

Quinceañera Checklist

Checklist · 78 items · 10 sections

A planning checklist for a traditional quinceañera, built around the misa (the Catholic mass that opens the day), the court of chambelanes y damas, and the reception with the vals. It covers padrinos, the last doll, the changing of shoes, the surprise dance, and the vendors most families book six to twelve months out.

Open the editable, AI-powered version online:

<https://genechecklist.com/checklist/quinceanera-checklist>

12 MONTHS BEFORE

- Set the date with the parish first

HIGH

Misa slots fill 9-12 months out, especially Saturdays in spring and fall.

- Meet with the priest or deacon to confirm sacramental requirements

HIGH

Usually proof of baptism, first communion, and a pre-quince retreat or platica.

- Set the budget across misa, reception, dress, court, vendors, and photography

HIGH

- Pick a theme and primary colors

HIGH

Rose gold, blush, navy, burgundy, and dusty blue are popular. Colors drive dress, court attire, flowers, and decor.

- Decide on traditional vs. hybrid format

HIGH

Traditional keeps misa, vals, and last doll. Hybrid may skip the misa but keeps the vals and court.

- Draft the guest list with parents (most quinces run 150-250 guests)

HIGH

- Choose the reception venue and reserve the date

HIGH

Salones de fiesta book out fast on Saturdays.

- Open a dedicated planning binder or shared doc for contracts, deposits, and padrino assignments

9 MONTHS BEFORE

- Ask padrinos (godparents who sponsor specific elements)

HIGH

Traditional sponsorships: vestido, ramo, recuerdos, pastel, vals, brindis, medalla, anillo, biblia, cojines, last doll, tiara.

- Confirm each padrino in writing with the item they are sponsoring (avoids doubles)

HIGH

- Cast the court of damas y chambelanes

HIGH

Traditional: 14 damas + 14 chambelanes + chambelan de honor (mirrors the 15 years). Smaller: 7 pairs or chambelan de honor only.

- Book the photographer and videographer (the best ones reserve a year out)

HIGH

- Book the DJ or sonido and ask if they handle bilingual MC duties for the vals and brindis

HIGH

- Start dress shopping (ball gowns need 4-6 months for ordering and alterations)

HIGH

- Book the mariachi for the misa exit or reception entrance (45-minute sets are standard)

- Pick a vals choreographer for the court (most need 3-4 months of weekly rehearsals)

6 MONTHS BEFORE

- Order the dress and the changing shoes

HIGH

Flat zapatillas for entrance, heels for the cambio de zapatillas ceremony.

- Buy or commission the muñeca de última (last doll), often dressed to match the quinceañera

HIGH

- Order the tiara, medalla, anillo, biblia or cross, and the cojines for the kneeling ceremony

HIGH

- Book the florist for the bouquet (offering to the Virgin Mary), boutonnières, and damas' corsages

HIGH

- Book the cake (pastel): traditional multi-tier with color palette, often with a fountain or staircase base

HIGH

- Book transportation: limo, party bus, or vintage car for quinceañera and court

- Order save-the-dates or send formal invitations 4-5 months out

- Book hair and makeup artist; schedule trial 4 weeks before

- Start a gift registry if the family is doing one

More common in US-based celebrations than in Mexico.

3 MONTHS BEFORE

- Start vals rehearsals weekly with the court

HIGH

Standard waltz plus a baile sorpresa to reggaeton, cumbia, or a pop mashup.

- Confirm chambelanes have matching suits or guayaberas in the color palette

HIGH

- Confirm damas have dresses in the secondary color, ordered together for consistency

HIGH

- Meet with the priest for the misa rehearsal and order of service

HIGH

Readings, bouquet offering, blessing of the tiara, medalla, ring.

- Finalize the reception program with the MC

HIGH

Entrada, brindis, vals, baile sorpresa, cambio de zapatillas, last doll, cake, open dance.

