pedestals, altar or registrar's table
- ☐ Reception: table centres, top table, cake flowers
- ☐ Extras: welcome sign, place-setting stems, bar, fireplace
- ☐ A throwing bouquet if you'd rather keep yours

Questions worth asking your florist

- What's genuinely in season on my date?
- What would you do differently if my budget were 20% lower?
- Which of these arrangements can be moved from the ceremony to the reception?
- What time will you deliver, and who needs to be there to let you in?
- Who takes the vases and stands back, and when?
- How should I hold the bouquet, and how do I keep it fresh until the photos?
- Can any of it be dried or pressed afterwards?
- What's the deposit, and when is the balance due?

Three ways to spend less without it looking like you did

Buy in season. Flowers cost far less in their own month, and they look better for it. Ask what's at its best on your date and build from there. **Move things twice.** Ceremony pedestals become reception statement pieces; aisle ends go on the top table. **Go tall and thin, or low and full.** Fewer, better stems in height beat a wide arrangement that needs volume to work.



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Stuck on any of it? Just ask.

This list is yours to keep, print and scribble on. If something on it makes no sense, or you want a second opinion on a quote, send us a message — no obligation, no sales pitch. We've been arranging flowers for other people's biggest days since 1979, and we'd rather you got it right than got it from us.

Homeland Florists

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HELPING FRESH FLOWERS FIND A HOME