

tied in *bloom*

BOOK 01 / THE WEDDING COLLECTION

01

We're Engaged. Now What?

A calm beginning to planning a wedding together

For the two people trying to hear each other clearly while everyone else has questions.

A SHORT GUIDE WITH WORKSHEETS

PRINTABLE + FILLABLE PDF

It started with her.

Tied in Bloom began because I wanted to make something for my fiancée. Something that would help her plan our wedding without feeling overwhelmed.

I love her. I wanted to take some of the weight off her shoulders so she could enjoy being engaged. That was the reason for the app, and it is still the reason behind everything I make here.

My hope is that something I made for the woman I love can help you and the person you love, too.

With love,
Sergio

Using this book

Read at your own pace. You can skip a question, keep an answer private, or return to it later. Agree on what you want to share rather than assuming every page belongs to both of you.

For writing by hand, print the pages you want at actual size. On screen, open the PDF in a viewer that supports form fields and save a separate copy after writing. Keep answers within the visible space; use another sheet when you need more room. Printed pages fit US Letter and can be scaled to A4.

Store your completed copy somewhere private. Nothing in this book sends your answers to Tied in Bloom.

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Let the news belong to you first

An engagement can change the speed of a conversation overnight. People who were asking about your weekend may begin asking about dates, venues, and invitations. You are allowed to enjoy the news before providing a plan. A wedding date is useful when you are ready to choose one; it is not an entrance requirement for being engaged.

Decide together what you want to keep private for now. This might include the proposal story, photographs, ring details, family reactions, or the fact that you have not begun planning. Privacy works best when both partners understand the same boundary. One person may love public celebration while the other prefers individual conversations. Agree on a sequence that gives each person some comfort, such as telling close people privately before posting anything.

A simple response can prevent repeated improvisation: "We're enjoying being engaged. We'll share plans when we've made them together." If someone keeps asking, you can repeat that sentence without providing a new explanation. You do not need an announcement that answers every possible question.

Choose one way to mark this period that does not create another project. Take a walk, share a meal, record a voice note, or write down what you hope marriage will feel like. The point is to make a memory you both want, with whatever time, energy, and resources you actually have.

Have the conversation before the research

Before opening venue tabs, describe the experience each of you imagines. Discuss people, pace, setting, and feeling before naming products or packages. "I want time to speak to everyone" contains more useful information than "I want something elegant." It suggests a smaller guest count, a longer meal, or fewer scheduled activities.

Try answering separately first. Each person writes three things they hope to experience and three things they would find difficult. Then read the answers aloud without correcting them. A difficult thing might be a crowded dance floor, a long religious service, being photographed constantly, or carrying debt afterward. These answers reveal design requirements that a photograph cannot show.

Differences need translation before compromise. In a hypothetical example, one partner wants a large celebration because their family rarely gathers. The other wants an intimate ceremony because public attention feels uncomfortable. They could explore a private ceremony followed by a larger meal, or a ceremony arrangement that reduces performance and preserves the gathering. Neither option should be assumed before they discuss its cost and emotional effect.

End with a short shared description that makes both of you think: yes, that sounds like us. It can remain provisional: "A relaxed afternoon with our closest people, good food, and very little formal performance." Keep this sentence beside your planning notes. When an attractive idea appears, ask whether it supports the experience you chose or quietly changes the event.

Write your first shared picture

This page captures a starting point rather than a promise. Write in ordinary language. Avoid words such as perfect or unforgettable, which are hard to use when making practical decisions. Describe what a guest or either partner would actually experience: a seated lunch, children nearby, a quiet ceremony, or an evening of dancing.

Include one thing you are willing to leave undecided. An early description should help you begin without pretending that every preference already agrees. Return to it after you have real information about cost and availability.

The celebration we currently imagine

Name the people, place, and two experiences that matter most to both of you.

Still open for discussion

Record one disagreement or unanswered question without trying to solve it here.

Find the boundaries that shape the event

A useful wedding plan makes room for the life you already share. That life includes available money, work schedules, caring responsibilities, travel capacity, health and access needs, cultural commitments, and the amount of planning energy you can sustain. Naming a condition does not make the celebration less meaningful. It gives the celebration a realistic place to happen.

