

PLANNING A WEDDING DURING COVID-19...

ADVICE FOR NEWLY ENGAGED COUPLES!

You're newly engaged, on top of the world, and ready to start planning the magical wedding you've been dreaming up in your head, your heart, and maybe even on your Pinterest board, for years... then COVID-19 happens and we find ourselves in a time of uncertainty, with no guaranteed end date. You're stuck between excitedly wanting to plan your wedding and being hesitant to secure vendors out of fear that the circumstances won't improve by the time your big day rolls around. Goodness, you deserve a hug [and a cocktail]!

It's a heavy feeling of worry and disappointment to plan your wedding not knowing for certain that it will actually happen on your original date of choice and/or with all the people you want to be there, especially amidst the larger concerns of health and job security during a pandemic.

If you're newly engaged and riding this roller coaster of emotions, first and foremost we want you to know that our hearts are with you! It doesn't seem fair that the fun, customary wedding planning experience you always envisioned has been greatly altered. However, if you feel up to it, your wedding planning does not have to come to a halt. It's okay to hold on to hope and optimistically plan for the fun to come. What better use of "quarantine time" than to plan a joyful occasion, giving yourself something to look forward to!? I did (engaged in April, married in November)! And when YOU are ready, let's start planning!

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STEP 1: GATHER YOUR THOUGHTS AND INSPIRATIONS

Now that you've had some time to grieve the traditional planning experience, start focusing on the day that you have been envisioning and what you CAN control! Work with your future Mr./Mrs. to develop a budget and determine what aspects of the day are most important to the two of you. A good idea is for each of you to list out your top three "must haves" or "biggest wishes" for the big day - it's ok to have different answers - it's a helpful guide during your planning process to check back in and make sure the day reflects BOTH of you and you don't lose focus during planning based on too much outside input from well-intentioned friends, family and others!

If you're one of the few that don't have a Pinterest board, now's a good time to start one! Or save images you come across on Instagram. Consider all of the color palettes, florals, tablescapes, cakes, and other design ideas that catch your eye and take some time to enjoy the "pretty phase" of wedding planning! Chat with your fiancé about venue styles and go online to look at those in your area, making a list of venues you're most interested in. Many venues are offering virtual tours right now, which is super helpful if you're not able to get out and see them in person just yet; some venues are doing in-person/appointment only showings; and some are starting to schedule open houses!

Select your wedding party and invite them to be a part of your special day. This doesn't have to be an elaborate or over the top gesture, but it will certainly make you feel more supported and enthusiastic to have a team cheering you on as you waver between all the emotions of planning in the coming months! We guarantee that it will be a bright light for them during this time as well!

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STEP 2: HIRE A PLANNER OR COORDINATOR

We may be biased in saying that hiring a wedding planner has always been the best decision a couple can make in the wedding planning process, but it's even more important now. Experienced full-service planners are currently navigating the postponement process for couples already affected by COVID-19 and we have become well-versed in how to plan during this pandemic. Moving forward, we also know what to look for in vendor contracts to protect our future clients. It's our job to be your advocate and help you make the best decisions possible that will save you TIME, MONEY, and STRESS.

After determining your budget and style, research wedding planners in your area and set up consultation calls or video chats. Decide which planner that you vibe with best and book them! If a full-service planner is not in your budget, secure an event management package or partial wedding package, many of which also provide couples with a great base of recommendations and information to begin the wedding planning process.

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STEP 3: SELECT A DATE AND SECURE VENDORS

The reality of 2021 is that many vendors are already booked through the rest of the year due to all the weddings that have been postponed, so the first availability will likely be in 2022 or at a venue that wasn't at the top of your list. Work with your planner to secure a venue and date and consider some options if you want to get married in 2021 at the venue of your dreams- Fridays and Sundays can be great options if you weren't originally considering them! Your friends and family that love you will show up to celebrate, no matter what day of the week it is!

Once a venue and date have been decided on, share all your saved Pinterest boards and other inspiration with your planner. Your planner will be able to take those ideas and line up vendors that match your style and budget, and are available on your date. If you're not working with a planner, start scheduling phone calls and/or virtual meetings with the "big ticket" vendors that book up the quickest such as photographer, videographer, entertainment, hair/makeup, officiant, etc.

This #stayathome era actually works in your favor as a newly engaged couple - vendors are excited as ever to chat with new clients right now! Since most postponements over the past few months are already squared away, vendors have more time to focus on new bookings and planning for future events.

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STEP 4: CONTINUE PLANNING AND STAY OPTIMISTIC!

Create a registry, start your wedding website, and select save-the-dates. Continue planning the details of your day such as wedding party attire, catering, florals, etc., as if everything is guaranteed to happen as planned. Hold off on ordering any items [for now] that may be personalized with a date *just* in case. None of us know exactly what the future of this pandemic looks like, but we recommend couples not make any decisions on postponements until 8-12 weeks out [unless there is an obvious decision imposed by state-ordered restrictions at the time].

While some things remain somewhat unknown, you don't want to find yourself rushed into planning a wedding or missing out on your choice of vendors because you held off too long on booking. And the worst case? If postponed, your wedding is already entirely planned! You've booked a solid vendor team that will work with you to determine a new date and you can focus on enjoying the remaining time of your extended engagement.

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Uff-da! That was a lot. Trust us when we say we understand this is all much easier said than done! But let's not stop dreaming and planning these beautiful celebrations with your closest friends and family. We WILL get back to gathering and it WILL be more cherished and meaningful than ever before!

LOVE IS NOT, and never will be, CANCELLED. We would be honored to help you make your love story something worth celebrating and assist in making your event "simply incredible, and incredibly simple."

If you have any questions about planning right now, please reach out to our team. We are still in the business of love and remain SO excited to assist couples in their wedding planning journey!



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