

# WEDDING PLANNING GUIDE

HOW TO ENSURE  
YOUR WEDDING  
PHOTOS REFLECT  
THE REAL YOU

P | +44 7493299923  
I | @EMERALDPHOTO.UK

E | EMERALDPHOTO.UK@GMAIL.COM  
W | EMERALDPHOTO.CO.UK

---

WWW.EMERALDPHOTO.CO.UK

---



---

WWW.EMERALDPHOTO.CO.UK

---

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

pg. 04

Hello & Congratulations

pg. 06

What to expect

pg. 08

Timelines

pg. 12

Getting ready

pg. 14

Cultural weddings

pg. 16

Destination weddings

pg. 21

Portraits

pg. 30

Ceremony & Receptions

pg. 35

Tips & Tricks

WEDDING GUIDE

# 01

HELLO & CONGRATULATIONS

If you're here, it's likely because you've just embarked on the exciting engagement journey and are planning your dream wedding day.

First off, congratulations! And if you're already collaborating with me at Emerald Photo UK, I'm deeply honoured that I've been chosen to capture your moments. I'm eagerly looking forward to beginning this creative journey with you.

For those who've stumbled upon this guide hoping to find some direction for your wedding planning, a warm welcome to you. I appreciate you exploring my portfolio and hope this guide provides invaluable information and tips for orchestrating your ideal wedding day.

My global adventures have taken me to countless locations to document my clients' love stories. I'm pouring these experiences into this guide to equip you with the finest advice and insights for planning your wedding. You should be looking for a curated timeline, innovative photo session scheduling ideas, and my seasoned advice on managing a destination wedding, navigating the complexities of a metropolitan setting, and other unique scenarios you might have yet to consider.

My partner and I are the heart and soul behind Emerald Photo UK - passionate about capturing the genuine, unguarded moments that tell the story of your love. Our journey has led me to photograph couples in diverse locales, such as the UK, Hungary, Austria, Croatia and Prague. Leveraging this wealth of experience, I've crafted an extensive 40-page guide filled with everything I've learned.

My mission is to deliver more than just photographs; I aim to provide a narrative that truly sets your story apart. Entrusted by couples worldwide, I bring my artistic flair and storytelling prowess to celebrate your unique love story. Let's create something unforgettable together.



# 02

## YOUR ENGAGEMENT SESSION

Engagement sessions are perfect for you and your photographer to build a relationship with each other. They allow us to capture the essence of your relationship and determine the most authentic way to narrate your love story. Additionally, these sessions are crucial in ensuring you're at ease in front of the camera on your big day.

From the initial planning stages and selecting outfits to the actual shoot at your chosen location, followed by choosing and customising your final photos, the entire journey is designed to be enjoyable and memorable.

We're committed to crafting pictures that are beautiful and deeply meaningful to you. We've put together this guide to help you fully embrace and get the most out of your engagement session.



## WHAT TO WEAR

Picking out what to wear for your engagement photoshoot is fun and a great way to show off your unique style as a couple! Think of outfits that look cute together and match the vibe of your photoshoot spot. Whether it's cosy sweaters for a forest backdrop or cool, breezy outfits for the beach, go for clothes that make you feel like yourselves.

Keep it comfy so you can cuddle up or dance around without a worry. And hey, it's your love story, so whether you choose snazzy suits, adorable dresses, or your favourite jeans, the most important thing is to wear your smiles and let your happiness shine through!

## HAVE FUN

The magic in photos comes from your real connection and the joy of being together. When you're engaged in activities you genuinely enjoy, your natural chemistry shines through effortlessly. Authentic smiles and heartfelt moments are best captured when you're in your element, doing what you love.

Whether visiting a spot with special memories or simply relaxing at home, being in a comfortable and meaningful setting allows your genuine emotions and bond to surface; this authenticity makes the experience enjoyable and ensures your photos genuinely reflect your unique relationship.

## CREATIVE IDEAS

Pinterest is a fantastic resource for inspiring and helping clients craft a unique vision for their photoshoots. It's a treasure trove for discovering concepts that resonate with your style. While it's great for gathering ideas, remember that authenticity shines brightest. Directly imitating the latest trends or quirky poses might not age well and could appear out-of-date by your wedding day. Use Pinterest as a starting point to ignite your creativity, then add your twist to make your engagement photos genuinely one-of-a-kind.