Separate a fixed condition from a preference. A caregiver's limited availability may be fixed. Wanting a particular month may be flexible. A venue's capacity is fixed for that space, while the number of optional evening guests can be changed. Treating every wish as immovable makes the plan harder to resolve; treating every real limit as negotiable can make it harmful to live with.

For a hypothetical couple with one partner studying for an examination, the least expensive available date might still be a poor choice if preparation consumes the same weeks. The relevant cost includes the pressure created by timing, even though that pressure has no invoice. Compare the whole situation before calling one option the obvious bargain.

Write each important boundary with its reason and source. "No overnight travel for my parent" is clearer than "family logistics." Ask the person affected what they need rather than guessing. Revisit boundaries when circumstances change, and tell each other when an old assumption has stopped being true.

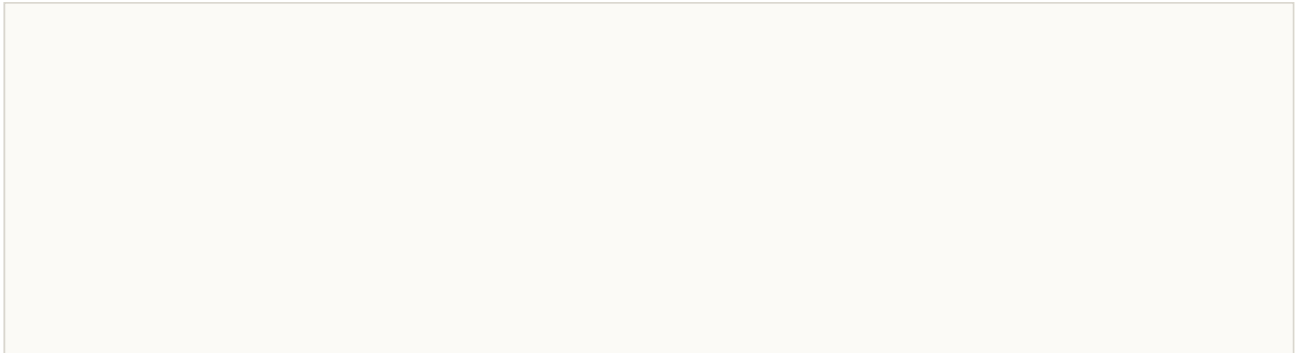
Name what is fixed and what can move

List only the conditions that materially change your options. A long inventory of minor likes can hide the limits you most need to see. For each condition, identify who supplied the information and whether you have confirmed it recently.

If you are unsure whether something is fixed, mark it as a question. "A sibling may need school holiday dates" is a research task until that person confirms their availability. Do not announce a date around an assumption that could be checked with one respectful conversation.

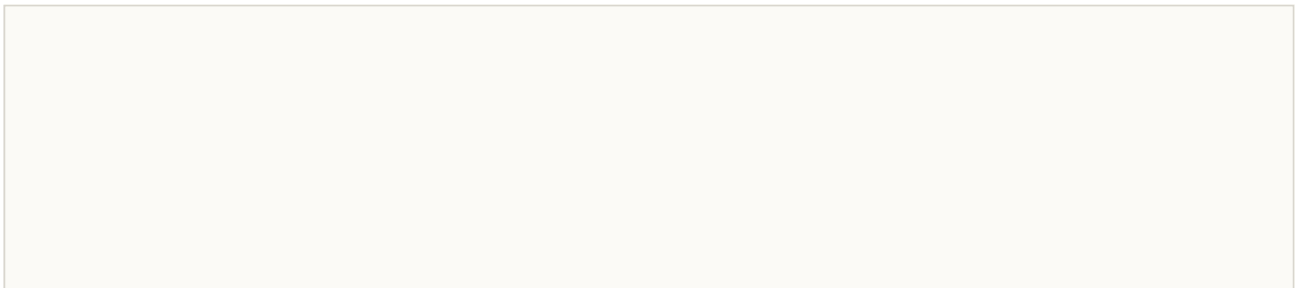
Conditions we must plan around

Record up to four limits, their reasons, and who can confirm them.



