



NZ Registered Celebrant and Wedding Planner

Planning your Wedding Day Timeline

I find planning the timeline of the wedding day is one of the most common things that couples ask me about. They have an idea of what time they might like to have the ceremony, eat dinner or start the dancing, but they don't know how much time other parts of the day will take. So I have prepared a wedding day guideline which gives a good overview of the day's activities and timing. This is a standard timeline, you may be doing things differently but it is a great starting point for planning timing on the day.

Hair and Makeup **3.5- 4.5 hours**

For most makeup looks and styles it will take about 45mins to an hour for to complete one person's look. So for the bride and three bridesmaids it should take about 3.5 - 4.5 hours. Make sure you check with your stylists for timing, they know exactly how long it will take to create the look you want.

Getting Dressed **30mins**

Don't forget time for getting everyone dressed and organised.

Photos before leaving for the ceremony **30mins**

It take a while to get all of those detail shots and pics with Mum and Dad. Make sure you don't have to rush this special family time.

Transport Time **TBC**

Don't forget time to make it to the venue, if you have hired a nice car with Champagne you won't want to rush this part!

Pre - Ceremony

The Groom's party should arrive at least 30 minutes early to greet guests as they arrive. The Bride and bridesmaids should be about 5-10 minutes late, just so no late guests are walking up the aisle after you.

Ceremony **30-40mins(includes greeting guests afterwards)**

An average ceremony will last between 20-25 minutes including the ceremony. After this there will be another 10-15 minutes of mingling with guests.

Group Photos **30 mins**

These usually take about 30 minutes, start with your biggest group first and work down to the smaller groups this makes it easier to keep everything flowing smoothly.



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Transport time **(TBC)**

Make sure you take this into account if you are going offsite for photos. Remember to count getting there and getting back and any possible traffic.

Portrait Shoot **1-1.5 hours**

Your photographer can advise exactly how long your shoot will be, but most shoots are about this long.

Introduction and Arrival at Reception **10-15 mins**

This includes the MC's intro, bridal party entrance and saying grace for the meal (if this is something you wish to do) You can also cut the cake at this time if your photographer will not be staying for the reception.

Dinner **1.5- 2 hours**

A buffet dinner will take about 1.5 hours and a set menu will take about 2 hours. A set menu is longer because it features an entree course. This is based on an average size reception of 80-100 guests. If you have more or less guests this can affect how long the dinner will take so check with your venue/caterers.

Speeches **30-45 mins**

To work out the timing for speeches calculate how many minutes you are allowing for speeches and how many speakers you have. About six is usual one from the Bride's parents one from the Groom's parents, the best man, maid of honour and the Bride and Groom. A good timing for the speeches is after dinner and before dessert.

Dance Party **2-3 hours**

Once speeches and dinner are finished you are on to the informal part of the night start with your first dance and make sure the DJ follows up with a good solid dance track that everyone knows to get the floor filler right from the start and enjoy your party!

So now lets see how this might work for a 4pm wedding with a buffet dinner and photos onsite at the venue.



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Sample Timeline

9.00	Champagne Breakfast (Optional, my recommended way to start the day)
10.00	Start hair and makeup.
12.00	Don't forget to eat something. (sandwiches are easy to eat while getting ready.)
2:30	Getting dressed and getting those little detail photos.
3.00	Photos at home with parents and bridesmaids.
3:30	Travel to Ceremony
4.00	Ceremony
4.10	Bride Arrives
4:30	Meet and Greet Guests (Hug Time)
4.45	Group photos
5.15	Portrait Shoot
6.45	MC Intro and Entrance
7.00	Dinner Served
8.00	Speeches
8.30	Dessert
9.00	First Dance and Party
11-1200	Guests start leaving venue.

I hope this helps get the timeline under control!