# 03

## HOW TO PLAN YOUR WEDDING DAY SCHEDULE

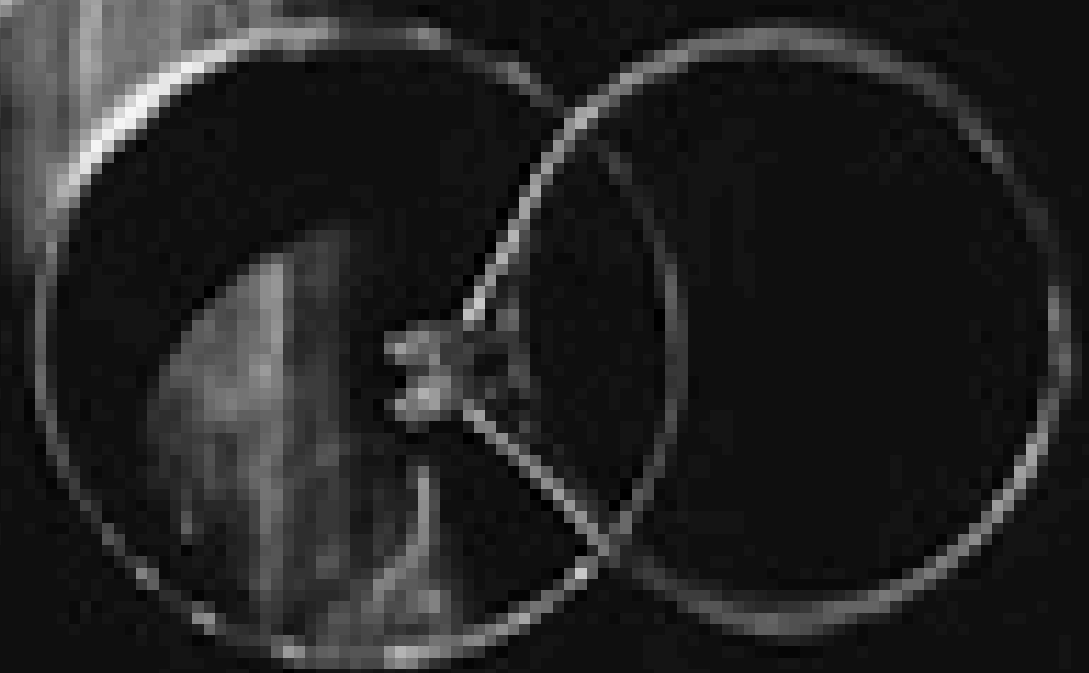
TIMELINES



Planning your wedding day schedule is like putting together the perfect playlist – it sets the rhythm for a day filled with love and celebration! If you're steering the ship without a planner, it's super important to sync up with your vendors and photographer. We photographers love to go with the flow of your day, capturing the magic as it unfolds, all according to your well-thought-out plan.

Here's a little tip: Be generous when pencilling in time to getting ready. Hair and makeup have a sneaky way of taking longer than expected, and the last thing you want is to feel rushed before you walk down the aisle. Plus, that extra time is perfect for snapping gorgeous bridal portraits while relaxed and glowing.

And hey, remember to sneak away with your sweetheart for a couple of photos! We suggest setting aside about 20 minutes during that dreamy golden hour light – it's pure photo magic. Then, as the stars come out, let's grab a few more minutes to play with some creative night lighting. It's all about making your day picture-perfect, super chill, and fun!



## YOUR WEDDING TIMELINE

As you plan your big day, you might wonder, "How much time do we need for those awesome photos?" If you're dreaming of something more spontaneous than the classic, posed wedding pics, why not go for a photojournalistic or documentary vibe?

It's all about catching those real, unscripted moments without making the day feel like a photo shoot. Of course, we'll carve out some particular time for those essential Bride/Groom and couple's snaps. But apart from that, expect a laid-back, candid style that lets everyone be their fabulous selves – most won't even notice the camera!

