



"Capturing the images that capture your heart"

Before the Wedding FAQs

How early in the wedding planning process should I book a wedding photographer?

Some wedding photographers require engagement photos to be taken only a few weeks in advance of the wedding, while others may recommend scheduling the engagement photo session months ahead of time. Many factors come into play in getting an engagement photo ready in time for your wedding, starting with the photo shoot itself. If you're doing an outdoor or location shoot, you should allow enough time for weather-related rescheduling. Once the photos have been shot, it can take anywhere from a few days to a few weeks to get the proofs back to you. You then need to decide which one to have enlarged and framed, and allow time for printing and framing. You may save some time by picking a frame in advance; your photographer or frame shop can help you with this. The smartest course: Even if the date is a mere two months before your wedding, schedule your engagement photography shoot at the time you sign your contract with your wedding photographer.

What are the advantages of hiring a professional?

A professional photographer will be timely - arriving at your wedding promptly, and getting the results to you on time. A professional has just the right equipment and film for photographing your wedding. Having attended many weddings, an experienced wedding photographer will be at ease at your wedding. A professional uses a color laboratory that is in the business of meeting high professional standards of print quality. And, a professional is used to working with individuals, couples, and groups to make the formal photography go smoothly. When you think about the cost of photography, remember that the photographer's fee is only part of your investment: You, your parents, your extended family and your friends will be investing time with the photographer during your wedding. Don't waste time on your wedding day with a photographer who won't produce results you love!

Shouldn't I be asking "What do I get and how much does it cost?"

Even shopping for shoes or furniture you wouldn't ask that question until you find the style and quality you like. After you have looked through a photographer's portfolio - seeing candid, formals and illustrative pictures, you will know if this photographer has the technique, style and spirit to be the eyes through which you and your children will see your wedding day. Of course, you should determine if the photographer is within your budget, give or take a little, but what you really want from photography is memories and feeling. Look for an established and reliable photographer whose work moves you, whose technical quality is tops. If you find a photographer who makes you happy, you never will regret your investment, whatever the dollar cost. When we have invested in items that will be with us for the rest of our lives, our satisfaction has been highest when we have paid that extra bit for the best quality.

So, how much does wedding photography cost?

My research indicates that photography runs between nine and fifteen percent of the total wedding budget. When couples value photography highly and are on a limited budget, they will spend up to 30% of their wedding budget on photography.

Most brides initially underestimate the cost of photography by 50% - in other words, you will probably spend at least twice as much as you budgeted, unless you have advice from a wedding coordinator who is familiar with prices in your area.



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How do I find the right wedding photographer?

You should choose a wedding photographer based on several considerations. First, of course, you must love his or her work. Look for a photographer whose work moves you, whose style you love, and who tells a story the way you want your story to be told. If you don't love the pictures, nothing else matters. The second factor to consider is personality. Since your wedding photographer will be with you and your fiancé for a significant portion of your wedding day, and you will have close dealings with him or her both before and after the wedding, you need to make sure that you feel comfortable with this individual. One way to gauge this is to ask yourself: "Would my fiancé and I be friends with this photographer even if we weren't getting married?" If the answer to this question is "yes," then you are that much closer to hiring the right wedding photographer for you.

Why is wedding photography so much more expensive now than when my parents got married?

A lot has changed in photography since your parents' wedding. Chances are that when your parents got married, wedding photographers typically worked from set shot lists and only took the photographs that they knew would sell after the wedding. This led to cookie-cutter wedding photography that left every wedding album looking almost exactly the same. The true story of the day was left untold. Your parents' photographer probably took fewer than 200 photos at their wedding. Today's wedding photojournalists may take 10 times that many as they document the unique story of a couple's wedding day. Digital wedding photography has led to advancements in wedding albums, too. Today's wedding albums are original works of art with custom-designed layouts that are produced using the same methods employed for art books and magazines. This is a time-intensive process that requires all of the skill, talent, and artistry that professional wedding photographers already bring to their viewfinders.

What equipment should our wedding photographer have?

Every wedding photographer should have camera gear and accessories suitable for shooting your wedding in the style demonstrated in his or her samples. Depending on your photographer's particular style of shooting, this equipment may include a variety of cameras, lenses, flashes, additional lighting, reflectors, backdrops, film or memory cards, batteries, and a long list of other gear. Your wedding photographer should also have backup gear sufficient to deal with the possibility of equipment failure. With all that said, I feel by far the most important piece of equipment your wedding photographer should possess is a creative, artistic eye.

