

Where to Start

What an exciting time! You are engaged, you've picked the venue, got the caterer, have a venue helper....now what!

The best place to start is with a **Budget planner**. I have one in the Wedding Packet section that is really helpful to get a clear overview of the complexity of the day. You can find them online as well as planning checklist.

I'm sure you have begun to **think about the style** or feel you want for the day or weekend. It is really helpful to put together a **Pinterest** page or collage that you can show your vendors to translate the feel you want, the colors you love and the ideas that inspire you. This is especially helpful for dessert and florals.

Start putting together a **list of guests** and choose your **wedding party** if you are having one. Next step is to gather everyone's address- that can take a while! Start thinking about if you are going to send a **Save the Date** and if you are going to put together a **Wedding Website**. WeddingWire and The Knot have great website templates that make it really easy to put one together. It's really important to let your guests and especially the wedding party and family know to **book lodging early**. Hood River is very popular in the summer, and especially on the weekends. Most hotels do not offer room blocks, and in my opinion, don't always end up benefiting your guests. Room blocks are released 3 months prior to your wedding weekends, and that is usually the window that guests realistically will be making their plans. So make your plans now and encourage your close ones to do the same! If you are finding that things are appearing full- keep checking back for those blocks to open up in a few months.

Begin Prioritizing your Vendors:

Start off by prioritizing your vendors in a list from the most important to the least important. Many top priority vendors begin to book out a year + in advance. I HIGHLY suggest trying to use local vendors.

Traffic and accidents from Portland to the Gorge can really put some stress on the day if core vendors are running late. Below is the usual order of importance:

Photography is a good place to start because it is a very particular style and taste, and if you fall in love with someone's style and they book, it's hard to replace that. You don't want to miss out on booking someone you love.

DJ/Band: This is another very important vendor to book early. I highly recommend DJ's for weddings. They really help to keep the day flowing and we rely heavily on them to help keep things on track. Bands are great, but the timeline is tight and it can be quite expensive for the amount of time they actually end up playing, in addition you will need to include them all for dinner. Our local DJ Ryan at Gorge Music is great for DJ and live music during the ceremony and cocktail hour.

Officiant: Who is lucky enough to marry you two? Someone special, so make arrangements early and start the conversation.

Videographer: The one thing I hear that people regret is that they wanted a videographer, but didn't hire one. The day goes so fast! A video is a sweet way to remember every second and get the feeling back from the special moments you shared.

Dessert: We have some really great local talent in this department. They do book early, so make this a priority!

Flowers/Styling: I have some great recommendations on my Vendor List, but our local florist Lucy at Lucy's informal flowers is amazing and matches the style of the Farm really well. She also sources about 95% of her flowers from local Hood River Valley farms, keeping the cost down and the spirit alive by helping some more small family farms!

Hair + Make-up: Most Brides get ready at their rental house/ hotel or at a salon in town, then come to the Farm's cottage to get dressed with the Bridal Party. You can arrive to the Farm anytime after 1pm. If you'd like to get ready at the Farm, check my Vendor List for recommendations of stylists that travel.

Transportation: Most couples provide a bus for transporting guests from Hood River to The Farm then back to town at the end of the night. Buses can only make one trip, so you need to plan for the appropriate amount of buses for guests that will be transported. Buses generally pick up at a pick up point such as a hotel and depart at 3pm to arrive at the Farm at 3:30pm, ceremony starts at 4pm. Pick up is at the Apple House at 10pm, so we stage the buses around 9:45pm. Buses cannot stay on the property during the event, so they usually wait down at the country store.

VW bus Photo Booth, Luxury Trailer Restrooms, Live Music for Cocktail Hour, Ice Cream Carts, S'mores Carts, Donut Trucks and more: There are lots of fun ways to put your stamp on the day.

I have a very extensive [Vendor List](#) to get you started located under the Wedding Packet section. I am always updating it so keep checking back to see what's new!

Be sure to get familiar with the information I have online including the **Planning Tips** page also under the Wedding Packet section. Our meeting schedule can be found under the Notes From Cassandra Section as well as the list of our coordinator duties. Our first formal meeting will be at the first of the new year, so I will be in touch then to begin scheduling those. I look forward to working with you and know I'm always available by email to answer any questions you have!