Our motto? Let the day roll out beautifully and naturally. We're old hands at juggling tight timelines while keeping everything chill and fun. We've sketched the schedule to help you picture how the day might go, photo-wise.

## Getting Ready

Please ensure you're all glammed up and ready to go at least an hour before heading out.

**Bridal Portraits:** Let's take about 20 minutes for some stunning shots.

**Groom Portraits:** We'll need about 10 minutes (even quicker if we're all in the same spot).

**Bridal Party:** Another 10 minutes to capture the fun with your squad.

Plus, there is a 30-minute cushion before the ceremony for early birds and last-minute priming.

## Ceremony

Family Photos and a Big Group Shot: We'll wrap this up in 30 minutes.

## Reception

**Bride & Groom Portraits:** Set aside 15-20 minutes for those dreamy, golden hour pics.

**Nighttime Magic:** Another 10 minutes later for some fantastic, creative night shots.

All in all, we're looking at around 40 minutes of portrait time.

Remember, these times are just a guide. Your wedding is uniquely yours, and we're here to capture its essence, ensuring your day looks picture-perfect and feels effortlessly joyful and genuine.



## S A M P L E   P H O T O G R A P H Y   T I M E L I N E

This timeline is crafted for a magical day, capturing every moment beautifully. Remember, while this is a guide, we're all about flexibility and capturing those spontaneous, perfect moments as they happen!

### Sample Photography Timeline

(Based on a 4:30 pm ceremony start time, perfect for an August wedding in London with a 10-hour photography package.)

- 13:30** • **Photographer arrives.** Capturing the getting-ready moments – the dress, shoes, and all those unique details.
- 14:00** • **Bride's hair and makeup session.**
- 15:00** • **The bride steps into her dress.**
- 15:30** • **It's time for some stunning Bride portraits.**
- 16:00** • **Departure for the ceremony.**
- 16:30** • **Ceremony Coverage begins.** The magic and emotions of saying "I do."
- 17:30** • **Family formal portraits.** (We recommend keeping these brief so you're kept from your guests for a short time. You can take more at the reception if you'd like.)
- 17:30** • Cocktail hour kicks off. Mingle, relax, and enjoy – we've covered the candid shots!
- 18:30** • **The bride and groom join the cocktail hour when ready.**  
Meanwhile, I capture the reception setup and also the guests getting seated for dinner.
- 18:45** • **The grand entrance.** Your moment to shine as you enter the reception.
- 19:00** • **Dinner is served.** (The photographer takes a break and eats – we need our energy to capture your best moments!)
- 19:30** • **Sunset portraits with the couple**
- 20:00** • **Speeches.** Capturing every laugh, tear, and cheer.
- 20:30** • **It's a quick escape for some creative nighttime portraits.**
- 21:00** • **Cake cutting.** The sweetest moments were captured.
- 21:30** • **First dances.** Your dance floor debut as a married couple.
- 22:00** • **The party begins.** Dance, laugh, and celebrate – we'll catch every moment!
- 23:00** • **Photographer finishes.**  
• **Bride & Groom Official Exit.** The final, memorable shot of the night.

(If the bridal parties are nearby, I can cover both; otherwise, we'll need time to capture these moments as well.)

(The timing depends on the sunset; we aim for about an hour before. We'll adjust accordingly if winter or the sun sets early.)

(If the night extends beyond this, additional time may be needed for fireworks or a grand exit.)

# 04

## GETTING READY

GETTING READY



The preparation phase of a wedding holds its unique charm and significance, as it's when the palpable mix of anticipation and joy shines through. Yet, amidst this flurry of emotions, it's easy to overlook the inherent chaos accompanying this day's segment.

Imagine squeezing in the bridesmaids, the makeup artist, hairstylists, and photographers into a single room brimming with makeup essentials, curling irons, hairspray, duffel bags, trash bins, water bottles, snacks, and an array of outfits. This bustling space can quickly become congested and need to be more organized. Achieving those timeless and sophisticated 'getting ready' photographs hinges on having ample space and proper lighting.



