

THE

# wedding experience



# I'm so glad to meet you.

Let's be real - you had a basically unlimited selection of photographers that you could have chosen to photograph your wedding. You probably looked at different prices, different styles, different personalities, and so much more before you could narrow it down. And that's why I'm so grateful that you chose me! Photography is so much more to me than a business transaction or a way to pay the bills. My favorite thing about what I do is human connection. Whether that's me photographing the connection that you have with each other, or me making new connections with each one of my clients.

My job is an important one - your photos will last a lifetime and I want you to look back on them forever and ever and to be reminded of your day and everything that it meant to the two of you. I wrote this guide because I've picked up a lot of tricks over the years that will help me make sure that your photos are absolutely out of this world - and you deserve nothing less.





# Engagement sessions.

I love when couples add an engagement session to their wedding package. They're a little (a lot) less busy and less stressful than the wedding day, so it'll give us time to get to know each other - no pressure, and no timeline to stick to.

If you're like me, you haven't gotten professional photos taken since you were a senior in high school, and if you're like me, you feel horribly uncomfortable with a giant camera pointed at you. That's okay - most people do.

Engagement sessions are an amazing way to overcome a little of that anxiety, and a great way for me to learn about both of your personalities and how best to capture them. You'll get a feel for what it's like to be told what to do with your hands and asked to spin in a circle, and I'll learn about your little quirks and all your best angles. Whether you're serious and artsy, or laid back and playful, learning about your unique personality will help me tell your story on your wedding day, the way it needs to be told. I'll already know which side is your good side, and you'll have one less thing to stress about. Plus, you'll get some photos for the save-the-dates!

A romantic couple embracing outdoors at night. The woman has long, wavy red hair and is wearing a white lace dress. The man has a beard and is wearing a light blue button-down shirt. They are both smiling and looking at each other. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a wooded area.

the secret sauce

for getting  
those gorgeous  
engagement photos

## 01. Location

I'm sure by now if you know one thing about me, you know that nature is my jam. I love beautiful scenery - mountains, oceans, trees, it's all photogenic and wonderful. So of course, my recommendation is always to choose a beautiful outdoor location. BUT I don't want you to think you can't get good photos if your backdrop isn't so scenic. The most important thing is that you feel comfortable. So if the outdoors isn't for you or if you don't want to drive too far, or it's cold outside, choose somewhere that's special to the two of you - maybe it's your home, or the diner where you had your first date. Whatever location you choose, just make sure it reflects your personalities.

## 02. Outfits

This is possibly the most important part - choosing what to wear. It's important because the colors, patterns, and textures of your clothes should compliment your location. That might sound overwhelming, but I have a full style guide that I will send you that goes over all of this. But I will give you one tip here - dress like yourself. Wear what makes you feel good, and what you feel comfortable and confident in. And of course, if you need outfit tips, just ask me! I'll be able to tell you which specific colors will look good in the location you chose, and if you send me photos of your outfit options I'll give you my honest opinions.



### 03. Timing

The time of day that we take your photos is so important - because while I could take photos in harsh sunlight and they would look good, you would inevitable have a lot of shadows on your faces and the photos wouldn't be amazing. The best times of day are sunrise and sunset - I recommend starting either half an hour before sunrise, or an hour before sunset for the best lighting. That way, there won't be any shadows, and we'll get that gorgeous glow that makes everything look soft and pretty. If you're a morning person, I like sunrise because there tend to be less crowds, especially if you choose a popular location. But I can't blame you if you're not into waking up before the sun does.

### 04. Have fun!

I know I said outfits were the most important part, but I take it back. This one is just as important. I know wedding planning gets hectic, and you might be worried about how you look or how your engagement photos will turn out. But leave that to me - I'll do the heavy lifting to make sure you look your best and I'll make sure you have a good time. So just relax, enjoy the moment, think about how you'll be married soon, and have fun! Photos are best when you're genuinely enjoying yourself - and a lot of my job is to help you do that and make you feel comfortable in front of the camera. So come to me with a positive attitude and come exactly as you are, and leave the rest to me.

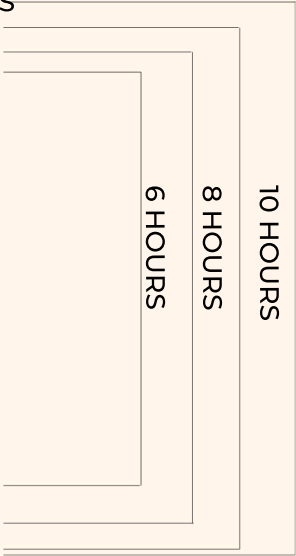


the  
wedding  
day

# The timeline.

I won't lie, it's intimidating. But unfortunately it's also pretty important, so I'm here to help! This is a sample timeline of the photography of wedding day that includes a first look, and has the ceremony starting at 5:30 pm. Of course, it's not a one size fits all, so feel free to talk to me about the specifics of your day! I'll help you work it out, and we can decide how long you want your want me to be there to make sure we capture everything you want. Your timeline will also depend a lot on the season because we need to take into consideration the amount of day light that we have.