Preferences we could adjust

Identify what could change if it protects a more important need.



Choose a planning horizon

There is no universal correct engagement length. The useful question is how much time your particular event requires within your actual life. A simple local gathering may involve fewer dependencies than a destination celebration with travel, several ceremonies, and many contributors. A longer timeline creates more opportunity to compare, but it can also extend the period in which planning occupies your attention.

Start with a season or range of months if that is enough for your next decision. Check major work commitments, important family dates, travel demands, and any participants whose presence is essential to both of you. Essential should remain a short category. Otherwise, finding a date can become an attempt to satisfy every possible calendar.

Then identify the first decision that needs a firmer answer. You may need a rough guest range before contacting venues, or a budget ceiling before comparing dates. Put those decisions in order rather than treating every task as equally urgent. An inspiration board does not need to precede a conversation about affordability.

A manageable planning rhythm might be one scheduled discussion each week and a shared place for questions between meetings. Try the rhythm for two weeks, then adjust. If one partner is regularly exhausted, the system needs revision. Time is part of the plan, and both people should be able to see how much of it the celebration is using.

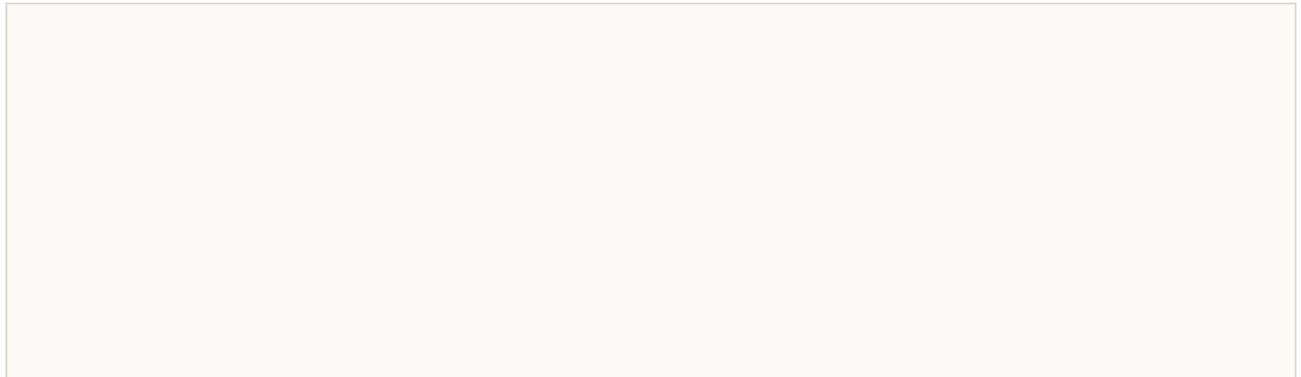
Make a first-month plan

Choose a few things you want to settle in the first month. Three completed decisions are more useful than thirty partly explored categories. You might start by agreeing on a spending ceiling, estimating guest numbers, or identifying two possible seasons. "Look at weddings" is too vague to tell you when the task is complete.

Agree on who will take care of each item and when you will talk again. That person gathers the information and brings back a recommendation. Leave at least one weeknight or weekend period free from wedding conversation if that would help you protect ordinary time together.