Will our wedding photographer shoot our engagement portrait?

Most wedding photographers either include an engagement portrait session as part of the wedding package or offer it as an additional option. At some wedding photography studios, a limited number of engagement prints are included in the wedding photographer's fee. At others, only the engagement portrait session itself is included in your wedding package. Should you want to purchase prints, you would purchase them. There are certain circumstances in which, brides secure the services of a different photographer for their engagement session. For example, if you live in New York but are getting married in London and have hired a London wedding photographer, it may not be feasible for you to get together with your London photographer for an engagement photo session. In this case, it may be more practical to hire a New York wedding photographer to shoot your engagement portrait session.



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Do wedding photographers offer discounts for off-season or weekday weddings?

The wedding photography business is time-sensitive because there are a limited number of high-season weekend dates each year. Photographers often get many requests for the same wedding date but are often limited to shooting only one wedding a day. To encourage clients to book off-season or weekday weddings, some wedding photographers may offer a discount or added services for those dates. Discounts may also be offered for smaller weddings or for dates that are booked a short time before the event. Other wedding photographers feel that they work just as hard and that their product and time are equally valuable on any and every day of the year, and therefore do not offer discounts for off-season or weekday weddings.

Can we upgrade our package after we book our wedding photographer?

Most likely, yes! If you book a photography package and change your mind later (usually before you've made the final payment) most wedding photographers will welcome the opportunity to upgrade your package. Keep in mind that this might require an additional amount toward the retainer. You may save more if you get the package you want from the start rather than adding items a la carte. Also, if the upgraded package now includes an album, your wedding photographer may want to know this in advance of your wedding in case he or she needs to take album-specific shots at the event.

Why will our wedding photographer copyright the pictures he takes at our wedding?

In the field of wedding photography, copyright is a form of legal protection that wedding photographers have on their images, layouts, designs and other artistic works. This protection grants them the exclusive right to reproduce or display their images, or authorize others to do so. A photographer is granted copyright at the time the product is created. Copyright does not need to be claimed or registered to belong to the photographer, nor does a notice of copyright need to be present for copyright to be in effect. Copyright is in effect for 70 years after the life of the author (in this case, the photographer). It's illegal to violate any of the rights held by the owner of the copyright. It's not necessary to obtain a transfer of the copyright to reproduce the images; a reproduction release will serve this purpose. Transfer and reproduction releases need to be put in writing and signed by the photographer. For more information on copyright, visit www.copyright.gov.

It is most important that you discuss photo reproduction policies with your wedding photographer before signing a contract, as they differ widely.

Is it better to book a wedding photographer who uses film or a wedding photographer who uses digital equipment?

Both film and digital cameras capture and record light. Film cameras do so by exposing the film to light. Digital cameras use an electronic sensor instead of film. Both formats are capable of producing stellar images in the hands of an experienced professional. The vast majority of people presented with a 5x7 inch print of a professionally shot and processed digital photograph and a professionally shot and processed film photograph will not be able to tell which is which. When shopping for a wedding photographer, review each candidate's work with your own eyes, either by viewing samples online or by scheduling an appointment to look at examples of his or her prints and albums. You will likely find that the quality of the prints and albums are of ultimate importance, regardless of whether the photographer chooses to **use** film or digital photography. The photographer's medium of choice will not usually impact his or her ability to provide a wide variety of products and services.



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Can I give our wedding photographer magazine clippings of certain poses I want?

Every wedding photographer has a different working and shooting style. Some are happy to see examples of photos you like, and will use these as inspiration if they seem to compliment the photographer's own style. If you have hired a wedding photographer who is more interested in recording the spontaneity of the day, it may be difficult for him or her to try to copy a specific image from another event with a different couple, different light, and different circumstances. Since your wedding photographs will be unique to your day, you will likely find it more enjoyable to simply allow events to unfold, and trust your wedding photographer to give you the images that attracted you to his or her work from the start.

What is a proof?

