



How To Plan

YOUR WEDDING

by All Seasons Weddings

www.allseasonsweddings.com

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▼ First Steps

Planning a wedding is, for a lot of us, the biggest event we'll ever organize. It can be overwhelming at first but there are steps that you can take to make sure everything goes perfectly on the day.



The first step is to set a budget. Whether it's a blowout formal wedding at a grand banquet hall, or an intimate pop-up wedding at your favorite spot in the park, there are great options at all price points.





▼
What you will need

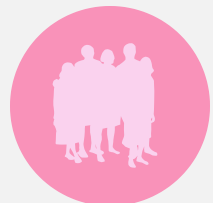
Getting married is easy! There are only a few essential elements in making your wedding a reality.



Your significant other.



The paperwork.



Witnesses - at least 2.



A location.



A wedding officiant (we can help you with this part!)

▼ The All Seasons Difference



A WHOLE TEAM ON YOUR SIDE



Starting with our friendly office staff, we will walk you through the process of getting married.

CHOOSE THE OFFICIANT THAT IS THE BEST MATCH



With over 700 officiants in Canada, we have a large and experienced team to choose from.

PEACE OF MIND



If things go sideways, there is someone to call, with our weekend on call, emergency line.

CRAFTING THE PERFECT CEREMONY



Draw on the creativity & experience of our officiants and the ceremony resources on our website and in this guide.

... IN THE LANGUAGE(S) YOU WANT



Whether you want to include English & French, or Spanish, German, Mandarin, Cantonese, Arabic (among many others), All Seasons has options for you.



All Seasons Weddings was an absolute pleasure to deal with. They made it so simple to create the perfect & most meaningful ceremony.

Ali & Jeff

When there are a billion things to organize, it's quite incredible that such a huge piece of the puzzle is made so easy for the bride and groom.

Mark &
Jessica

We received lots of positive feedback from guests and many singled out our officiant. Several said the ceremony was the best they had ever attended.

Derek &
Steve

Bev was AMAZING! She made the whole process enjoyable & stress free. We could not have asked for a better officiant. She is so professional and helpful.

Jonathan &
Natasha

Deborah was absolutely amazing! She had an amazing calmness & friendliness that fit in with my crazy family right away!

Jared &
Brittini

The All Seasons system made the whole selection process and contacting an officiant extremely easy.

Kirk &
Heather

▼ Weddings on a Budget

Suggestions for getting the most for your money.



Wedding costs have a way of ballooning out of control. Creating a budget isn't simply knowing you have a set amount to spend then maxing it out.

Decide what is important to you. Sure, you'd like to have it all... but if you can't, you need to decide what areas are most important to you. Is it the wedding dress/suit? An abundance of flowers? A top-notch photographer?

Pass on some things altogether. If a fancy wedding cake isn't a priority, just don't do it. Serve cookies instead. Pass on bouquets, a photo booth for the reception, and a limo or vintage car rental. A "wedding dress" doesn't have to come from a bridal boutique.

Research. Once you've set an initial budget, start researching. Get a real sense for how much things cost. You may want to play high end, low end. What's the cost of your dream venue? What is a low-cost alternative?

Trim your guest list. It's fine to keep the ceremony and dinner to a more manageable number and then open the doors for the reception. A more intimate wedding can be really lovely. Ask, "Will this person be in my life in five years?" And "When was the last time I saw them or had a real conversation with them?"

▼ Weddings on a Budget

Be flexible. If you can be flexible with your date, you can save on the venue, catering and other vendors as well. Stay away from Saturdays. Wedding vendors located in the suburbs or rural areas may be willing to beat the price you'll pay right in the city.

Host at home. Booking a wedding venue can cost a lot. See if your friends or family have a suitable space, your condo's party room, or the home of a relative, for example. Consider an all-in-one location that can accommodate your ceremony and reception

Use recycled décor. Look for wedding groups on social media where couples resell their wedding items (e.g. centrepieces, seating charts, and signs) for much less than new.

Flowers. See what is in season and local for your wedding date. Talk budget with your florist and let them know that you are open to suggestions to get the most bloom for your buck. Go with non-floral décor and incorporate candles/greenery for tables.

