

How to Get the Best Photographs on Your Wedding Day

If getting beautiful and memorable images of your wedding day is important to you, planning is absolute key. Here are a few tips that will help you - and your photographer!

Start early! In my experience, the best-looking portraits are the ones taken before the ceremony. You have just had your make-up and hair done and your dress is spotless. **For the bride, allow about an hour** (depending on family size) for getting ready pictures, bridal portraits and family portraits. **For the groom, 30 minutes** is usually sufficient.

Allow for travel time and other delays. If the photographer has to travel to various locations, allow time for travel, traffic, and unpacking of photography gear.

Consider having romantic portraits taken before the ceremony.

Yes, of course it is traditional not to see each other before the ceremony. But **with careful planning this first meeting can be made very special.** Grooms, just consider, you will be seeing your bride for the first time as she walks down the aisle – along with everybody else. You cannot really savor the moment, or tell her quietly how beautiful she looks. Brides, I know that you are just as nervous. Wouldn't you like a bit of time alone together? You can calm each other; you can tell each other just what you're thinking in a quiet, intimate setting. Then 'step on stage' to declare your love before all your family and friends. Then you can spend more time with your guests, when everybody is anxious to congratulate you.

If you decide not to see each other before the ceremony, it is even more important to plan time for photographs together. There is no set time these should be taken. It will depend on the time of your wedding and the overall flow of the day. Every photographer loves the light before sunset, so consider arranging beforehand to "duck out" for 15 minutes of sunset photography. Purposefully weave photography time into your wedding day!

Group photographs. These are best taken right after the ceremony or upon arriving at the reception site. All of your families are still together and nobody will be missed. Keep in mind that the time needed for group photos is directly proportional to the number of people involved. The larger the families and wedding parties, the longer it will take. Plan on a minimum of 20 minutes and up to 45 minutes. It only takes one missing person to delay everything. **Tell everyone** you want in the group photos **before your wedding day.**

Appoint someone to help. To speed things up, appoint someone to help with the group photos. It should not be you! This person can be anyone who has the personality (and tact) to gather and move family members along if they are not paying attention and will be a contact point for the photographer.