

INDIE

WEDDING DJ

- the -  
Indie Wedding Planning Guide

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A step-by-step guide of what to do,  
when to do it and where to buy it for an indie couple

## **A Note From Justin (the author)**

Hey,

Thanks for downloading this Guide! Planning a wedding is a ton of work and can be very stressful. I have taking my years of experience working with 100s of clients and put all of my knowledge into this guide. I want you to have fun planning your wedding and to have a stress-free wedding day. Following this guide will help get you there.

### **How to Use the Guide**

I've split up all of the tasks that you need to complete into a timeline. I assumed that you would be married about 12months from the time that you downloaded this guide. If you are getting married sooner then that, then make sure to compress the timeline. If you're getting married more than 12 months from now, then you can start completing tasks early ☺.

Just send me an email at [justin@indieweddingdj.com](mailto:justin@indieweddingdj.com) if you have any questions.

I'd love to hear from you,

Justin Jacques

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## Right after Your Engagement

### Coming up with your wedding style

1. Brainstorm ideas for your ultimate wedding, your idea of the perfect wedding. This will start to give you direction for the planning. If you could have any wedding in the world:

Where would it be? Destination, local location, a specific venue, outdoors vs. indoors

How big would it be? Gigantic, less than 100, over 100, small and intimate

What kind of vibe would it have? Casual, raging dance party, traditional, indie or black-tie

2. Pick the parts of your ultimate wedding that make you the most excited or are must-haves. Make sure you and your partner both have a say in the must-haves. This is important when you present the ideas to your families. This way you present a united front if they're proposing any changes you've already determined are non-negotiables.

3. Throughout the process repeat the phrase "I will not remember how my wedding looked, I will remember how my wedding felt" to keep your stress in check!

4. Stay organized by making an excel spreadsheet with different tabs including:

- Guest list and RSVPs
- Tasks that must get done and who will do them (you, your fiancé(e), your parents, your maid of honor, etc.)
- Vendor contacts
- Important information for the week of (hotel arrangements, meetings, DIY projects, rehearsal dinner info, basically anything you will need to do the week leading up to the wedding)
- Hauling spreadsheet (who needs to bring what to the wedding/bring it home at the end)
- Day of Spreadsheet (the schedule for the day of events)

## 11-12 Months to go

### Must dos

#### Budget

- Decide on an approximate budget
  - If the budget is tight for the number of guests and size of wedding you want, consider alternative ideas for the wedding: dessert/cocktails only, day wedding with lunch, public park vs. upscale indoor venue
  - Also note that almost all weddings go over budget so it's a good idea to set aside a "slush fund" of 10-15% of your total budget. Save it for last minute emergencies or unexpected costs like booking a vendor that you fell in love with but is over budget.
- Who is contributing to the budget?
  - If parents are contributing to the wedding, make sure you know what kind of wedding you want before you go into a conversation with them about what they'll pay for. They may have different feelings about what they'll contribute if you're not having the kind of wedding they'd prefer (i.e. religious vs. secular).
- Who is going to make the payments for each major purchase?
- How are you going to track it? For budget tracking software check out these options:
  - [The Knot](#)
  - [My Perfect Wedding Planner](#)
  - [Wed Simple](#)
  - [Wedding Wire](#)

#### Guest List

- Start a guest list for a rough estimate of how big a venue you'll need
  - Are children going to be invited?
  - How many people will your parents invite? This can depend on how much they're contributing financially to your wedding
  - You can start with questions like "Whom do we love?" and "Who must be there?" and move out from there
  - Sometimes rules like, if we haven't seen them in a year then no invitation, can help guide decisions
  - Also note that a rule of thumb for people attending is ~75% if most guests are local or ~60% there are a lot of out-of-town guests

#### Venue

- Decide on some rough dates
- Research and book a reception venue
  - Alternative ideas for location include parks, restaurants, summer camps, at-home/backyards, the courthouse or fruit orchards
- Research and book a ceremony venue
- Research and book a caterer (if applicable)
- Details to note about the venue before choosing:
  - Are tables and chairs provided? Find out exactly what is provided and who sets up and tears down.
  - What is the staff situation? What staff members are included in your flat fee, and what will they take care of?
  - Are there additional staff members they suggest (or require) you to hire? Some venues require you use their decorator or DJ
  - Can you bring your own alcohol?

