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# The UK wedding checklist

From Gary Nunn, wedding photographer and filmmaker · garynunn.co.uk

OUR WEDDING DATE

Tick each box as you go and save the file: it works in Preview, Adobe Acrobat and the Books app on a phone. 85 tasks, from the legal bits to the thank-you cards. The free online version, which puts a real date on every task, is at garynunn.co.uk/ultimate-wedding-planning-checklist.

## A year or more to go

14 TASKS

- [ ] **Decide on the type of ceremony: civil, Church of England, other religious, or humanist with a separate legal ceremony**
  In England and Wales a humanist or outdoor ceremony is not legally binding on its own, so a short civil ceremony is needed as well.
  12 MONTHS BEFORE · LEGAL & CEREMONY

- [ ] **Agree rough guest numbers, your budget and the feel of the day**
  Numbers drive everything else: venue size, catering cost and stationery quantities.
  12 MONTHS BEFORE · VENUE

- [ ] **Set the overall budget and agree who is contributing**
  12 MONTHS BEFORE · BUDGET & ADMIN

- [ ] **Tell your closest family and friends before it goes on Instagram**
  12 MONTHS BEFORE · YOU TWO

- [ ] **Shortlist and visit venues**
  Check capacity for the wedding breakfast and evening, exclusivity, corkage, curfew and accommodation on site.
  12 MONTHS BEFORE · VENUE

- [ ] **Check your venue is licensed for the ceremony, if you're marrying there**
  Ask the venue for its approved premises licence. Only the licensed rooms or structures can host the legal part.
  11 MONTHS BEFORE · LEGAL & CEREMONY

- [ ] **Book the venue and pay the deposit**
  Read the contract for the cancellation policy, minimum spend, and whether VAT is included.
  11 MONTHS BEFORE · VENUE

- [ ] **Draft the guest list: day guests and evening guests**
  Decide the split early. Evening-only guests are normal in the UK and affect catering and stationery.
  11 MONTHS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Start looking at wedding dresses and outfits**
  Made-to-order dresses can take six months plus alterations.
  11 MONTHS BEFORE · ATTIRE & BEAUTY

- [ ] **Take out wedding insurance**
  Buy it before paying deposits. Check it covers supplier failure and cancellation.
  11 MONTHS BEFORE · BUDGET & ADMIN

- [ ] **Open a joint wedding account or agree how bills are paid**
  11 MONTHS BEFORE · BUDGET & ADMIN

- [ ] **Choose your wedding party: bridesmaids, best man, ushers**
  Ask in person if you can. It's a big question for them too.
  10 MONTHS BEFORE · YOU TWO

- [ ] **Book the registrar or celebrant, or speak to the vicar about banns**
  Registrars book up a year ahead for Saturdays. For a church wedding, speak to the vicar about banns, fees and any residency requirement.
  10 MONTHS BEFORE · LEGAL & CEREMONY

- [ ] **Book the photographer and videographer**
  Good photographers and videographers book 12 to 18 months ahead. Check the coverage runs from the preparations through to the first dance, and ask to see a whole wedding, not just the highlights.
  10 MONTHS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

## Ten to six months

16 TASKS

- [ ] **Book the caterer and agree the menu style**
  Sit-down, sharing platters or a feasting style. Ask about children's meals and supplier meals.
  9 MONTHS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Collect postal and email addresses for every household**
  9 MONTHS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Design or order save the dates**
  9 MONTHS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Order the wedding dress or main outfits**
  9 MONTHS BEFORE · ATTIRE & BEAUTY

- [ ] **Ask the venue about a room for you and a block of rooms for guests**
  Ask for a group rate and a release date so unbooked rooms go back to the venue.
  8 MONTHS BEFORE · VENUE

- [ ] **If your venue needs it, book the marquee, lighting and furniture**
  8 MONTHS BEFORE · VENUE

- [ ] **Book the band or DJ and any ceremony musicians**
  Check the venue's sound limiter and finish time before booking.
  8 MONTHS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Think about an engagement shoot**
  Twenty minutes in front of the camera before the day makes the day itself far easier, especially if you hate having your photo taken.
  8 MONTHS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Send save the dates**
  Especially important for a destination or bank holiday date.
  8 MONTHS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Book the florist and agree the overall look**
  7 MONTHS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Sign supplier contracts and pay the deposits**
  7 MONTHS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Book the cake maker**
  6 MONTHS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Book hair and make-up artists**
  Confirm how many people they can do and the start time needed.
  6 MONTHS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Set up a wedding website or information sheet: travel, parking, taxis and accommodation**
  6 MONTHS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Choose bridesmaids' and groomsmen's outfits**
  6 MONTHS BEFORE · ATTIRE & BEAUTY