That's precisely why we emphasize the importance of thoughtfully selecting your preparation area well in advance rather than making it a last-minute decision. Refrain from restricting your choices to hotel rooms; exploring residences on platforms like Airbnb can be a fantastic alternative. These spaces often provide more captivating and aesthetically pleasing backdrops, superior lighting, and ample space to move around comfortably without feeling squeezed in.

Suppose a hotel room is your setting of choice. In that case, it's wise to consider reserving an additional room or coordinating with friends to ensure one room remains a designated, clutter-free area. This means personal items should be neatly tucked away out of sight! Would you be able to get ready at your venue? Is there a separate space where items like the dress can be showcased and photographed without distracting clutter?

Lighting, too, is a critical factor. Ideally, we prefer to work in a room bathed in natural light, allowing us to turn off all artificial lights. This helps avoid the unflattering skin tones that mixed lighting (a combination of natural light, lamps, and overhead lights) can create.

Sometimes, we might introduce studio lighting for your bridal portraits and particular 'getting ready' shots. This approach is more feasible in a room that can comfortably accommodate the light stands and flashes we use, which do require a bit of extra space. Remember, we're here to assist you in orchestrating this segment of your day, so don't hesitate to reach out for guidance. We're more than happy to help!

## 05

## CULTURAL WEDDINGS

We are passionate about capturing the vibrant traditions of cultural weddings, including those that feature a mix of Western ceremonies and deep-rooted cultural practices or are entirely dedicated to celebrating specific traditions. This guide offers our top four pieces of advice to ensure you experience a joyful and stress-free wedding day.

1. *Timing considerations are essential, mainly if your wedding includes a morning ceremony. Our experience extends to the magnificent Afghan weddings, known for their elaborate celebrations, Indian weddings with multi-day festivities, and the unique customs of Jewish and Muslim weddings. It's crucial to discuss with your photographer the best times for capturing your portraits, especially if you plan to wear different outfits throughout the day. Organizing these details well in advance will ensure a smooth flow.*
2. *Detailed planning is vital when incorporating various cultural elements into your wedding. This includes arranging early hair and makeup sessions if your ceremony starts in the morning. Ensure your stylist is informed about the early call time, and consider the logistics for your bridal party—will they need to arrange accommodation nearby to be there on time?*
3. *Focus on the special requirements of your wedding day. Do specific moments, like family portraits after the ceremony or a change of dress between different parts of the celebration, need special attention?*



## WEDDING GUIDE

*Please communicate these needs with your wedding planner and photographer to ensure every detail is taken care of.*

*4. Remember to eat. With activities planned from dawn to dusk, scheduling some time for a meal or snack is important.*

*1. Arranging catering for you and your bridal party during downtime is a smart move to keep everyone energized and happy throughout the day.*

## AFGHAN-HUNGARIAN WEDDING WITH TRADITIONAL AFGHAN CEREMONY IN BUDAPEST

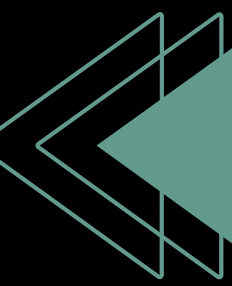


## 06

## DESTINATION WEDDINGS

The allure of tying the knot in a breathtaking, far-flung locale is unmatched. Having captured nuptial celebrations across the globe, we've gathered invaluable insights into the unique challenges and joys of planning a destination wedding. Here are some key tips to ensure your overseas wedding is as seamless and memorable as you dream it to be.

1. *Securing a reliable wedding planner is crucial. Given the distance and cultural differences, having a local expert to help you plan is very important. We can connect with outstanding planners worldwide and are also happy to make recommendations.*
2. *Opt for a post-wedding photoshoot. Destination weddings often feature stunning backdrops you'll want to capture without the rush of the wedding day. Scheduling a shoot for a day or two after the ceremony allows you to explore and photograph in more locations, ensuring you have breathtaking memories of the full beauty of your chosen destination.*
3. *Be mindful of the climate. The dream of a beach wedding in Greece or Thailand comes with the reality of heat, especially in full wedding attire. To avoid discomfort, consider scheduling your ceremony for the cooler, more beautiful sunset hours. Additionally, ensure your preparation area is equipped with effective air conditioning to keep everyone comfortable.*
4. *Limit the number of family portraits immediately after the ceremony. While it's tempting to capture every possible group combination on the day, consider saving non-essential family portraits for later in the evening at the reception.*