- Are you locked into a catering contract? Many venues either requires that you use an on-site caterer or provide you with a list of preferred caterers.
- Hidden fees for anything from a cake-cutting fee to a corkage fee to a cleanup fee. Make sure you know them all before you sign a contract

## Inspiration

- Start collecting ideas for what you want your wedding to look like. Some good resources are:
  - [www.stylemepretty.com](http://www.stylemepretty.com)
  - <http://ruffledblog.com/>
  - <http://offbeatbride.com/>
  - <http://www.weddingwire.com/>
  - <http://www.theknot.com/>
  - Wedding magazines
- Collect the offline items in a folder and use Pinterest to pin your ideas onto a wedding board  
 Things that you should be on the lookout for:
  - Dress
  - Wedding makeup
  - Jewelry
  - Bridesmaids Dresses
  - Groomsman Style
  - Shoes
  - Themes and Colors
  - Flowers
  - Decorations: centerpieces, lighting, and furniture covers
  - Cake and cake toppers
  - Neat Ideas
  - Favors
  - Stationary
  - Photo ideas
  - Bridal Shower and Bachelorette Ideas

## Miscellaneous

- Create a new email account for your wedding (you'll be happy to stop receiving wedding related emails when its all over)
- Announce your engagement (this can be done by calling close family and friends, then changing your Facebook status ;) )
- Decide who is going to be in your wedding party and ask them to participate.
  - Note that you don't need to have the same number as your partner, they don't all need to be in matching outfits, and you can have either gender stand up for you (i.e. brother stand up for his sister).

*Bonus*

- Have an engagement party
- Hire a wedding planner
- Create a free wedding website click here:
  - [eWedding](#)
  - [The Knot](#)
  - [My Wedding](#)
  - [Wedding Wire](#)
- Start your wedding workout (if you're planning to do it) – you may want to hire a trainer
- Reserve a block of rooms at a hotel for out of town guests
- Arrange for families to meet
- Order 'Save the Date' cards. A few great sites that my past customers loved:
  - [Wedding Paper Divas](#)
  - [Green Bride Guide](#)
  - [Minted](#)
  - [Betsy White Stationary](#)
  - [Purple Trail](#)

## 9-10 Months to go

### *Must dos*

#### **Vendors**

Free yourself of the idea that you're going to find the perfect vendor because there are no absolutely perfect vendors. Instead focus on finding vendors that you mesh with because you're going to be working with them a lot on your wedding day. Try and find people whose philosophy you agree with and can make you laugh. If you can't find that, at the very least, find someone who seems relatively unobjectionable and doesn't raise any red flags.

- Research and book a photographer
  - Check out out <http://www.weddingwire.com/> for see local award winning and reviewed photographers
- Research and book a DJ or Band
  - Check out out <http://www.weddingwire.com/> for see local award winning and reviewed DJs
- Call to schedule dress appointments at bridal shops
- Select bridesmaids & flower girl dresses. Here are a few popular sites:
  - [The Dessy Group](#)
  - [For Him and For Her](#)
  - [Oasis](#)
  - [Love Season](#)
  - [Best Bridal Prices](#)
  - [Mod Cloth](#)
- Select and book ceremony musicians
- Book an officiant, minister, rabbi or priest
- Research and book a florist. If you're ordering your own flowers or for bridal bouquets, check out these sites:
  - [Bunches Direct](#)
  - [JRRoses](#)
- Research and book a decorator

#### **Decor**

- Choose your wedding theme, style and color scheme
  - Check out paint swatches at your local hardware store for color scheme inspiration

#### **Registries**

- Setup your gift registries. Here are some good ones to add items from anywhere:
  - [My Registry](#)
  - [Our Wishing Well](#)
  - [Wedding Republic](#)
- Add registries page to your wedding website.