- [ ] **Book the honeymoon and check passports are valid for the trip**
  Many countries need six months' validity. Book in the name on your passport if travelling straight after the wedding.
  6 MONTHS BEFORE · BUDGET & ADMIN

## Six to three months

16 TASKS

- [ ] **Plan the hen and stag dos, or hand them to people who'll enjoy it more**
  5 MONTHS BEFORE · YOU TWO

- [ ] **Gather the documents you will need to give notice: passports, proof of address and any divorce final order (decree absolute)**
  Each partner needs photo ID and proof of address dated within the last three months.
  5 MONTHS BEFORE · LEGAL & CEREMONY

- [ ] **Book wedding cars or transport for the couple and guests**
  If the venue is rural, book a coach or minibus for guests and confirm the last pick-up time.
  5 MONTHS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Choose and order invitations, with RSVP cards or an online RSVP**
  5 MONTHS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Decide whether either of you is changing your name**
  It affects the name on your honeymoon booking if you travel straight after.
  4 MONTHS BEFORE · YOU TWO

- [ ] **Give notice of marriage at the register office: both partners, at least 29 days before the wedding, within 12 months of it, in the district where you live**
  Book an appointment with your local register office. You must have lived in the district for at least seven days. The notice is valid for 12 months, so do not give it too early.
  4 MONTHS BEFORE · LEGAL & CEREMONY

- [ ] **Menu tasting with the caterer**
  4 MONTHS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Cake tasting and design sign-off**
  4 MONTHS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Set up a gift list or honeymoon fund**
  4 MONTHS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Order or hire suits**
  4 MONTHS BEFORE · ATTIRE & BEAUTY

- [ ] **Send invitations**
  Include the dress code, the RSVP deadline, and whether children are invited.
  4 MONTHS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Choose ceremony readings and music**
  A civil ceremony cannot include religious readings or hymns. Send the final choices to the registrar for approval.
  3 MONTHS BEFORE · LEGAL & CEREMONY

- [ ] **Check your suppliers have public liability insurance**
  Most venues ask for copies before the day.
  3 MONTHS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Book children's entertainment or a crèche if children are coming**
  3 MONTHS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Buy the wedding rings**
  Allow time for engraving and resizing.
  3 MONTHS BEFORE · ATTIRE & BEAUTY

- [ ] **Review the budget against actuals and payments due**
  3 MONTHS BEFORE · BUDGET & ADMIN

## Three months to one

16 TASKS

- [ ] **Choose your first dance song, and practise it at least once**
  2 MONTHS BEFORE · YOU TWO

- [ ] **Choose two witnesses and tell them**
  Any two people over 16 who understand English can act as witnesses.
  2 MONTHS BEFORE · LEGAL & CEREMONY

- [ ] **Write your vows or choose from the registrar's wording**
  2 MONTHS BEFORE · LEGAL & CEREMONY

- [ ] **Check when suppliers can get in to set up, and when everything has to be out**
  2 MONTHS BEFORE · VENUE

- [ ] **Hair and make-up trial**
  2 MONTHS BEFORE · ATTIRE & BEAUTY

- [ ] **Buy shoes and accessories and wear the shoes in**
  2 MONTHS BEFORE · ATTIRE & BEAUTY

- [ ] **If you're giving a speech, write it and time it**
  2 MONTHS BEFORE · BUDGET & ADMIN

- [ ] **Book a night off from wedding planning. Seriously.**
  No spreadsheets, no Pinterest. Just the two of you remembering why you're doing this.
  6 WEEKS BEFORE · YOU TWO

- [ ] **Final walk-through at the venue**
  Agree where everything goes, who arrives when and where suppliers park. Bring your planner or coordinator if you have one.
  6 WEEKS BEFORE · VENUE