DIY. With advance planning, you can do some things yourself, from invitations to wedding favours and decorations. Be cautious about tackling too much.

Less expensive alternatives. Contact a local university for music students to provide music. Vendors just starting out will often offer lower prices as they build their reputation. If the venue has a sound system, forgo a DJ and prepare your own dance-a-thon playlist.

Host a cocktail reception with finger food instead of dinner. You'll pay less and have the added bonus of getting more face time with your guests. Shrink the bar menu down to a couple of options to save.

Leave 'wedding' off your requests. When contacting a vendor, try not to mention the word 'wedding' as there is often a markup. When ordering cake, order cake for 50 people, not a wedding cake.

Build in a buffer. Building a little extra into your budget for unexpected costs will save you stress if additional expenditure comes up.

Plan and plan some more. Last-minute decisions don't allow for space or time to think. A longer lead time gives you a chance to find sales and work on discounts.



▼ Involving Family & Friends

When you get married it can feel like there are a million things to do... and a million people want to help. Some will expect to be included in the preparations, like the bridal party and perhaps parents & siblings. There may be other special people that won't be central figures, but you'd still like to give them a little job or carve out some time for them on the big day. Here are some tasks and activities that you can delegate to make everyone feel involved:



Leading Up to the Big Day

- Creating ceremony programs (great for techie youth or grownups).
- Crafting table centrepieces.
- Creating or packaging wedding favours.
- Wedding dress shopping. A grandmother or godmother would be thrilled to be invited along.
- Making “goodie bags” for children attending the reception.
- Creating a photo collage to display at the reception.
- Creating a slideshow or video with photos/video clips of the couple through the years to play at the reception.
- Addressing invitations.
- Choreographing a dance for the reception.
- Airport pick-ups for out-of-town guest arrivals.