## WEDDING GUIDE

*This approach streamlines the day and allows you and your guests to relax and enjoy the celebration, including some time for you to capture those breathtaking sunset photos as a newlywed couple.*

*This strategic planning ensures that the focus remains on celebrating your love, surrounded by the beauty of your chosen destination, without the day feeling rushed or overly scheduled.*

ONE OF OUR FAVOURITE MOMENTS,  
WAS WHEN ERIN AND ROBIN FROM  
AUSTRALIA HAD THEIR WEDDING IN  
THE BRISTOL MARIOTT HOTEL.





It's worthwhile doing an extra shoot to capture the best locations outside the wedding day

## WEDDING GUIDE



Without the constraints of a wedding schedule, you'll discover incredible opportunities and have the chance to capture photos in the most optimal lighting.

## WEDDING GUIDE



EMERALD PHOTO UK

07

PORTRAITS

PORTRAITS





While our approach is predominantly documentary photography for most of your wedding day, the portraits we capture are significant, offering timeless memories you'll treasure.

You can feel at ease during this session; with a decade of experience photographing couples who may not have been professionally photographed before, we are very interested in creating a natural connection between you. This brief, relaxed interlude allows for genuine moments to unfold.

In the following pages, you'll find a selection of our couples' photographs alongside exquisite bridal portraits. Our method is laid-back, ensuring the bridal portraits are enjoyable and feel less like a formal photo session and more like a moment to cherish your attire, capturing you and your dress gracefully before the ceremony.

For the couple's portraits, we encourage you to engage with each other rather than the camera. This approach yields unique and heartfelt images for each couple, capturing beautiful snapshots of your connection. Please don't worry; we'll guide you smoothly through the process, ensuring a comfortable and memorable experience.

EMERALD PHOTO UK

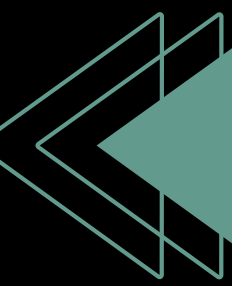


## BRIDE AND GROOM

When couples first view our wedding photography, they often ask, "Did that happen spontaneously? Did they position themselves that way? Will we need to do something similar?" The response is a mix of both yes and no.

Our primary focus during weddings is capturing the genuine, unfolding moments as they occur. We wouldn't coordinate scenarios like dressing scenes. However, the sessions for your couple and bridal portraits are somewhat directed. You'll be conscious of our presence and the photography, but the essence and interaction between you remain authentic.

These sessions are designed to produce breathtaking images of you both, which you'll likely display in your home. This part of the day is delightful and provides a rare moment of privacy for you two before rejoining your loved ones for the remainder of the celebration. Embrace this time, enjoy the experience, and then return to celebrate with your friends and family.





Preparing early  
for these  
portrait sessions  
leads to a more  
relaxed  
atmosphere,  
resulting in  
better  
photographs.



## WEDDING GUIDE



Give yourself some time before the ceremony. You will be glad with the result.



## ARTISTIC PORTRAITS

Do you know what makes your wedding photos pop and become those cherished art pieces on your walls for years? Those breathtaking, artistic shots capture the essence of your special day. We're all about catching those magical moments with a super flexible approach because, let's face it, the perfect shot can happen when you least expect it!

Whether it's the golden glow of the sunset or a unique moment that happens, we're always on the lookout for that one or two chance to snap something extraordinary for you. Something that tells your story.

We love playing with off-camera lighting and capturing those dramatic silhouettes against stunning backdrops to create vibrant, eye-catching images that freeze your wedding day in time. Imagine looking back and reliving those moments through photos that are as alive and full of emotion as the day itself. That's what we're here for!



