

build your day, backward

start with your ceremony time, fill in the rest, and leave room to breathe.

your names

wedding date

ceremony start time (we call this T)

sunset that day (see the golden hour guide)

☐ we're doing a first look

☐ no first look (we'll see each other at the aisle)

before the ceremony

subtract the number from T to get your time. start with your track, then fill in your time.

moment	first look	no first look	your time
hair + makeup starts	T - 4:30	T - 4:00	
photographer arrives (details)	T - 3:00	T - 2:30	
getting dressed, gifts + letters	T - 2:15	T - 1:45	
first look	T - 1:45	—	
couple portraits (30–40 min)	T - 1:30	after the ceremony	
wedding party portraits (20–25 min)	T - 0:55	after the ceremony	
immediate family photos (15–20 min)	T - 0:35	after the ceremony	
touch-ups + hide before guests arrive	T - 0:20	T - 0:20	
ceremony begins	T	T	

hair and makeup take about 45 minutes per person, so add up your getting-ready crew before you pick a start time. if you're doing a first look, you also get your portraits done while the light is good and the stress is low, which means you actually get to enjoy cocktail hour.

notes + questions for your photographer

after the ceremony + reception

these are typical lengths, not rules. fill in your own times and check the box when you've added breathing room.

moment	typical length	your time	buffer added?
ceremony ends + hug line	15-20 min		☐
family formals	20-30 min		☐
wedding party portraits (no first look)	20-25 min		☐
couple portraits — aim for golden hour	30-40 min		☐
cocktail hour / guests mingle	45-60 min		☐
grand entrance + first dance	10-15 min		☐
dinner (eat something!)	45-60 min		☐
toasts	15-25 min		☐
parent dances + cake	15-20 min		☐
dance floor	60-120 min		☐
last dance + send-off	10-15 min		☐

the three places to add 10-15 minutes of breathing room

- after getting dressed and before you leave the room. your mom seeing you in your dress needs a minute.
- between the ceremony and family photos. you'll want to hug everyone who just watched you get married.
- right before the reception starts. take a breath, eat a bite, and walk in together instead of rushing in.

one last gut check

- ☐ is anything scheduled back to back with no gap?
- ☐ does sunset land during couple portraits, not during dinner?
- ☐ is there a real window for you two to eat and sit down?
- ☐ could your grandma keep up with this day?

notes

finished? send me a pic or screenshot and i'll tell you what i'd change.
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