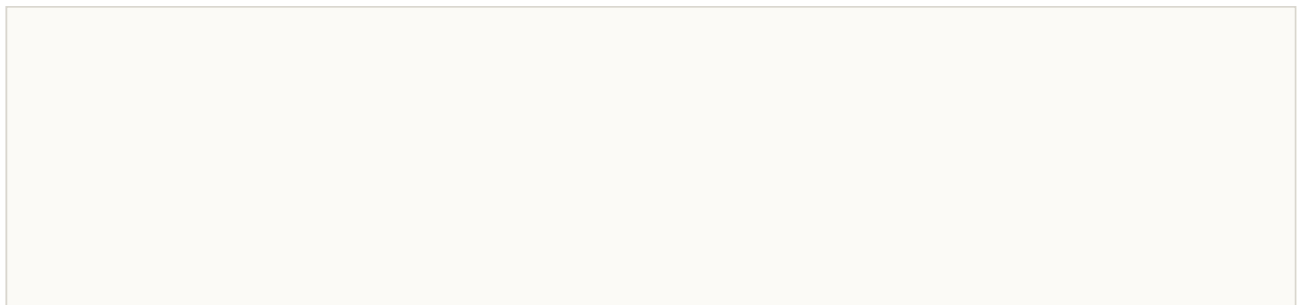
What we want to settle next

Write the result, owner, and date to talk again for each. Choose work you can comfortably finish this month.



Time we are protecting

Describe when planning is welcome and when you both want a break from it.



Estimate the guest range before the room

Guest count influences far more than the number of plates. It can change the rooms available to you, the shape of the ceremony, transportation, accommodation, staffing, and the amount of time you will have with each person. You do not need a final invitation list immediately, but a credible range prevents you from shopping for an event you are unlikely to hold.

Begin with individual lists of people each partner hopes to invite. Combine them, remove duplicates, and mark households clearly. Discuss children, partners, caregivers, and other companions before adding names to satisfy an assumed rule. These categories can change the total considerably, and the people involved deserve consistent, respectful communication.

Create a minimum workable count and a comfortable maximum. The minimum is the gathering you would still choose if resources were tighter. The maximum is the largest gathering you can support with care and within your boundaries. These numbers should reflect both partners' relationships rather than automatically splitting every category in half.

In a hypothetical example, a couple lists 46 people they jointly consider essential and another 22 they would welcome if space allows. Their current planning range is 46 to 68 guests, not an unsupported guess of 50. They can now ask venues about capacity and pricing using the same range. Keep this early list private until invitations and guest policies are settled.

Talk about money before collecting quotes

Agree on the amount you can make available before deciding what the wedding should cost. Start with money already set aside and contributions that have actually been confirmed. Keep hoped-for gifts, unconfirmed help, and possible future savings separate. They may eventually become available, but treating them as certain creates commitments before resources exist.

Discuss what the wedding must leave intact. This could include ordinary bills, existing savings goals, an emergency cushion, or time away from paid work. You do not have to share the same income to deserve an equal voice. Decide how contributions will work without confusing the size of a payment with authority over the relationship.

Use household planning arithmetic. In a hypothetical example, \$5,000 already saved plus a confirmed \$2,000 contribution gives \$7,000 currently available. If you keep \$700 unassigned for changes, the initial category allocations must total no more than \$6,300. Future savings belong in a separate line until you agree on their timing and reliability.

When another person offers money, clarify the amount, timing, and expectations before including it. A useful sentence is: "Thank you. Before we plan around this, can we talk about what you are offering and whether you have any requests attached?" Record the answer where both partners can see it. A generous conversation becomes more useful when its practical meaning is clear.

Record the first money agreement

This page is a starting household agreement, not a detailed spending plan. Use amounts you can explain and dates you can check. If a contribution is uncertain, write it under unconfirmed rather than quietly adding it to the total.

Decide what will cause you to revisit the agreement. A change in income, a new caring responsibility, or a quote above your ceiling may require a new conversation. Revising the plan early is easier than trying to preserve every choice after commitments have accumulated.

Available now and protected elsewhere

List confirmed resources, any unassigned reserve, and money this event will not use.

Our rule for new commitments

State what both partners must review before anyone books or pays.

Share the work from start to finish

Sharing wedding planning works best when each partner owns complete pieces of work. A task such as "research photographers" should include defining the requirements, finding suitable options, checking availability, comparing full costs, and presenting a recommendation. When one person must assign every step and chase every response, the visible tasks may be divided while the remembering and organizing still fall to one person.

Choose responsibilities according to capacity, interest, and existing workload. Avoid assuming that the person who cares more about a detail must manage everything around it. One partner can have a strong preference for music while the other compares the practical details because they have more time that week. Both still need to understand what they are looking for.