- 9:00 BRIDESMAIDS' HAIR & MAKEUP BEGINS
- 11:00 BRIDE'S HAIR AND MAKEUP BEGINS
- 1:45 GROOM BEGINS GETTING READY
- 3:00 BRIDE PUTS DRESS ON
- 3:30 FIRST LOOK + PORTRAITS
- 4:00 BRIDAL PARTY PHOTOS
- 5:00 HIDE WHILE GUESTS ARRIVE
- 5:30 CEREMONY
- 6:00 FAMILY PHOTOS
- COCKTAIL HOUR
- 7:00 ENTRANCE INTO RECEPTION
- 7:15 DINNER BEGINS
- 7:45 TOASTS
- 8:15 FIRST DANCE
- 8:20 DANCE FLOOR OPENS
- 8:30 COUPLES' SUNSET PHOTOS
- 9:00 BOUQUET & GARTER TOSS
- 10:00 CAKE CUTTING
- 11:00 GRAND EXIT





## Detail shots.

The first thing I'll do when I get there (after saying hello and gushing about how excited I am for you) is take some detail shots. It's helpful if you gather everything so that it's all together when I arrive.

Some items that I need for detail shots include rings, Invitations, jewelry, tie, dress, shoes, and cuff links. If you have any sentimental details, please throw them in there!

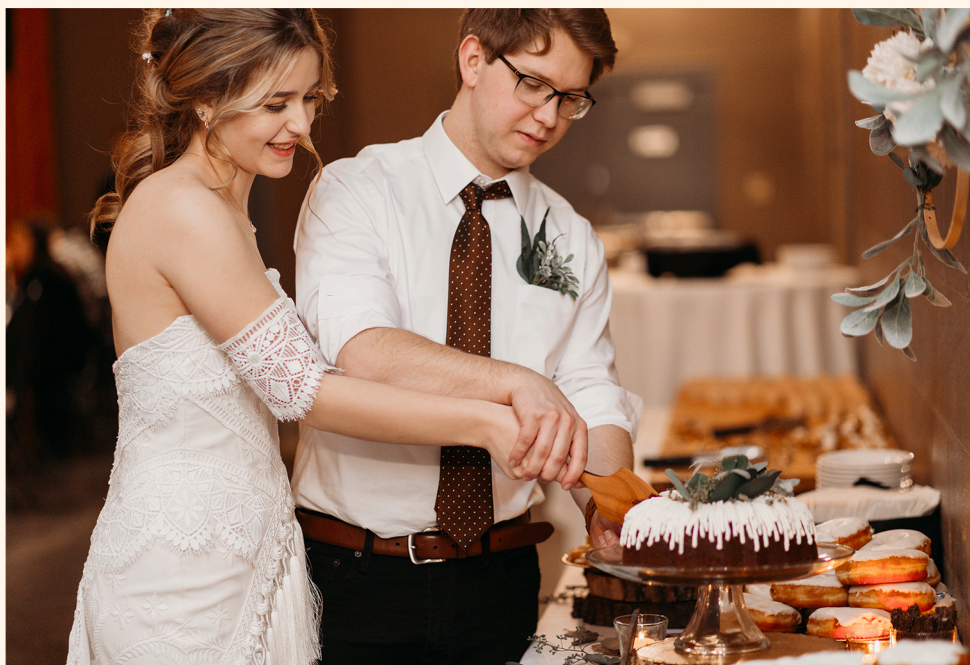
Also - I highly recommend getting a nice hanger for your dress, and for the bridesmaids' dresses. They don't have to be fancy and custom made - but any wood hanger looks so much better than a plastic one.

**30 minutes - 1 hour**

## The space.

The location really defines the look and mood of every photo, and this is also true for the getting ready location. Hotel rooms are notorious for terrible yellow lighting. Consider renting a cute Air BNB to get ready in! Instead of being cramped in a tiny bathroom where the toilet will be in the background of your photos, try to find a big, open room with lots of windows. Windows are the most important part - soft, natural light will make all the difference. It'll make you look radiant, rather than washed out and yellow.

**Windows are the most important part - make sure you have some natural light to work with.**





## the first look

Let's face it - your wedding is the best day of your life, but it's also pretty stressful. I always recommend that my couples do a first look, because it gives you a chance to have a private moment with your love, away from all the eyes on you at the ceremony. You get a few minutes away from the hustle and bustle, and spend a little time together, to soak up the love and excitement.