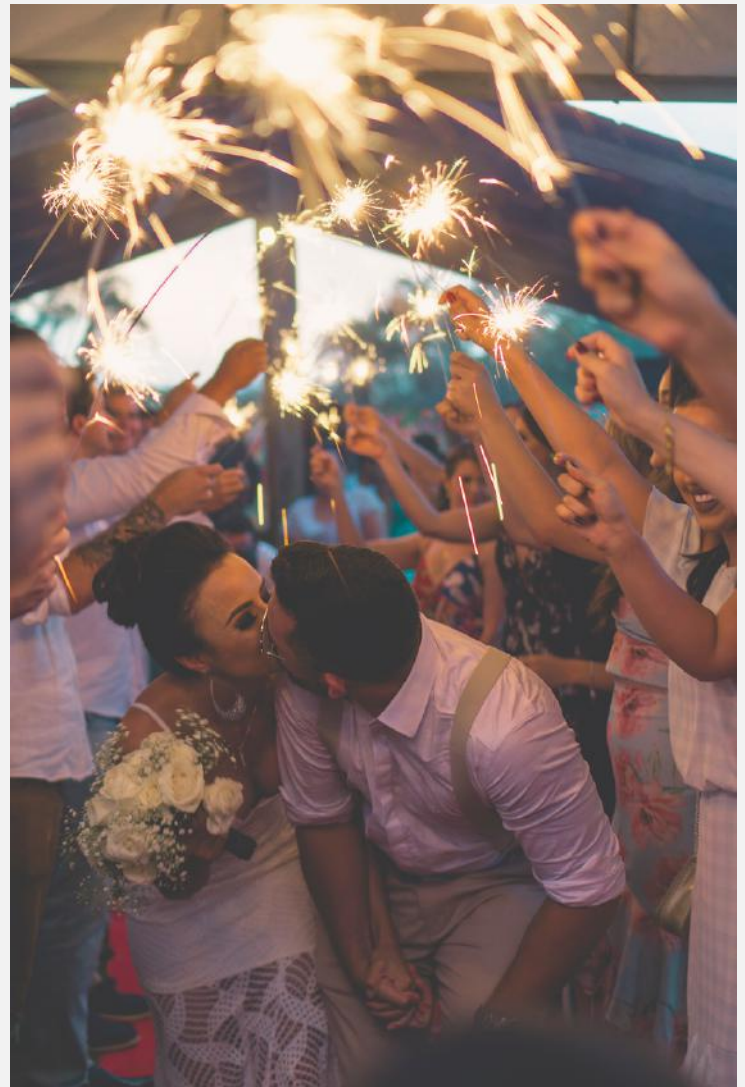
▼ Involving Family & Friends

Before and During the Ceremony

- Picking up flowers/bouquets from florist.
- Placing some decorations at the ceremony location and/or reception venue.
- Help the bride get dressed/hair done/make-up. Place reserved signs for seats at the ceremony location
- Ushering – it may have fallen a little out of fashion, but showing people to a seat is often appreciated by guests who don't know where to sit at the ceremony.
- Handing out programs at the ceremony or bubbles for afterwards.
- Carry the rings (caution that small children may be unpredictable in this regard).
- Being part of the wedding procession (ring security, flower girl, maid/men of honour and best men/maids).
- Delivering a reading or poem during the ceremony.
- Singing or playing an instrument during the signing portion of the ceremony.
- Making announcements before the ceremony (couple have asked that guests not take photos during the ceremony. Join us for a group picture after the ceremony. Remember to turn off your phone.)

Reception

- MC at reception.
- Making a speech/toast.
- Unofficial reception photographers (great for kids who will be on their phones all evening anyway) You can even make them a badge or card on a lanyard to display.
- Responsible person to take care of gifts and cards.
- Providing bride and groom a safe ride to where they are spending the night.





The Paperwork



1

Look up your provincial website to see where you can purchase a marriage licence.

Ontario

Alberta

BC

Nova Scotia

QC: the officiant acts as the licensing agent and has the necessary paperwork



2

Check to see what form of ID you will need to present when purchasing your licence. Or in QC what you will need to show the officiant to complete the necessary paperwork. Make sure you have all other necessary paperwork such as divorce certificates.



3

Send a photo or scan of your marriage licence to your officiant so they can prepare some of their paperwork ahead of time. This does not apply to QC.

▼ Traditional Sample Wedding Ceremony

Feel free to customize the ceremony, including writing your own vows. Involve a family member or a friend!

Word of Welcome

Welcome. My name is _____ and I have the privilege of performing this marriage ceremony today. On behalf of [your name] and [partner] welcome and thank you for being here. They are delighted that you are here today to share in their joy during this wonderful moment in their lives. By your presence, you celebrate with them the love they have discovered in each other and you support their decision to commit themselves to one another for the rest of their lives.

Address to the Assembly

Today their relationship changes. All of us know it will grow, and become stronger and better. Indeed this day is a day of hope. A day in which [partner] and [your name] demonstrate their commitment, devotion, and mutual respect, as well as their faith and love in one another. You who are gathered here as witnesses are called to continue your support and encouragement as they unite in marriage.

Address to the Couple

We all know marriage is more than two people standing up here repeating vows. There is an art to any creative activity. So too in marriage. Part of the art of marriage is finding room for the things of the spirit.

So, to you two, I say: continue in your search for the good and the beautiful in this life. Part of the art of marriage is being flexible. So in your marriage cultivate flexibility, patience, understanding and a sense of humour. Part of the art of marriage is to comfort each other and strive to be each other's best friend.

Most importantly, develop the capacity to forgive and heal your differences day by day. Always remember that your love can prevail. It can be the miracle that invites you to learn, to blossom, to expand your horizons.

This ceremony today is a most serious covenant made before all of us as witnesses. From your new marriage relationship can come the nurture and strength you two need to face the world. Only from this moment on you will face the world together in a new way. Today a new family is born and our world will be the better for its birth. For this we all celebrate.

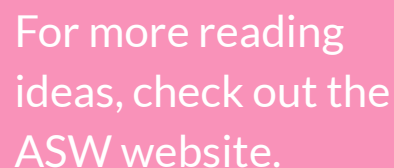
Reading

Now a reading that expresses the sense of joy and love on this occasion. These two are dedicating it to one another. It is called 'To My Friend':

I love you not only for what you are but for what I am when I am with you.
I love you not only for what you have made of yourself but for what you are making of me.
I love you because you have done more than any creed could have done to make me good,
and more than any fate could have done to make me happy.
You have done it without a touch, without a word, without a sign.
You have done it by being yourself.
Perhaps that's what being a friend means, after all.