Taking care of a task does not mean making every choice alone. Some choices can be made independently within a limit; others need both people to agree. For example, one partner might find three suitable transport options independently, then bring the final price and timetable to a shared discussion before booking. State that boundary at the beginning.

Try a handoff with four parts: the result needed, the limits, the decision date, and the point at which consultation is required. Review workload regularly. If a task slips, ask what blocked it before assigning blame. Missing information, unclear standards, and unrealistic deadlines are planning problems you can often repair together.

Pass a task across clearly

Choose one real task you can assign today. Make the expected result specific enough that its owner can work without repeated instructions. "Find three accessible venues for about 60 guests under our venue allocation" is more actionable than "help with venues."

The owner should repeat the description in their own words and name any missing information. Agree on a date to talk again that leaves time to make the decision. A handoff is complete when responsibility, limits, and the next conversation are understood by both people.

The task and its boundaries

Write the owner, desired result, guest or cost limits, and information still needed.

How we will close the loop

Name the date to talk again and the choices that require both partners.

Handle advice without opening every decision

Wedding advice often mixes affection, memory, habit, and personal preference. You can appreciate the intention without adopting every suggestion. It helps to decide which subjects are open for input and which decisions belong only to the two of you. Otherwise, a friendly conversation can accidentally become a consultation with no clear ending.

Use specific requests when you want help. "Would you recommend a local baker who can discuss these dietary needs?" is easier to answer than "What should we do about food?" The first question invites useful information within your plan. The second may invite someone to redesign the reception, whether or not that was your intention.

When a suggestion does not fit, respond to it directly and briefly: "We can see why you enjoyed that at your wedding. We're choosing a seated lunch because it suits our guest group and budget." More detail is optional. Repeated explanations can make a settled decision sound as if it is waiting for approval.

If a conversation becomes tense, pause before promising anything. Tell the person when you can respond, then discuss it privately with your partner. Avoid making the other partner the villain: "They won't let me" can damage trust on both sides. Use shared language only for decisions you have actually made together, and take responsibility for your own boundaries.

Prepare the words you need

Choose a conversation you expect to have more than once. It may concern a date, guest list, ceremony tradition, or spending suggestion. Write a response you can comfortably say aloud. The strongest boundary is often a short explanation followed by the practical next step.

If you and your partner disagree about the boundary, resolve that privately before presenting it as a joint position. This worksheet should make communication clearer, not create a script one person is expected to perform against their wishes.

Our current answer

Write two or three sentences that explain the decision without criticizing someone else's wedding.

If the question returns

Choose a calm repeat response, a pause, or the person who will follow up.

Find what you love in an image

A collection of wedding images can help you notice what attracts you, but it rarely reveals the full conditions that produced the scene. A photograph does not show the setup hours, hire quantities, guest comfort, sound, weather plan, or total invoice. Treat an image as a clue about preference rather than a ready-made specification.

For each image you save, write what you actually like. It might be the low flowers that allow conversation, the warm light, the informal seating, or the absence of a crowded backdrop. This step separates an achievable quality from a collection of expensive objects. Several different choices may create the quality you want.

Limit the number of references for a single decision. If you keep adding images after a direction is clear, comparison can restart questions you had already answered. Share a small set with anyone quoting for work and explain your practical limits alongside it. A supplier needs quantities and priorities as well as visual references.

In a hypothetical example, a couple loves a long candlelit table but plans a daytime meal where open flames are not permitted. They can identify the underlying preference as a warm, continuous tablescape and discuss linen, flowers, or permitted lighting that suits the actual room. The result may look different while preserving the part of the image that mattered to them.

Make decisions you can explain later

A decision becomes easier to keep when you know why you made it. Before comparing options, identify the criteria that matter for this particular choice. A venue might need a workable access route, a suitable guest capacity, an acceptable total cost, and a weather alternative. A stationery choice may require only readable information, a delivery date, and a budget limit.

Ask the same questions about every option. Otherwise, one appealing detail can dominate an uneven comparison. Ask for missing information before declaring a winner. If an option cannot meet a fixed need, record that fact and move on instead of trying to compensate with attractive features elsewhere.