#### **Honeymoon**

- Start researching honeymoon options.
- Book time off of work for your wedding and honeymoon
- Apply for passports (if needed). If you're short on time, check out:
  - [Rush My Passport \(USA\)](#)

#### *Bonus*

- Book your videographer.
  - Check out out <http://www.weddingwire.com/> to see local award winning and reviewed DJs

## 7-8 Months before

### Invitations

- Select and purchase invitations. You can find unique and cool options at:
  - [Green Bride Guide](#)
  - [Minted](#)
  - [Vistaprint](#)
  - [Love Vs. Design](#)
  - [Betsy White Stationary](#)
  - [Hello Lucky](#)
  - [Wedding Paper Divas](#)

### Dress

- Order your dress
  - Alternative dress ideas include buying a vintage, used or simple dress from the mall that you can have tailored to look dressier. You can also get a bridesmaid dress in white or ivory for a more casual look.
  - Here's few popular, online wedding dress shopping options:
    - [David's Bridal](#)
    - [Green Bride Guide](#)
    - [Unique Vintage](#)
    - [Preowned Wedding Dresses](#)
  - You can now order lingerie and undergarments for under the dress so you have it for your fittings:
    - [Shapewear](#) or [more Shapewear](#)
    - [Her Room](#)
    - [Leonisa](#)
- Order you veil and other accessories (if applicable)
  - Hair Accessories, can be found at:
    - [The Knot](#)
    - [Light In the Box](#)
    - [Online Bridal Store](#)
    - [For Him and Her](#)
    - [Little Things Favors](#)
    - [Top Wedding](#)
    - For extensions check out [abHair](#)
    - To trial different hairstyles online, go to [My Hairstyler](#)
- Buy your shoes. Check out:
  - [Unique Vintage](#)
  - [Kate Spade](#)
  - [Nina Shoes](#)
  - To design your own, [Milk and Honey](#)
  - [Online Bridal Store](#)
  - For wedding flip flops, [Girl Two Doors Down](#)

## **Cake**

- Research and book cake designer (or check out these other options): xxx
- Buy a cake topper. For cute ideas:
  - [Want and Wishes](#)
  - [Etsy](#)
  - [Little Things Favors](#)
  - [Gracious Bridal](#)
  - [Beau-coup Bride](#)

## **Shower**

- Update registries with wedding shower gifts

## 6 Months to go

### Venue

- Finalize your guest list
- Book transportation to and from ceremony and reception
- Order stationary:
  - Invitations and return cards
  - Menus
  - Table numbers
  - Place cards
  - Thank You Cards
  - Which can all be purchased from:
    - [Hello Lucky](#)
    - For stationary with your personal caricature: [Pose Prints](#)
    - [Betsy White Stationary](#)
    - [Purple Trail](#)
    - [Delphine](#)
    - [Wedding Paper Divas](#)
  - Place card holder can be found at:
    - [Wants and Wishes](#)
    - [Hanson Ellis](#)
- Reserve rental equipment
  - Tent(s)
  - Chairs and Covers
  - Flatware, plates, glassware
  - Tables, Linens, and Napkins
  - Serving trays, punch bowls, etc.
  - Champagne flutes
  - Podium
  - Bar

### Makeup and Hair

- Book appointments for hair and makeup for you and your wedding party
  - It's a good idea for you and your bridesmaids to have a picture of the wedding hair and makeup you want when you go to the appointments so let your bridesmaids know they should start looking now. Going into either appointment without any ideas could leave you disappointed in the look you/they end up with.

## 5 Months to go

### Flowers

- Select flowers:
  - Bouquets
  - Throwing bouquet
  - Boutonnieres
  - Corsages
  - Flowers for the ends of rows
  - Centerpieces
  - Alter arrangements

### Decor

- Finalize decoration plans

### Rings

- Buy wedding rings. For online options check out:
  - [Reeds](#)
  - [My Love Wedding Rings](#)
  - [Debebeans](#)
  - For a greener choice: [Green Bride Guide](#)
  - Another green choice (lab created diamonds): [Diamond Nexus](#)
  - Ethical Diamond Simulants: [Diamonius](#)
  - Tungsten Wedding Bands for men: [Tungsten Republic](#)