WEDDING GUIDE





# 08

## CEREMONY & RECEPTION

Lighting & Locations on Your Big Day: Often the unsung heroes of wedding planning, we believe these elements deserve a spotlight! Navigating through dimly lit venues to create stunning visuals is our jam, and we're more than happy to guide you on the best times and spots for your indoor or outdoor ceremony. Our goal? To ensure everything is picture-perfect, setting the stage for unforgettable memories.



## LIGHTING: THE SECRET INGREDIENT TO STUNNING PHOTOS

Lighting isn't just a part of photography; it's the heartbeat of every memorable shot, influencing the mood and quality of your wedding images, regardless of the venue or backdrop. Before your big day, we'll adventure around your venue, scouting for those perfect spots to make your photos pop. We'll consider the natural light when we plan to capture your portraits and family snaps, offering suggestions to ensure everything runs smoothly.

Have you got a dreamy location in mind for your photos? Please share it with us ahead of time! We'll check it out to ensure it's just right, considering the weather, lighting, and how it fits into your day's timeline.

Now, a little foresight can go a long way for the ceremony and reception. Here are a few things to ponder that can dramatically enhance the feel and look of your images:

### OUTDOOR CEREMONIES:

Lighting, Lighting, Lighting: What's the sun up to during your ceremony? Will you be basking in its glow, or is one of you in the shade? A pre-wedding visit or research can help us plan for the perfect lighting, perhaps adjusting the setup to avoid squinty-eyed vows.

What's Above and Behind You: An arch, a gazebo, or a stage can influence your photos. We'll consider how these elements affect lighting and shadows to ensure you're both looking your best.

Room to Roam: Ensuring enough space for us to move around the ceremony can make a difference. It means I can capture various shots, from the emotion on your parents' faces to the joy of your bridal party.

We can work together to ensure your wedding photos are as magical as the day by thinking about these elements in advance. Let's make every moment shine!

## PLANNING YOUR INDOOR CEREMONY: LET'S LIGHT IT UP!

Indoor ceremonies come with their own unique set of considerations, especially when it comes to lighting:

**Lighting Check:** What's the lighting situation like? Are we working with natural light streaming through windows, or is it more about the ambient and artificial vibes? If the latter, think about ways to enhance the mood. Hanging lights, candles, or even strategic spotlights can add a magical touch.

**Church Ceremonies:** If you're tying the knot in a church, it's crucial to know their rules for photography. Some have strict guidelines, like photographers not going beyond the last pew or crossing the aisle, which can affect how we capture your "I dos."

**Flash Photography:** It's also worth checking if your venue or church is okay with flash photography. This can make a big difference in how we plan to document your ceremony.

## DON'T FORGET THE RECEPTION:

**Setting the Scene for Dinner:** The type of lighting you choose for your reception can transform the space. Whether it's the romantic glow of candles, the whimsy of hanging lights, or a fairy light wonderland, these choices not only set the mood but affect how your photos turn out. We're all for adding light to beautify the space further and capture those intimate moments.

**The Head Table:** Think about what's going to be behind you at the head table. A cluttered background can distract from your photos, so a nice, clean backdrop is always a plus.

**Speeches:** Where will your speakers stand during the toasts? Having them close to you can capture those genuine reactions and make for some unforgettable photos.



KEEP IN MIND THAT YOUR  
WEDDING DAY IS THE  
CELEBRATION OF THE MOST  
SIGNIFICANT DAY IN YOUR  
LIFE.

CHOOSING A  
PHOTOGRAPHER WHO ALIGNS  
WITH YOUR VISION AND  
KNOWS HOW TO CAPTURE  
THOSE GENUINE,

HEARTFELT MOMENTS  
WITHOUT INTRUDING ON  
YOUR CELEBRATION CAN  
GREATLY ENHANCE YOUR  
OVERALL ENJOYMENT AND  
FUN.



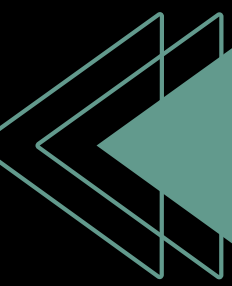


# 09

## TIPS & TRICKS

You might be realising just how much careful consideration and planning go into capturing your wedding day. It's not just a big day; it's a marathon of moments filled with people wanting a piece of your time.