Expression of Intent and Consent

Now just a few questions.



For more reading ideas, check out the ASW website.

First for you [partner]. You have chosen [your name] to be your husband/wife/partner. Will you love and respect him/her/them? Will you be honest with him/her/them always? Will you stand by him/her/them through whatever may come? **(Answer: 'I will')**

[Your name], you have chosen [partner] to be your husband/wife/partner. Will you love and respect him/her/them? Will you be honest with him/her/them always? Will you stand by him/her/them through whatever may come?

(Answer: 'I will')

And do you both promise to make the necessary adjustments in your personal lives so that you may continue to live in a harmonious relationship together?

(Answer: 'We do')

Affirmation of Family and Friends

Now, in the spirit of joy and affirmation, I want to ask your families and friends a question: Do you, the families and friends of [partner] and [your name], give them your blessing and support, wishing them a wonderful life together?

(All answer: 'We do')

Exchange of Vows

[Your name] and [partner], we now come to your vows. May I remind you that saying your vows is one thing but nothing is more challenging than living them day by day. What you promise today must be renewed tomorrow and each day that stretches out before you. Will you now please turn and face each other and hold hands, looking at each other.

[Partner], please repeat after me:

In the presence of our family and friends I [partner] choose you [your name] to be my husband/wife/partner, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, to love and to cherish, and to be faithful to you alone. This is my solemn vow.

Now, [your name], please repeat after me:

In the presence of our family and friends, I [your name] choose you [partner] to be my husband/wife/partner, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, in joy and in sorrow, to love and to cherish, and to be faithful to you alone. This is my solemn vow.



See page 21 for advice
on writing your own
VOWS.

Giving and Receiving of Rings

May I have the rings, please. [Partner], please repeat after me:

[Your name], I give you this ring, that you may wear, as a symbol of the vows, we have made this day. I pledge you my love and respect, my laughter and my tears. With all that I am, I honour you.

Now, [your name], please repeat after me:

[Partner], I give you this ring that you may wear as a symbol of the vows we have made this day. I pledge you my love and respect, my laughter and my tears. With all that I am, I honour you. Now may those who wear these rings live in love all their days.

Affirmation of the Marriage

Now may the love which has brought you together continue to grow and enrich your lives. May you meet with courage the problems which arise to challenge you and may your relationship always be one of love and trust. May the happiness you share today be with you always and may every word you have pledged here be a living truth in your lives.

Declaration of the Marriage

[Partner] and [your name], we have heard your promise to share your lives in marriage. We recognize and respect the covenant of marriage you have made here this day before each one of us as witnesses. Therefore, in the honesty and sincerity of what you have said and done here today, it is my honour and delight to declare you henceforth to be husband and wife/henceforth to be married.

You may seal your vows with a kiss.

The Signing of the Register

Introduction of the Couple

It is my personal privilege and a great joy to be the first one to introduce [partner] and [your name] as husband and wife/partners for life. Please greet them warmly.

All Seasons will provide you with a personalized sample ceremony, bilingual if requested, that you can further customize.

Recessional

▼ Handfasting Vows

Tie the knot with your partner and add these Wiccan inspired vows to your ceremony.

Officiant *(to the couple)*

Please join hands.

As your hands are joined, so are your lives,

Holding each other,

Caressing each other,

Supporting each other,

Loving each other.

The officiant ties the ribbon around the couple's joined hands.

Couple *(repeat after the officiant in turn)*

I, _____, promise you, _____, that I will be your husband/wife/partner,

From this day forward,

To love and respect you,

To support and to hold you,

To make you laugh

And to be there when you cry,

To softly kiss you when you are hurting,

And to be your companion and your friend,

On this journey that we will now make together.

The officiant announces that the couple are now bound to each other. The couple unclasp hands and remove themselves from binding while leaving ribbon tied. The knot is left tied to symbolize the permanence of the union. The ribbon may be placed on the signing table to be taken home by the couple.



▼ Rose Ceremony

Involve your parents or children in the ceremony!