Set a stopping point. This could be a date or a number of suitable options reviewed. A stopping point does not require choosing something unsuitable; it prevents an open-ended search after you have found an option that fits what you agreed you needed. If none meets it, reconsider your wish list together rather than searching indefinitely under impossible conditions.

Keep a short decision note: what you chose, why it fits, what tradeoff you accepted, and what would justify reopening it. "We chose the earlier ceremony to avoid evening travel for key guests; we accept a shorter preparation morning" is useful later. Reopening a choice should respond to new information or a real concern, rather than the mere appearance of another attractive possibility.

Create a decision record

Use this page for one decision that keeps circling back. First check whether the missing piece is information, agreement, or confidence. More research may solve an information gap. It will not automatically resolve different priorities, and it can make a confidence problem harder by producing more alternatives.

Write the accepted tradeoff in plain language. Every realistic option gives up something. Naming that cost allows you to choose deliberately instead of expecting the selected option to satisfy all wishes equally. Keep the record where both partners can find it.

The choice and the reason

Name the option, the needs it meets, and the tradeoff you accept.

When we would reconsider

Identify specific new information that would justify reopening the decision.

Build one home for the practical details

You need a dependable place for current information, not a complicated collection of planning tools. Choose a shared system both partners can use comfortably. It may be a notebook, folder, spreadsheet, or app. The important qualities are access, clarity, and an agreed habit of updating it after decisions.

Keep a short current list separate from reference material. The current list should show the next action, owner, due date, and status. Quotes, inspiration, and old options can live elsewhere. When everything appears in one long list, a settled idea can look as urgent as an unpaid invoice or an unanswered booking question.

Give important files names that explain what they contain. Include the supplier, subject, and date when helpful. Keep the accepted version of an agreement identifiable. Record payments with their dates and supporting records so the amount still due can be checked. Avoid relying on memory or a message buried in one person's phone.

Once a week, spend a few minutes checking what changed. Close completed tasks, remove abandoned ideas from the current list, and identify the next three actions. If a system takes more effort to maintain than it saves, simplify it. The purpose is to reduce repeated searching and uncertainty, including for the partner who did not handle the original conversation.

Choose your next three actions

Return to the decisions you have made in this guide. Select the next actions that unlock useful progress. A good action has a clear finish: confirm a contributor's amount, count the current guest range, or send the same availability questions to three venues.

Check the combined workload before assigning dates. Three actions that all require a long evening may not fit the same week. Leave space for responses and ordinary life. When these actions are complete, choose the next small set using the information you have gained.

Our next three actions

For each, record the owner, what will count as finished, and realistic date.

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What can wait

Name two appealing tasks that do not need attention yet.

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Keep your relationship in the picture

Planning can reveal differences in how you make decisions, handle attention, spend money, and respond to family expectations. These differences deserve curiosity. They do not need to be turned into evidence that one person is better at caring or that the celebration must follow one person's instincts.

Notice the conditions under which conversations work well. You may need written options before discussing a choice, or time to consider a proposal without responding immediately. Another person may think most clearly aloud. Agree on a process that lets both people participate, including a way to pause when tiredness or frustration makes the discussion less useful.

Make repair ordinary. A useful sentence is specific: "I booked that call without checking your work schedule. I'll move it, and next time I'll ask before confirming." An apology becomes more practical when it includes a changed action. If planning repeatedly brings up a deeper difficulty, consider support from someone appropriately qualified and acceptable to both of you.

Keep some experiences free from wedding administration. You can enjoy being engaged without using every meal to review a list. As you move into bookings and details, continue asking whether the process is compatible with the life you are building together. The event will need decisions. Your relationship also needs attention that has no deadline, supplier, or guest count attached.

Take this with you.

You do not need every answer to begin well. You need a few honest conversations, a workable picture of your resources, and a way to make the next decisions together. Let the first version of your plan be specific enough to help and flexible enough to learn from. Keep the choices that support your real lives. Change the ones that no longer fit. When planning starts to feel larger than the celebration itself, return to the people, pace, and experiences you named at the beginning. Then choose the next useful action, finish it, and give some attention back to being engaged.

What we want to remember

