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Pre-wedding plans

What to do, when to do it

Remember (wo)man, that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return. You may be painfully aware of the transitoriness of life as you try to remember the thousands of things you absolutely have to get done before the big day (your wedding, not the Resurrection, you big dummies). Here's a calendar, compiled by "Woman's Day" magazine and reprinted from last year's wedding guide, to help you schedule your wedding plans.

Three months before wedding

- ★ Finalize the guest list.
- ★ Order wedding invitations, announcements and stationery.
- ★ Begin shopping for your trousseau.
- ★ Shop for the mothers' wedding attire.
- ★ Order wedding attire for the men.
- ★ Arrange for attendants' fittings.
- ★ Schedule physical examinations and blood tests.
- ★ Finalize all details of reception.
- ★ Make your honeymoon reservations.
- ★ Sign lease on new residence.

- ★ Make beauty salon appointments for the wedding party.
- ★ Send wedding announcement and bridal portrait to your local paper.
- ★ Look into new insurance coverage or make necessary policy changes.

Two weeks before wedding:

- ★ Confirm the final guest list. Inform the caterer.
- ★ Decide on seating arrangement for reception. Write place cards.
- ★ Try on your wedding gown and veil with wedding hairdo and makeup.
- ★ Change your name and address on all credit cards, charge accounts, bank accounts and important documents.
- ★ Notify the post office of your new address.
- ★ Set your new home in order.
- ★ Confirm honeymoon reservations.

Two months before wedding:

- ★ Mail invitations.
- ★ Arrange for the wedding rehearsal and party.
- ★ Buy presents for each other.
- ★ Order the wedding rings.
- ★ Reserve rental equipment, if any.
- ★ Arrange for the wedding portrait to be taken at your final fitting.

One week before wedding:

- ★ Finalize all details with the caterer, musicians, florist, baker, photographer and limousine service.
- ★ Tell your attendants the date and time of rehearsal.
- ★ Inform the best man and maid or matron of honor of any special responsibilities.
- ★ Check to see that attendants' wedding attire is satisfactory.
- ★ Prepare the wedding announcements for mailing on wedding day.
- ★ Start packing for your honeymoon.
- ★ Have the bachelor and bridesmaids' parties.

One month before wedding:

- ★ Apply for a marriage license.
- ★ Order flowers for the ceremony and reception.
- ★ Order personal flowers.
- ★ Shop for shoes.
- ★ Decide on jewelry.
- ★ Go for your final gown fitting and wedding portrait.
- ★ Plan bachelor party and bridesmaids' party.
- ★ Make hotel reservations or lodging arrangements for out-of-town guests.
- ★ Arrange transportation for the bridal party.

Six months before wedding

- ★ Decide on a wedding date and style — traditional or modern. Plan your budget.
- ★ Choose a reception location. Make reservations.
- ★ Talk to your clergyman or officiant.
- ★ Choose your attendants.
- ★ Pick a color scheme for the wedding.
- ★ Begin a guest list.
- ★ Shop for your wedding dress or arrange to have it made. Order your bridesmaid attire.
- ★ Select a caterer.
- ★ Select a florist.
- ★ Book the musicians and decide on the music.
- ★ Select a photographer and/or videotape company.
- ★ Start planning your honeymoon.
- ★ Start looking for an apartment or house.
- ★ Register with bridal registries.

Rings popular throughout history

NEW YORK (AP) — The history of the ring, like the ring itself, literally has no beginning and no end, research by the Jewelry Industry Council shows. Excavations have turned up rings from as far back as 1400 B.C.

The French digs at Enkomi, Cyprus, in 1930 unearthed a massive ring of electrum, a light yellow alloy of gold and silver, with two figures on it. It depicted a draped seated figure on a throne approached by another wearing a lion's skin and horns.

"While 3,400 years ago may seem astounding, consider that some historians venture to guess that Neanderthal man wore rings as early as 30,000 B.C.," says Kae McCulloch, fashion director of JIC.

Rings have long played an important role with humankind, she points out. They have served as door keys, money, even validity of citizenship. In Roman times, key-shaped rings were

either worn on the thumb, or suspended from a girdle. Free men and freed slaves in Rome were privileged to wear gold rings denoting their citizenship around 40 B.C.

Roman gladiators wore heavy wide rings — forerunners of today's brass knuckles, and used for the same purpose.

Satirist Juvenal (50-130 A.D.) described "summer and winter" rings: open filigree "for hot weather" and heavily gemmed ones "best for winter."

"Surely vanity inspired the thumb ring of Hindu women that held small mirror so milady could easily check her coiffure," McCulloch says.

Watch rings made their appearance in the 17th century, making up in beauty and design for their shortcomings in timekeeping, she adds.

"Today, we are most familiar with wedding, engagement, cocktail,

school, birthstone and eternity rings," she notes, "but throughout history, rings have included everything from the infamous poison rings of the borgias to innocent perfume rings.

Memorial rings with a strand of the deceased's hair commemorated the dead and were given to family and friends. Posy rings, sometimes called gypsy rings since gypsies sold them, carried mottos: "For a kiss...take this."

Signet rings, coronation rings, ecclesiastical and religious rings, are all part of the ring story. Many rings have historic significance, McCulloch points out. Caesar learned of the murder of the great Roman general Pompey when the general's seal ring was brought to him.

An early diamond engagement ring, from Maximilian of Austria to Mary of Burgundy in 1477, can be seen today at the State Museum of Vienna.



WEDDING PICTURES

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