

Wedding Timeline Checklist

Checklist · 28 items · 6 sections

A complete hour-by-hour wedding day timeline checklist. Covers getting ready, ceremony, cocktail hour, reception, and end of night: so the day flows perfectly.

Open the editable, AI-powered version online:

<https://genechecklist.com/checklist/wedding-timeline-checklist>

GETTING READY

- Hair and makeup start time confirmed with artist (work backward from ceremony)

HIGH

Allow 45-60 min per person. Bride typically goes last for freshest look

- Photographer arrives during getting ready (typically 2 hours before ceremony)

HIGH

- Breakfast or snacks organized for bridal party during getting ready

- Bridesmaids dressed and ready 30 min before bride's last touch-ups

HIGH

PRE-CEREMONY PHOTOS

- Bridal portraits (bride alone): typically 30 min before first look or ceremony

HIGH

- First look (if doing one): 45-60 min before ceremony allows full couple portraits

- Bridal party group photos (if doing before ceremony)

- Family formals before ceremony (if applicable and schedule allows)

CEREMONY

- Guests seated 30 min before ceremony start time

HIGH

- Processional begins (ceremony start time)

HIGH

- Ceremony: typically 20-30 min for civil, 45-60 min for religious

HIGH

- Recessional and exit

HIGH

COCKTAIL HOUR

- Cocktail hour begins: guests move to cocktail area
HIGH
Cocktail hour is typically 60 min: gives couple time for portraits
- Couple and wedding party photos during cocktail hour
HIGH
- Family formal photos (if not done before ceremony)
HIGH

RECEPTION

- Grand entrance: couple introduced into reception
HIGH
- First dance
HIGH
- Father/daughter and mother/son dances
- Welcome speech: typically by best man or MOH
HIGH
- Dinner service begins
HIGH
- Toasts during dinner: best man, MOH, family (limit to 3-4 speakers)
HIGH
- Cake cutting: typically after dinner, before or during dessert
HIGH
- Open dancing begins
HIGH
- Bouquet and garter toss (if doing)

END OF NIGHT

- Last dance announced 15-20 min before end of reception
HIGH
- Send-off (sparklers, confetti, or just farewells)
- Venue breakdown / vendor wrap-up
HIGH
- Designate someone to collect cards, gifts, and personal items from venue
HIGH