### Groom and Groomsmen Attire

- Order the groom and groomsmen's suits or tuxes. Browse some online options at:
  - [Dessy](#)
  - [Mega Suits](#)
  - [Men's USA](#)
  - For ties and bowties:
    - [Ties](#)
    - [Beau Ties](#)
    - [Jack Franklin](#)
  - For Cuff Links:
    - [Link Your Shirt](#)
    - [Uncommon Goods](#)
    - [Cuff Daddy](#)

## 4 Months to go

- Choose your food and drink options
  - Consider a signature cocktail for the cocktail reception that'll reflect the season and color scheme

### Music

- Select music for the ceremony
  - Processional song(s)
  - Signing of the registry
  - Recessional
- Select music for the reception
  - Wedding Party Introduction
  - Bride and Groom First Dance
  - Father/Bride Dance
  - Mother/Groom Dance
  - Bouquet/Garter toss
  - Cake cutting
- Pick an MC for the reception and ask them to be your MC
  - [How to be a Wedding MC eBook](#)
  - [InstantWeddingToasts.com](#)

### Accessories

- Buy a guest book:
  - [Green Bride Guide](#)
  - [The Knot](#)
  - [Ann's Bridal](#)
  - Or check out these alternatives:
    - [Little Things Favours](#)
    - [Wants and Wishes](#)
    - [American Bridal](#)
- Buy a cake knife and server. You can find these at:
  - [The Knot](#)
  - [Wants and Wishes](#)
  - [Little Things Favours](#)
- Buy your wedding favors. Check out:
  - [The Knot](#)
  - [WeddingFavours.org](#)
  - [My Wedding Favours](#)
  - [Beau-coup Bride](#)
  - [Jelly Belly](#)
  - [Chocolate.com](#)
  - [Coffees of Hawaii](#)

### Rehearsal Dinner

- Reserve a location for your rehearsal dinner
- Make a guest list for the rehearsal dinner
- Schedule appointments to do a trial for makeup and hair
- Meet with your officiant to review your plans for your ceremony
  - start looking for readings
  - look for or start writing vows
    - [Vow Writing ebook](#) for extra help

## 3 Months to go

### Reception

- Determine who will be giving speeches at your reception and add them into your schedule. For speech ebooks, check out:
  - [Ultimate Wedding Speeches](#)
  - [Wedding Speeches For All](#)
  - [For the best man](#)

### Travel

- Book your bridal suite
- Book your honeymoon
  - For ideas from locals at your destination: [Viator](#)
  - [Smart Fares](#)
  - [Globester](#)
  - [Hotwire](#)

### Bride's Attire

- Purchase bridal lingerie for the honeymoon and wedding night
  - [Love Ophelia](#)
  - [Journelle](#)
  - For unique vintage style: [Kuhmillion Lingerie](#)
  - [Dress Center](#)
- Book your first dress fitting
- Attend marriage classes (if applicable)

## 8 Weeks to go

- Purchase gifts for:
  - Bride/Groom
  - Wedding party
    - For her: [Green Bride Guide](#)
    - For her: [Buyer at Large](#)
    - For her: [Beau-coup Bride](#)
    - For her: [Personalization Mall](#)
    - For him: [Beau-coup Bride](#)
    - For him: [Gracious Bridal](#)
    - For him: [Sophie's Favors](#)
    - For both: [Etsy](#)
- Finalize reception music selections and confirm with DJ or band
- Finalize ceremony music selections and get to musicians or DJ
- Ask your potential readers (at your ceremony) if they would like to read for you
- Finalize vows (if you're writing them)
- Mail all wedding invitations
- Apply for a marriage license
- Purchase accessories:
  - Ring pillow:
    - [Little Things Favors](#)
    - [The Knot](#)
    - [Beau-coup Bride](#)
    - [American Bridal](#)
  - Flower basket
    - [The Knot](#)
    - [Ann's Bridal](#)
    - [American Bridal](#)
  - Garter belt
  - Wedding Jewelry:
    - [Nordstrom](#)
    - [Luxe Deluxe on Etsy](#)
    - [Light In The Box](#)
    - [My Jewelry Box](#)
    - [Clothing Loves](#)
  - Card box
  - Cake Toppers
    - [Wants and Wishes](#)
    - [Little Things Favours](#)
    - [Etsy](#)
    - [Gracious Bridal](#)
  - If your pup's going to be in the ceremony, check out:
    - [Pet Smart](#)
    - [Jake's Dog House](#)
    - [Just 4 My Pet](#)
  - Other Decorations: could include centerpieces, lighting, and furniture covers for ceremony or reception
    - Centerpieces:
      - [Luna Bazaar](#)
      - [Event Décor Direct](#)