- Order recuerdos (party favors): often small framed photos, rosaries, or themed keepsakes

- Confirm catering menu and tasting (typical: carnitas, pollo, arroz, frijoles charros, salad)

- Book the photo booth or 360 video booth if using one

1 MONTH BEFORE

- Final dress fitting with the changing shoes on hand

HIGH

- Final vals and baile sorpresa rehearsals with full court in shoes and practice skirts

HIGH

- Confirm all padrino contributions are paid or delivered

HIGH

- Print the misa program with order of service in Spanish or bilingual

HIGH

- Confirm headcount with caterer and venue

HIGH

- Hair and makeup trial run with the tiara

- Pick up cake topper, knife, and toasting flutes for the brindis

- Schedule a spa day or facial for the quinceañera the week of

WEEK BEFORE

- Confirm call times with photographer, mariachi, DJ, florist, and venue

HIGH

- Pick up the dress, last doll, tiara, medalla, ring, biblia, and cojines

HIGH

- Walk the court through the misa entrance and the reception entrance in person

HIGH

- Prepare the brindis speech (the 'esta es mi hija' moment)

- Pack an emergency kit: safety pins, double-sided tape, bobby pins, blister patches, stain remover, sewing kit

- Write thank-you notes for padrinos to deliver at the reception

DAY OF CEREMONY

- Hair and makeup start 4-5 hours before misa call time
HIGH
- Arrive at the church 30 minutes early with the court, padrinos, and cojines
HIGH
- Court processional: damas on the arms of chambelanes; chambelan de honor escorts the quinceañera last
HIGH
- During misa: blessing of the tiara, medalla, ring, biblia, and bouquet by the priest
HIGH
- After communion, offer the bouquet (ramo) to the Virgin Mary at her side altar
HIGH
- Mariachi plays at the church exit or the procession to the reception
- Quick photo session in the church or at a nearby park before heading to the reception

DAY OF RECEPTION

- Grand entrance: court enters in pairs, then quinceañera with her father or chambelan de honor
HIGH
- Brindis: parents give the toast ('esta es mi hija'), guests raise glasses
HIGH
- Vals: choreographed waltz with chambelan de honor, then the father, then the court
HIGH
- Baile sorpresa: the second choreographed number, usually a costume reveal or genre switch
HIGH
- Cambio de zapatillas: father removes flats and replaces them with heels (the step into womanhood)
HIGH
- Muñeca de última: quinceañera receives the doll from her parents as the symbolic last toy of childhood
HIGH
Often passed to a younger cousin or sister.
- Cake cutting with the parents and padrinos del pastel beside them
- Open dance floor with DJ, often a hora loca with props later in the night

COURT, DAMAS, AND CHAMBELANES

- Confirm court size early: 14 pairs + chambelan de honor, or 7 pairs, or chambelan de honor only
HIGH
- Assign a court coordinator or older cousin to keep rehearsals on schedule
HIGH
- Match chambelan attire: black or navy suits with vests or ties in the accent color
HIGH
- Order all damas dresses from the same shop in the same color and silhouette
HIGH
- Plan a court bonding event: dinner or rehearsal pizza night about a month out
- Gift court members a small thank-you: cufflinks for chambelanes, jewelry or robes for damas

TRADITIONS AND SYMBOLIC ELEMENTS

- Tiara: blessed at misa; represents the quinceañera as a princess in the eyes of God and family
HIGH
- Medalla and rosary or cross: religious symbols presented by padrinos at the mass
HIGH
- Anillo (ring): symbol of the unending circle of God and family
HIGH
- Biblia and rosario: presented by padrinos during the mass for faith and prayer
HIGH
- Ramo (bouquet) to the Virgin Mary: offered at the side altar after communion as a dedication
HIGH
- Cojines (kneeling pillows): used at the altar during the mass
HIGH
- Muñeca de última: last doll, symbol of leaving childhood behind
HIGH
- Cambio de zapatillas: flat shoes traded for heels by the father, the visible passage to womanhood
HIGH
- Vals: waltz with father and chambelan de honor, the central reception dance
- Baile sorpresa: surprise dance, the modern counterweight to the formal vals