A proof is the first set of photos you see after the wedding! You'll look at all of your proofs to choose the final prints for your album as well as your reprint orders. Some of the ways photographers provide proofs to clients include: an online website, a DVD of computer screen images, or 4x6 inch photo prints. Printed proofs may also come in the form of a contact sheet, which is a catalog of approximately 12 images on a page. Be sure to ask your photographer exactly what type of proofing he or she offers. Typically, proofs only have basic color correction or exposure adjustments made to them, with no specific retouching or other finishing techniques applied. Some wedding photographers may add a logo and/or copyright information to their proofs, to discourage clients from making copies of what is considered an unfinished product.

What are the advantages of the different types of proofing?

There are several proofing options available: prints, portfolios, CDs, DVDs, and web proofing. Prints as proofs are often 4" x 6" and come in either a presentation box or an album. The advantage of the print as a proof is that you can physically sort the pictures into groups for albums and reprints. Proof portfolios are generally and contain 4 to 12 images per page. The advantages of a proof portfolio are that they make it easy to quickly locate images, and they're handy to carry around. CD and DVD proofing allows you to view images on your computer, often with some sort of software that displays the images as a slideshow, sometimes even set to music. Other CD and DVD proofing advantages include the ability to zoom in on images, as well as portability. Web proofing is often the quickest form of proofing and the easiest to share with friends and family.

So many wedding photographers say "we do photojournalism." I don't get it! Are they all photojournalists?

Many couples searching for a wedding photographer are attracted to images that look "natural" -- unposed photographs that capture a specific moment in time, exactly as it happened. A pure photojournalist will shoot your wedding without interference or interaction. The pure photojournalist won't pose you or your guests, using only his or her unique skill set to capture your images in a most flattering light. The resulting photographs will show your wedding in a most natural fashion.

Some photographers call themselves "documentary wedding photographers." They too will document your wedding day as it happens.

Some wedding photographers will capture parts of your wedding without interference or interaction, but at times during the day, they will pose you, or make suggestions about where to stand, to smile, to kiss, and will interact with you and your guests



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as they see fit. If you ask these photographers if they do photojournalism, they'll likely say "yes" because they do avoid interacting during parts of the day.

In each case, after you ask about "photojournalism," it's a good idea to also ask "Do you ever pose your subjects, or make suggestions that will help us look our best?" You'll get a better idea of how the wedding photographer you're considering works on your wedding day.

What is the advantage to having two wedding photographers from the same company shooting simultaneously?

There are many advantages! Two wedding photographers can shoot from two different angles or locations—they can literally be in two places at once, to capture all the action. For instance, during the ceremony, one may be up in the balcony shooting a wide-angle view, while the other is near the altar getting a close-up shot of the bride's eyes tearing up. Two wedding photographers may also shoot from two different perspectives, even if shooting the same scene. One might tell the overall story while the other is shooting an artistic detail of the same story. Having two skilled photographers can allow many more details of your wedding to be captured. A wedding photography team can also be good insurance in case a guest steps in front of one photographer or a camera fails during a critical moment—there will still be another professional ready for action. Some wedding photography studios offer two photographer shoots as their standard, while others charge an additional fee for the second photographer.

What are the advantages of having a solo photographer?

There are many photographers who feel that by working alone, they provide their clients with the best possible images.

Many photographers want their subjects to be themselves and act naturally, and forget there's a photographer in the room. This is very easy for the solo wedding photographer. One of the things many photographers want to hear, is that the bride and groom "didn't notice that the photographer was there." The bride and groom can relax and enjoy their friends and family. Working alone allows that single photographer to blend in, to disappear in the crowd, and to be easily forgotten, while capturing magnificent, natural, images.

Having one photographer means you're dealing with one person who's had many conversations with you since you first met. The solo wedding photographer knows your wants and your needs and understands WHO you are: The photographer can sense when you're going smile or cry or do that cute thing with your nose that your groom so loves about you. The photographer knows you. The better your photographer knows you, the better and more personal the images are going to be.

We don't need an engagement portrait. Can we ask our wedding photographer for another product or service in place of it?

Some wedding photographers will offer to substitute your engagement session for another option such as a bridal shoot, a post-wedding portrait session for the bride and groom, or additional coverage on your wedding day. If there is no other option that meets your needs, some wedding photographers may consider a small discount on the total price of your package. Other wedding photographers offer the engagement portrait as a complimentary session, and do not offer any substitutes or discounts if this offer is not accepted.



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Do wedding photographers offer separate pricing for really small weddings?