- Disposable Cameras for tables:
  - [Wedding Things](#)
- Lighting
  - [Event Decor Direct](#)
  - [Paper Lantern Store](#)
  - [Beau-coup Bride](#)
  - [Luna Bazaar](#)
  - For String Lights: [Wedding Things](#) or [Lights.com](#)

- Keep a record of RSVP cards
- Attend bridal shower
- Send bridal shower thank you cards

## 6 Weeks to go

- Finalize ceremony readings
- Order your ceremony programs
- Finalize details with your:
  - Caterer
  - Florist
  - Transportation
- Finalize schedule for the day and send to your
  - Wedding venue contact
  - Band/DJ
  - MC
  - Wedding coordinator, if applicable
- Create list of photos that you'd like your photographer to take
- Pick up the wedding rings (make sure that they fit)
- Obtain liquor license and buy liquor (if applicable)

## 4 Weeks to go

- Send ceremony readings to readers
- Start breaking in shoes
- Attend bachelor and bachelorette parties
- Purchase guest room gifts for out of town guests
  - For small gift packs check out [Gracious Bridal](#)

## 3 weeks to go

- Give final guest numbers to your vendors:
  - Rental companies
  - Florist
  - Reception venue/ Caterer
- Prepare seating chart

## 2 Weeks to go

- Send final payment to all vendors
- Prepare your reception speech
- Finalize your vows (if applicable)
- Have any hair treatments done - highlights, trim etc.
- Set up Photo Sharing App for the night, like:
  - [The Wedding Lens](#)
  - [Wed Pics](#)
  - [Wedding Photo Swap](#)

## 1 Week to go

- Make a reception bag and put the following in it:
  - Guest book (or alternative) and pens
  - Cake knife and lifter
  - Seating Chart
  - Menus
  - Table Numbers
- Make a ceremony bag and put the following in it:
  - rings
  - ring pillow
  - marriage certificate
  - flower basket
  - Reserved signs
- Pick up your dress and put all of your accessories with it
- Pick up the bridal party dresses
- Pick up the groom's suit/tux
- Pick up groomsmen's suits/tuxes
- Haircut for groom
- Write thank you cards for bridal party and parents
- Pack clothes for wedding night and next day
- Pack for your honeymoon

### *Day before wedding*

- Get a manicure and pedicure
- Give rings and marriage license to Best Man or other designated person
- Attend rehearsal and rehearsal dinner
- Give gifts to wedding party
- Give gift to fiancée
- Drop off reception bag to venue

### *On the Wedding Day*

- Don't faint (make sure that you eat breakfast and drink water)
- Wear a button down shirt to hair and make up appointments
- Give the Best Man or Maid of Honour cheques/cash for tips
- Bring your marriage license, photo permit, and Special Occasions Permit, if needed
- Share the details of a wedding photo app with your guests
- Enjoy yourself

### *After the Wedding*

- Make a gift list
- Send out 'thank you cards' to your guests (within 8 weeks of your wedding)
- Send 'thank you cards' to your suppliers.

## Day Of Checklists

### Groom's Checklist

- Cologne
- Deodorant
- Extra tie (in case of spills or someone forgets)
- Vows
- Cuff Links
- Dress Socks
- Hair styling products and tools
- Lint brush
- Pain reliever
- Snack
- Stain-remover
- Floss
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Breath mints

### Bride's Checklist

- Alternate undergarments
- Bandages
- Breath mints
- Button-down shirt
- Cotton swabs
- Deodorant
- Double-stick tape
- Bride's vows
- Floss
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Hair styling products and tools
- Lint brush
- Makeup and beauty tools
- Nail file
- Nail polish in the same color you're wearing
- Pain reliever
- Perfume
- Safety pins
- Small sewing kit
- Snack
- Stain-remover
- Tissues
- Water and a drinking straw
- Shoes that are easy on your feet