I totally understand feeling like you want him to see you for the first time as you walk down the aisle - because what pretty much every bride wants is a reaction. But, imagine this: you're up there in front of lots of people, and it can be hard to think about something other than the faces staring at you.

What I've found, is that a first look provides a "safer" space for the groom to get emotional - when it's just the two of you (and your third wheel - me), crying is less stressful. And with a first look, after you see each other you can hug, kiss, twirl, get a good look at each other without having to be on a time crunch and feeling like you need to move on with the ceremony to be done on time. This is one of the only times during the wedding that you'll actually get to be alone, without keeping anyone waiting.

Needless to say, I love first looks. But this isn't about me, so if you want to keep things traditional, that's great! I'd never want my couples to feel like I'm pushing a first look on them, but I do want you to be informed! No pressure :)

### 30 minutes

# The bridals.

After the first look, we'll get some shots of just the two of you. I recommend asking your friends and family to give you space for this part (most people find it easier to relax when you don't have an audience - but if you prefer having your personal hype people with you, absolutely go for it). If you don't do a first look, we'll do this part right after the ceremony! Either way, you're bursting with love and excitement, and these photos will show it!

This is the part that people tend to worry about. I know, you're "awkward in photos." I don't think anyone's ever come to a session with me and said, "I'm the BEST at having my photo taken!" But the truth is, how comfortable you feel during your session is pretty much entirely up to your photographer. If I stood there, didn't say anything, and clicked my camera while you stared into it, you'd probably be preeeeety unhappy - both during the session and when you see your photos.

## So here's what I do instead:

I'll use the chemistry that the two of you naturally have together to make sure you have a damn good time. Don't worry, I'll guide you and tell you what to do - if your hands are hanging awkwardly (a common issue :)), I'll tell you where to put them instead. But for the most part, I don't do the super pose-y stuff, and I let the session flow naturally. I'll never say "Smile!" because fake smiles aren't that cute, and they're not that fun. If you're feeling awkward, I'll do something like ask you about your first date, or ask one of you to whisper something in the other's ear - that way, we're not just taking photos, we're creating some moments, so that when you look back at each photo, you'll remember the moment you learned something new about your spouse, or maybe the moment they whispered "cookies" into your ear, but either way - I'll make sure your smiles are never forced.

**30 minutes**



# The ceremony.

This is it! The moment you've been waiting for. It's easy to get lost in all the planning and stress, all the bells and whistles. But try to keep in mind the most important thing - which is the start of your lives together.

You'll hear me say "lighting" a million times, but here it is again. Keeping lighting in mind, the best time to start your ceremony (photo-wise) is about 3 hours before the sunset. The lower the sun is, the better the lighting. The average ceremony is about 30 minutes long, but if you have special traditions that you want to incorporate, I'd allow an hour for the whole thing.

One important tip that I have is asking your officiant to move out of the way before the first kiss - that way they aren't in the background of the photo.

**30 minutes - 1 hour**

# my shot list

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME

### Getting Ready

bride's dress  
groom's suit  
bride's shoes  
groom's shoes  
jewelry  
bouquet  
boutonnieres  
rings  
bride getting makeup done  
bride getting hair done  
bride putting on dress  
bride putting on veil  
bride putting on jewelry  
candid shots  
bridesmaids/groomsmen  
groom putting on shoes  
groom putting on jacket

### Ceremony

ceremony site & details  
everyone walking down aisle  
groom's reaction  
bride's reaction  
exchanging of rings  
first kiss  
details of guests

### Bride & Groom

shot of rings  
groom only  
groom's details  
bride only  
bride's details  
bride and groom together  
I don't have a specific list of  
poses that I follow - it depends  
on the couple, the dress, etc. So  
if you have a specific pose that  
you've seen & love, let me know!

### Bridal Party

bride with bridesmaids  
groom with groomsmen  
bride with each bridesmaid  
groom with each groomsman  
entire party

### Family

I don't like creating my own list  
of family photos - because every  
family situation is different, so I  
appreciate when the bride and  
groom make a list of every  
family combination they want  
photographed!

### Reception

cake  
decorations  
bridal party entrance  
guests arriving  
guest interactions  
toasts & speeches  
first dance  
parent dances  
guests dancing  
cake cutting  
bouquet toss  
garter toss  
grand exit

## your shot list

YOUR MUST HAVE SHOTS - WRITE THEM HERE AND SEND ME A PHOTO, OR USE THIS TO BRAINSTORM.

## FAMILY

[illegible]

## OTHER

[illegible]

# BRIDE & GROOM

[illegible]



# Getting ready.

These photos often end up being some of my favorites. There's just something about those pre-wedding jitters, the little moments of this is it, the (sometimes alcohol induced) laughs with your best friends.

This part is mostly candid - but I usually try to make sure everyone is mostly ready before I take their photos - because you probably don't want a photo of you with one eye of makeup on or hair half done :).