Whether you are inviting hundreds of guests or are eloping with no guests at all, the work a photographer does at your wedding, as well as the work afterwards, does not change substantially based on the number of guests. Each event will get the same level of care and attention. Many wedding photographers have packages based at least partially on time spent at the event, so if a smaller wedding means a shorter wedding to you, you may be able to find a package with shorter coverage times that suits your needs. Some wedding photographers may also offer shorter coverage than outlined in their regular packages for weddings on non-peak days, or for weddings booked within a month or two of the event.

My mom insists on using another wedding photographer for our formal photographs. Is that okay?

Many professional wedding photographers will object to another photographer being commissioned for your wedding. Perhaps this issue has arisen because you have selected an informal photojournalistic style concentrating on unposed spontaneous events, while your mother is more focused on a studio style of more traditional, posed family portraits. If that's the case, consider finding a wedding photographer who is comfortable providing both traditional and photojournalistic-style images. Another alternative is to ask your wedding photographer whether he or she has an associate who could shoot the more traditional formals. Consult with your wedding photographer and check the details of your contract for other limitations on using another photographer.

Some photographers ask that no one else take pictures during the formal photography. Is that reasonable?

Yes. If the photographer is trying to work quickly through a series of formal pictures, a snap-shooter might slow the process. A problem arises when there are several cameras aimed at a formal group - the subjects will be looking at different lenses. The diverted attention will ruin the professional's picture. Or, if the professional is using a light-sensing trigger device ("slave") on a second flash, other flashes will trigger this flash, ruining the pictures [that you are paying for] and wasting battery power. There are many other reasons why a professional might ask others to refrain from picture taking during formals. On the other hand, many guests find snapping a few pictures a pleasant part of attending weddings, so it should not be a big deal for your professional to be relaxed and let people snap away when formals are over. Ideally, guests should show respect for the bridal party and photographer and put down their cameras during the formal photos.

What kinds of packages do wedding photographers offer?

Some wedding photographers offer coverage-only packages, which include only photography time. Everything else can then be purchased a la carte (in other words, at an additional cost per item) either before or after the wedding. Other wedding photographers offer packages that can include a variety of services and products, such as photography time by one or more photographers, proofs, online galleries, film or digital negatives, albums, prints, engagement sessions, thank-you cards, and slideshows. Each wedding photographer will be able to explain in detail the types of packages he or she offers.

What is a la carte pricing?

A la carte pricing means that each product and service offered by the wedding photographer is individually listed and priced, as opposed to being grouped together into set packages.



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Will the wedding photographer we want to hire hold our date or call us if someone else requests that date?

Don't expect your wedding photographer to hold your date, unless you've signed a contract or paid a retainer fee. Although the exact policy may differ from wedding photographer to wedding photographer, many of them will require a non-refundable retainer and a signed contract to hold your date. This benefits both you and the wedding photographer: You benefit by securing a wedding photographer who has now set aside your wedding date, is contracted to provide services to you, and will not entertain inquiries from other parties for the same date. The wedding photographer benefits by obtaining the guarantee to work and receive payment for his or her services. It's always in your best interest to book your wedding photographer as soon as you have chosen one whose work you love.

What happens with our wedding photographer if we cancel our wedding?

First, you will want to inform your wedding photographer as soon as you've made the decision to cancel your wedding. He or she will likely request a written and signed statement from you regarding the wedding cancellation. In most cases, the retainer you paid your wedding photographer to hold your date is non-refundable because he or she has turned away other potential clients for that date once you reserved it. In some cases, depending on how close to the reserved date you cancel your wedding, you may have to pay an additional fee or even the full rate of your photography package. Ask your wedding photographer about your payment schedule and your financial obligation in the event of a cancellation. Some photographers have provisions to refund some of your payment in the event they're able to book your wedding date with another couple.

We're not getting married for quite awhile. Will our wedding photographer refund our money if we cancel the wedding?

In order to retain the services of a wedding photographer, it's recommended that you book and confirm him or her as early as you can. This involves paying a booking fee **or** retainer to secure the date, usually a portion of the cost of your overall package. This fee is not normally refundable in the event of a cancellation. However, if you do cancel your wedding, you should contact your photographer immediately. If you cancel several months before the wedding date, it's possible that the photographer will be able to secure another booking for that date and give you a full or partial refund.

