
THE ULTIMATE WEDDING GUIDE

The printable *planning companion.*

Print this, stick it on the fridge, and tick as you go. Everything from the online guide you'll actually want on paper - the full planning checklist, your details box, the family formals maths, an example day, and the day-of reminders.

“Build backwards from sunset. Protect your 30 minutes. Slow everything down - you’ll experience more of it, and I’ll get the shot.”

Photography by Nimmy · Whangārei & Northland · bynimmy.com

Everything, in the order it needs doing.

12+ MONTHS OUT⁽⁴⁾

- ☐ Set your date and secure your venue
- ☐ Book your photographer, celebrant and caterer
- ☐ Set a realistic overall budget
- ☐ Draft your guest list

9 MONTHS OUT⁽³⁾

- ☐ Book hair and makeup, florist, music, videographer
- ☐ Order or begin the dress and suits
- ☐ Send your save the dates

6 MONTHS OUT⁽⁴⁾

- ☐ Book accommodation and transport
- ☐ Plan your wet-weather option
- ☐ Confirm your celebrant and shape the ceremony
- ☐ Book your engagement session

3 MONTHS OUT⁽⁴⁾

- ☐ Invitations out
- ☐ Confirm menu and drinks
- ☐ Dress fittings begin
- ☐ Apply for your marriage licence

6-8 WEEKS OUT⁽³⁾

- ☐ Build the timeline with me
- ☐ Draft your family formals list
- ☐ Confirm your vendor contact list

4 WEEKS OUT⁽⁴⁾

- ☐ Final balance due
- ☐ Final guest numbers to caterer
- ☐ Confirm the running order with celebrant and MC
- ☐ Request a vendor meal, served before speeches

2 WEEKS OUT⁽⁴⁾

- ☐ Final timeline sent to all vendors
- ☐ Family formals list finalised with me
- ☐ Confirm your wet-weather plan
- ☐ Brief your celebrant on the unplugged request

1 WEEK OUT⁽⁴⁾

- ☐ Assemble your details box
- ☐ Write your letters to each other
- ☐ Confirm arrival times with your wedding party
- ☐ Break in your shoes

DAY BEFORE⁽⁴⁾

- ☐ Tell me where the details box will be
- ☐ Hydrate, eat, sleep
- ☐ Charge everything
- ☐ Nothing else. It's done.

Gather it into one box the night before.

- ☐ Both rings, and the box
 - ☐ Invitation suite and any stationery
 - ☐ Perfume and cologne
 - ☐ Jewellery, cufflinks, watches, tie
 - ☐ Shoes
 - ☐ Veil or hair pieces
 - ☐ Buttonholes and a spare bloom or two
 - ☐ Vow books
 - ☐ Anything borrowed, inherited or with a story
 - ☐ Anything culturally significant to your ceremony
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FAMILY FORMALS - DO THE MATHS

Budget 3-4 minutes per grouping. Write them as groupings, not names, cap it around 10-12, and appoint a wrangler who knows every face and is happy to shout. Front-load the elders - grandparents first, always, so they can sit down.

THE TIMELINE, IN THREE RULES

- ☐ A good timeline is the single biggest predictor of a good gallery.
- ☐ Build backwards from sunset - it's the one resource you can't buy more of.
- ☐ Protect a 30-minute breather before the ceremony, with no photography at all.

A nine-hour day, as a shape – not a rulebook.

We'll shape your real one together six to eight weeks out. This is a Whangārei summer example, built backwards from an 8:35pm sunset.

11:30am	Arrive – details, dress, rings, invitations, florals
12:15pm	Candid getting ready. Hair & makeup finishing
1:15pm	Into the dress and suit. Love letters. Parent portraits
1:50pm	Wedding party getting-ready shots, separately
2:30pm	Breather – the 30 minutes I protect. No photos
3:00pm	Ceremony
3:30pm	Confetti, signing, congratulations
3:45pm	Family formals
4:17pm	Wedding party photos
4:47pm	Couple portraits
5:27pm	Rejoin guests. Reception space and canapes
6:12pm	Dinner service (my meal, before speeches), then speeches
7:30pm	Golden hour portraits – ~65 min of golden light
7:57pm	Cake, first dance, dancing opens
8:27pm	Coverage ends

The bits worth remembering out loud.

ON THE DAY

- ☐ Slow everything down. Count to five on the kiss - two seconds photographs as a near-miss.
 - ☐ Tell everyone walking you in to slow down too.
 - ☐ Consider an unplugged ceremony: a small sign at the entrance, a line in the order of service, and your celebrant asks at the start.
 - ☐ Feeling awkward? Move rather than pose. Talk to each other, not the camera. Give your hands a job. Breathe out. Weight on your back foot.
 - ☐ The single most effective thing for comfort on the day: do an engagement session first.
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NORTHLAND WEATHER

- ☐ Have a wet-weather plan - and tell me what it is. Marquee sides, a covered deck, a barn, an indoor room. Decide before the week of.
- ☐ Rain photographs well. Clear, unbranded umbrellas cost almost nothing.
- ☐ Wind is the real variable, especially at coastal venues. Factor it into veil length, hair and marquee choice.
- ☐ Summer sun is harsh between 11am and 2pm in January - shade matters.
- ☐ Sandflies and mozzies at bush and river locations, and at dusk. Repellent is a kindness.
- ☐ Bring cold water. A chilly bin and a few frozen flannels do more for the wedding party than anything else.

Getting legally married in Aotearoa.

Practical information, not legal advice - confirm current requirements with your celebrant and the Department of Internal Affairs.

- ☐ Both partners must be 18 or over (16-17 needs Family Court consent). Neither can currently be married or in a civil union. No residency requirement.
 - ☐ Apply for the licence online at marriages.services.govt.nz. It takes around three working days and is valid for three months, so apply around 6-8 weeks out.
 - ☐ On the day: a registered celebrant performs the ceremony and two witnesses aged 18 or over must be present and sign.
 - ☐ After: pre-pay for your marriage certificate when you apply - most name-change processes need it.
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IF YOU REMEMBER NOTHING ELSE

Build backwards from sunset. Protect your 30 minutes. Slow everything down.

When you're ready, get in touch - you won't annoy me.

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