From my experience shooting countless weddings, I've picked up a handful of extra tips and tricks along the way. These aren't just about enhancing your photos; they're about making your day more enjoyable and memorable.





## 1. HIRING A WEDDING PLANNER

For weddings with over 50 guests, seriously think about bringing on board a professional planner or at least a day-of coordinator who isn't part of your guest list or circle of friends. This person will handle all the day's queries and issues, allowing you to glide through your celebration without worrying about logistical hiccups like missing place settings, the DJ's need for an extra power cord, or ensuring the white wine is chilling properly. While it might seem nice to assign these tasks to friends or guests, remember they're there to celebrate too, and might get caught up in the festivities. A dedicated professional will ensure everything goes off without a hitch, keeping your peace of mind intact.

## 2. OPTING FOR AN UNPLUGGED WEDDING

Think about inviting your guests to stow away their smartphones, tablets, cameras, and other gadgets during the ceremony. We've often found ourselves adjusting our photography angles to dodge a sea of electronic devices popping up in the aisle. By removing these distractions, your guests' attention remains on you, creating a more intimate and engaged ceremony atmosphere.



### 3. EASE INTO YOUR WEDDING DAY

The whirlwind of your wedding day begins the moment you wake up. To set a serene and joyful tone, why not start with a quiet breakfast or a moment of solitude with your partner? It's a beautiful way to ease those pre-wedding jitters and savour the beginning of your special day together.

### 4. TIMING FOR HAIR AND MAKEUP

Hair and makeup sessions tend to take longer than anticipated. To keep the morning as relaxed and fun as possible, plan for these to start an hour earlier than you initially think is necessary. Ideally, you'll be fully prepped and ready to slip into your dress or suit an hour before the ceremony begins, ensuring a smooth transition to the day's events.

### 5. STAY HYDRATED AND NOURISHED

It's surprisingly easy to overlook, but keeping hydrated and snacking throughout the day is crucial. Have a selection of your favourite snacks and plenty of water on hand when you're getting ready. The day stretches out, and chances to eat or drink might be scarce until the reception.

### 6. PREPARE YOUR VOWS IN ADVANCE

Dedicating time before your wedding day to write your vows is a decision you won't regret. It eliminates last-minute stress and ensures you express your feelings just the way you want, without the rush or pressure of the day weighing on you.

### 7. HAVE A RAIN PLAN

If an outdoor wedding is what you've dreamed of, having a backup plan for rain is a must. While rain can make for some unexpectedly stunning photos, you'll want a solid plan B to avoid any weather-related disappointments.

### 8. CARVE OUT TIME FOR JUST THE TWO OF YOU

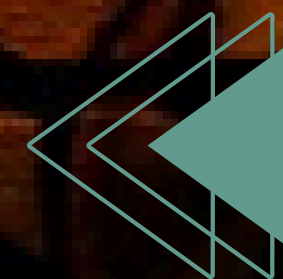
Your wedding day will fly by in an instant, and it's easy to get caught up and miss moments with each other. Schedule some alone time to step away, even for a few minutes between dinner courses, to share a quiet toast or a reflective moment. These are the memories that become priceless.

### ABOVE ALL, IT'S ABOUT YOUR LOVE STORY

Remember, above all, this day is about celebrating your love. Embrace the joy, let loose, and trust in the people around you to handle the details. By staying present and going with the flow, you're set to have the most incredible day of your life.



THANK YOU



## YOU MADE IT!

---

Wow, you made it to the end of the guide - that's awesome!

We're thrilled to collaborate with couples from around the globe, helping craft unforgettable moments for their big day. This guide offers a glimpse into our wealth of experience, and we hope it serves as a valuable resource to make your wedding truly spectacular. Remember, there's no one-size-fits-all approach to a perfect day; these tips are a starting point.

Best wishes,  
Eszter and Emerald Photo UK



THANK YOU

---

P | +44 7493299923  
I | @EMERALDPHOTOUK

E | EMERALDPHOTOUK@GMAIL.COM  
W | EMERALDPHOTO.CO.UK