Rose Ceremony for Parents

Marriage is a coming together of two lives, and a celebration of the love of two people. But, it is more. The love that you feel for one another is the flowering of a seed your mothers planted in your hearts many years ago. When you were first born, you were a bundle of diapers and tears, and your mothers lost sleep caring for you. Their love for you has brought them great happiness and great challenges, and their love did not diminish as they met these challenges. That is the great lesson you can bring into your marriage. As you embrace one another in your love, so too do you embrace the families which have been brought together on this happy occasion. As a token of your gratitude for your families, I would like to ask you to offer these symbols of eternal love, these roses, to your mothers.

The couple hand a single rose to each mother together, offering the mothers kisses if they wish.

Rose Ceremony for Children

Not only are [your names] creating a marriage today, but they also are forming a family with [your children's names]. Just as it is appropriate for them to declare their love for each other, they also wish to show you how much they love you with the gift of a rose.

The couple hand a single rose to each child.



▼ Address to Parents

As our sons and daughters find partners and find homes for the next generation, each family is enriched and enlarged. **Would the parents of ____ and ____ please stand?**

This occasion is a special celebration for you, the parents who have brought these children into the world, and nurtured them into adulthood. Today you are witnessing another stage in the lives of your son and daughter/sons/daughters.

Your continuing support and encouragement will be needed as _____ and _____ unite in marriage. Will you, who have loved and nurtured these two, try with the greatest love and wisdom you have, to support this new couple and help in every way?

Answer: yes.

▼ Unity Candle

Before the vows, the parents of the couple come forward (or grandparents or other) and light a candle. Then the partners light the center unity candle from these two outside candles. The unity candle symbolizes the joining of their families, the merging of two individuals, and the creation of a new family.

Officiant: At this time we will have the lighting of the unity candle. I want to ask representatives of both families to light one of the outside candles. Please come forward.

The two outside candles have been lit to symbolize the two families of [your name] and [partner]. They represent separate lives and separate families, in other words, your lives before today.



The couple will light the centre candle from the other two. The three candles will remain lit for the remainder of the ceremony. One candle for each of them, and one candle for the unity of their new family, and as a symbol of their commitment to each other and to a lasting and loving marriage.

[Your name] and [partner] please light the unity candle.

▼ Sand Ceremony

[Partner 1] and [Partner 2] have chosen to commemorate their marriage through the celebration of a Sand Ceremony. Today, with the pouring of each individual color of sand, a family is born, and for this we will all celebrate.

The ceremony symbolizes the inseparable union of [Partner 1], [Partner 2] and their children into a new and eternal family unit.

[Partner 1], [Partner 2] and (children's names) will pour their separate containers of sand into one common vessel. Each grain of sand in these separate containers represents a unique and separate moment, decision, feeling or event that helped shape them all into the separate and unique individuals that they are today.

As they pour their containers of sand into a common vessel, they will merge into a loving and supportive family unit. [Partner 1], [Partner 2] and (children's names), just as these grains of sand can never be separated into their individual containers again, so to may your bond be inseparable.



▼ Why Marriage?

BY MARI NICHOLS-HAINING

Because to the depths of me, I long to love
one person,

With all my heart, my soul, my mind, my
body...

Because I need a forever friend to trust
with the intimacies of me,

Who won't hold them against me,

Who loves me when I'm unlikable,

Who sees the small child in me, and

Who looks for the divine potential of me...

Because I need to cuddle in the warmth of
the night

With someone who thanks God for me,

With someone I feel blessed to hold...

Because marriage means opportunity

To grow in love in friendship...

Because marriage is a discipline

To be added to a list of achievements...

Because marriages do not fail, people fail

When they enter into marriage

Expecting another to make them whole...

Because, knowing this,

I promise myself to take full responsibility

For my spiritual, mental and physical
wholeness

I create me,

I take half of the responsibility for my
marriage

Together we create our marriage...

Because with this understanding

The possibilities are limitless.



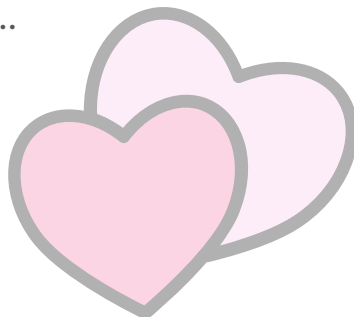
▼ An Irish Blessing

May green be the grass you walk on,
May blue be the skies above you,
May pure be the joys that surround you,
May true be the hearts that love you.