## What to wear.

While I know most of us like to get ready in an old t shirt and some sweatpants (or maybe that's just me), but on your wedding day the photos of you and your bridesmaids chatting, laughing, and walking around will look so much cuter if your outfits give them a pop! I'm a big fan of white, lacy robes for the bride, and floral or pastel colored ones for the bridal party. There are also cute satin rompers that look adorable in photos. The possibilities are endless.

1-3 hours



# The bridal party

After your first look and couple's photos, it's time for the bridal party! I'll get some photos of just the girls, just the guys, and some of everyone together. I'll also make sure to get individual photos of the bride with each bridesmaid, and of the groom with each groomsman. And if you're not doing a first look, I'll do the girls' and guys' photos separately before the ceremony, and after the ceremony we'll do a few of the whole party together! Make sure that the groomsmen arrive with boutonnieres on, and the bridesmaids have their bouquets.

I know you want all of your best friends to have a blast at your wedding - so just like with the couple's photos, I stay away from stiff poses. One of my favorite prompts for the bridal party is to have the couple kiss, and everyone else give a big cheer. Another fun one is to have everyone shout their best marriage advice at the same time - I get a wide range of answers with this one :).

**30 minutes - 1 hour**



# The family.

You love your family, but they're kinda nuts. And the excitement of the ceremony is so contagious. Understandably so, because you just got married! How could anyone not be stoked?

That's why having a list of family members that you need photos with is always helpful. I recommend including names, as well as their role. For example: "Mother of the bride (Gina)." Since this is likely my first time meeting your family, this will make it easier for me to go down the list and call out names, and I can keep track of who's gotten their photo taken and who hasn't.

Definitely make sure to let any family members who are part of these formals know that they have to be there! Tell them where to go right after the ceremony, so that they know where to be. People often tend to wander during this part - people who need to be in more than one photo try to leave after the first one. While I will of course keep an eye on everyone and do my best to let people know when they're done, I find it helpful if you also send a list of the family shots to each member of the family - that way they'll know exactly what's going on.

If you didn't do a first look, after family portraits is when we'll get some photos of just the two of you. While all this is going on, all of your guests will be at the cocktail hour.

1 hour

# The reception.

You did it!! You got married, and now it's time to party! During the reception I'll take some candid photos and some group photos, so if there are any friends or extended family members that you need photos with, now's the time! A lot of stuff happens during the reception, and I'll take photos of all of it. You have the freedom to make your reception your own! I once had a couple that did a "first game" instead of a first dance, and they played a game of basketball against each other. Super fun, and they had a much better time than they would have with a first dance, because a first game fit their personality so much better. So don't be afraid to make the reception your own!

Here are some common reception events:

- bridal party entrance
- first dance
- parent dances
- anniversary dance
- toasts
- bouquet/garter toss
- cake cutting
- grand exit

**3 - 5 hours**





# Golden Hour

I always recommend that my couples schedule half an hour during the sunset for a few more couple's photos. You'll get that gorgeous golden light, and maybe a new location so that you have some variety in your photos. The best time to start these is about 15 minutes before the sunset time - which you can find with a quick Google search of your wedding date. However, reception events tend to run behind, and it's difficult for the bride and groom to leave because everyone wants to say hello or to give more hugs or to take photos. Which is totally understandable - but of course photos are hard to take in the dark. Because of this, I recommend blocking off an hour for these portraits - 30 minutes before sunset, and 30 minutes after.





# the planning

WEDDING PLANNING IS FUN - BUT I'D BE LYING IF I SAID IT WAS EASY. HERE ARE SOME RESOURCES TO HELP YOU GET THROUGH IT.

# preferred vendors

VENDORS THAT I LOVE AND TRUST

## PLANNERS

Unveiled Design & Events LLC

Iridescent Events

Breeze Wedding and Events  
Planning  
<https://msha.ke/breezeweddingevents>

Kc Wedding Designs  
[kcweddingdesigns.com](http://kcweddingdesigns.com)

## FLORISTS

Painted Poise Floral Studio

Lavender & Sage Floral Design  
Studio

## DJ

Dj Jesse D

DJ AV Mobile DJs

## DRESS SHOPS

Bespoke Bride

Sarabeth Bridal

Margenes Bridal

## VIDEOGRAPHER

Nopalii Film

CStell Productions

## HAIR AND MAKEUP

Rebel Color By Kodi

Beloved Bridal Co

thank you.

Thank you for putting your trust in me. This job means the world to me - and my couples are what make it happen. So thank you, from the bottom of my heart. Don't forget - I'm here for whatever you need, whether that be help with your timeline, help deciding on a dress, or questions about your photos. My job goes beyond clicking the button of my camera - I'm here to make sure you have the best wedding day possible. And I can't wait to be there :).

**-Mija Anderson**