- [ ] **RSVP deadline**
  Give yourselves six weeks: the caterer needs final numbers two weeks before the day.
  6 WEEKS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Chase anyone who hasn't replied**
  5 WEEKS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Collect dietary requirements and accessibility needs**
  5 WEEKS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Book a ceremony rehearsal if the venue or church offers one**
  4 WEEKS BEFORE · LEGAL & CEREMONY

- [ ] **Agree the wet-weather plan with the venue**
  Agree the cut-off time for moving the ceremony or drinks indoors and who makes the call.
  4 WEEKS BEFORE · VENUE

- [ ] **Send your photographer the group photo list and the names of the key people**
  Keep it to the groups you'll actually frame. Every extra group comes out of your drinks reception.
  4 WEEKS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Choose gifts for the wedding party and parents**
  4 WEEKS BEFORE · BUDGET & ADMIN

## The last month

6 TASKS

- [ ] **Order place cards, table plan, menus and signage**
  4 WEEKS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Go through the ceremony running order with your registrar or celebrant**
  Include the entrance, readings, vows, ring exchange, signing of the schedule and exit music.
  3 WEEKS BEFORE · LEGAL & CEREMONY

- [ ] **Draft the table plan**
  3 WEEKS BEFORE · GUESTS & STATIONERY

- [ ] **Final dress fitting**
  3 WEEKS BEFORE · ATTIRE & BEAUTY

- [ ] **Pay any supplier balances due before the day**
  2 WEEKS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Give final numbers to the caterer**
  Include dietary requirements, children's meals and supplier meals.
  2 WEEKS BEFORE · WEDDING WEEK

## Wedding week

10 TASKS

- [ ] **Send the final table plan to the venue**
  Include table names, seat numbers and any accessibility needs.
  7 DAYS BEFORE · VENUE

- [ ] **Send every supplier the timings, the address and one contact for the day**
  That contact shouldn't be either of you. Hand it to a coordinator, a sensible friend or your mum.
  7 DAYS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Collect suits and check they fit**
  7 DAYS BEFORE · ATTIRE & BEAUTY

- [ ] **Share the timings with your wedding party**
  7 DAYS BEFORE · WEDDING WEEK

- [ ] **Put final payments and tips in labelled envelopes and give them to someone you trust**
  3 DAYS BEFORE · SUPPLIERS

- [ ] **Pack the wedding day emergency kit**
  Sewing kit, safety pins, plasters, stain remover, paracetamol, tissues, phone chargers, spare copies of the schedule.
  2 DAYS BEFORE · WEDDING WEEK

- [ ] **Drop the stationery, favours, decorations and guest book at the venue**
  1 DAY BEFORE · WEDDING WEEK

- [ ] **Steam the outfits and lay everything out for the morning**
  1 DAY BEFORE · WEDDING WEEK

- [ ] **Hand the rings, readings and vows to the right people**
  1 DAY BEFORE · WEDDING WEEK

- [ ] **Wedding day: hand the schedule to someone else and enjoy it**
  ON THE DAY · WEDDING WEEK

## After the wedding

7 TASKS

- [ ] **Return hired items: suits, décor and furniture**
  3 DAYS AFTER · AFTER THE WEDDING
- [ ] **Order copies of the marriage certificate from the register office**
  You will need certified copies for name changes with banks, HMRC and the passport office.
  7 DAYS AFTER · AFTER THE WEDDING
- [ ] **Settle any outstanding supplier balances**
  7 DAYS AFTER · AFTER THE WEDDING
- [ ] **Leave reviews for your suppliers**
  4 WEEKS AFTER · AFTER THE WEDDING
- [ ] **Clean and preserve the dress and outfits**
  4 WEEKS AFTER · AFTER THE WEDDING
- [ ] **Send thank-you cards**
  6 WEEKS AFTER · AFTER THE WEDDING
- [ ] **Update your name on passport, bank accounts and driving licence if changing it**
  2 MONTHS AFTER · AFTER THE WEDDING

### Want the budget and guest list too?

The free wedding planner at garynunn.co.uk/planning keeps this checklist, a budget tracker and a guest list with RSVPs in one place. No sign-up.

### Number twenty on the list is your photographer and videographer.

If you want both from one person, with no crew around you, that is what I do. Every price is on garynunn.co.uk/pricing.

### Rather someone else ran the list?

My partner Katrina Seear plans weddings in Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds, from full planning to on-the-day coordination: katrinaseear.com.