▼ Relativity

BY ALBERT EINSTEIN

Gravitation cannot be held responsible for
people falling in love. How on earth can you
explain in terms of chemistry and physics so
important a biological phenomenon as first
love? Put your hand on a stove for a minute
and it seems like an hour. Sit with that
special someone for an hour and it seems
like a minute. That's relativity.



▼ Vital Vow Advice

You should definitely consider writing your own vows, and here's why. Your ceremony helps to set the tone for your entire wedding day, so it should represent your relationship and personalities. The centrepiece of the ceremony is the vows.

Your own words will feel more natural than a pre-scripted selection. The ceremony may feel like a blur and speaking your own words can help you focus and be present in the moment.

Personalized vows will hold the attention of your friends and family and give them a window into your love story.

What should vows include? Traditionally, they make reference to the good and tough times ahead, as well as promises to love and cherish each other, but there is room for more.

You can mention favourite qualities about your partner or favourite things about



your relationship. Perhaps include reference to your faith, your kids, or to other things that you share (love of NASCAR, traveling, or dancing).

Beware of in-jokes or overly personal details. Do be quirky and showcase the uniqueness of your relationship, but don't leave guests thinking WTH?

Be genuine, be heartfelt but most importantly, make sure your vows are for each other, not aimed at getting a laugh (or tears) from the guests. We suggest keeping to less than 2 minutes each – it's more time than you think.

I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where. I love you straightforwardly, without complexities or pride; so I love you because I know no other way than this: where I does not exist, nor you, so close that your hand on my chest is my hand, so close that your eyes close as I fall asleep. -Pablo Neruda

Discuss tone (romantic, humorous) and length with your partner. Then call your officiant into action. If both partners send their written vows to the officiant, they can make sure they are well-balanced.

Write them in advance, not the day before, so you have time to practice. Read your vows out loud in front of a mirror.

Speak slowly and clearly. You should practice enough that you won't stumble, and can look up at your partner a time or two as you speak.



"I want us to grow old and crusty together, to shake our collective fists at teenagers, and to talk endlessly about the old days when things were better, cheaper, and generally more wholesome."

"I promise not to watch the next episode without you."

"I want your worst — give me your bad hair days, your long commutes, your burnt coffee, lost keys, splashed shoes, lost receipts, give me your every day, and I will give you my love to make it alright."

Make sure that your officiant has a copy of your vows. That way if your cue cards are misplaced the day of the wedding, there will be no need to panic.

Need inspiration? The internet is full of it. You don't have to write from scratch – you can modify something that you find.

If you or your partner are very shy or anxious, your vows can be presented to you in question form. This means the officiant will do all the heavy lifting and read the vows to you as a question. All you have to say is, "I do."

▼ HAPPILY EVER AFTER



After the ceremony, your officiant will leave you with a piece of paper that is an interim marriage document. It is a keepsake, but not a legal marriage certificate.

To obtain your legal marriage certificate:

Ontario: Wait 10 to 12 weeks after the ceremony before applying as it can take up to 12 weeks for the government to process the marriage licence and register your marriage. You can easily apply [online](#) or by mail.

Alberta: Wait two weeks after the wedding for the province to register your marriage, then apply at a registry office or by mail. [Read more.](#)

BC: You will automatically be sent a certificate – no application is needed

Nova Scotia: Wait 4-6 weeks after the wedding and then apply to Vital Statistics online, in person or by mail. [Read more.](#)

QC: The Directeur de l'état civil will send you a letter telling you that your marriage is registered, along with a "Secure NIP Number," for you to make a secure application for your marriage certificate. You can find the application form [here.](#)

After the wedding is over

1. Send thank you cards
2. Return rentals, unused items
3. Sell/donate decor items, etc.
4. Get wedding dress/suit cleaned
5. Create/order wedding album
6. Take down wedding website
7. Write vendor reviews
8. Investigate name change if applicable
9. Relax