Looking Your Best FAQs:

Can our wedding photographer avoid the red-eye effect in our wedding photographs?

The red-eye effect—in which the eyes seem to have another-worldly glow—is actually the result of quick bursts of light bouncing off the eye's retina and being reflected back toward the camera. The red-eye effect is more common when the lighting is very low, thus causing the pupils to open up to a wider size. Your wedding photographer will likely have various techniques for avoiding red-eye when shooting your pictures, one of the most common: Keeping the flash a short distance away from the camera lens. If the flash is very, very, close to the lens, as is the case with many consumer point-and-shoot cameras, red eye will often result. If red-eye is unavoidable, your photographer may use various software techniques to correct images in which the problem occurs.



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I wear glasses. Will that interfere with the quality of my wedding photographs?

Glasses sometimes present a bit of a challenge to the wedding photographer. After all, they partially obscure one (or two!) of your most expressive features—your eyes! Wedding photographers often make the eyes the focal point of their images, so wearing glasses could affect the final product. Glasses also can produce unwanted glare in your photographs. One way to minimize that glare is to tilt the arms of your glasses up a bit so that the lenses are angled downward. Your wedding photographer may have other tips, so don't hesitate to ask. It's sometimes possible to digitally remove eyeglass glare from pictures, but be aware that some wedding photographers will charge extra for this service—particularly if it's needed in multiple photographs. All wedding photographers have their own standards regarding the extent to which they will retouch photos before charging an extra fee, so be sure to clarify that point with your photographer prior to your wedding.

Are there certain types of bridesmaid dresses that don't photograph well?

There are gorgeous dresses in every shape and color that photograph well. What's really important is that the personalities of your bridesmaids shine through. The key to this is making sure everyone feels comfortable and confident in what they're wearing. If your bridesmaid's dress is two sizes too big, she may be slipping out of it all day and her discomfort will be evident in your wedding photographs. Many bridal stores now carry lines of bridesmaid dresses that use the same fabric in a variety of styles. This is an easy way to let each of your bridesmaids choose the dress best suited to her figure and personality. If everyone looks and feels great, they will definitely shine in your wedding photographs.

Are there some hairstyles that look better or worse in wedding photographs?

Most people will go for the styles that emphasize their good features and avoid styles that emphasize what they're trying to hide. A very important factor to consider is the weather—particularly wind. Be sure to consider how your hair will look if there is a breeze blowing, especially if you are having an outdoor ceremony. If you're taking any photographs outdoors, then a style that involves loose hair will be more challenging. A style that has most of your hair pinned or tied back but leaves tendrils framing the face could negatively impact your wedding photographs because you may find yourself pushing the tendrils out of your face all day long. When you don't push the tendrils away, the photograph will obscure your eyes—your most expressive feature! Keep in mind that if you use glitter-spray on your hair, it could end up on the groom's suit and give the appearance of dandruff in photographs.

Why is our wedding photographer so interested in natural lighting?

Natural lighting is a wedding photographer's best friend. Wedding photography involves fast-paced, constantly changing situations. There may not be enough time to set up elaborate artificial lighting in every situation and location. The less time the photographer has to spend setting up lighting, the more time he or she has to shoot your wedding. Natural light is at its most beautiful and flattering in the couple of hours after sunrise and before sunset, but a great photographer can find nice lighting and create interesting photography at high noon, and yes, even indoors. However, sometimes natural light does not cooperate! Many wedding photographers are experts at quickly creating artificial lighting that flatters their clients. They can enhance a scene using a single light or multiple lights, either on movable stands or held on a pole by an assistant. They may even use artificial light outdoors to add sparkle to eyes and faces.

I have a crooked smile. Can my wedding photographer fix it in the pictures?



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If you're self-conscious about any aspect of your appearance, discuss it with your wedding photographer. He or she may suggest that you have an engagement or bridal photo session before the wedding, where your pictures will be taken in a more relaxed setting. This allows you to become more comfortable with your wedding photographer, and it will be a good opportunity for your photographer to find the angles and poses that flatter you most. But what if you believe that your smile looks crooked in your wedding pictures and you would like it fixed? The policies of wedding photographers vary: Some will only fix issues caused by the photographer; others will make minor adjustments at no charge; and others will make extensive changes for a fee.

At the Wedding FAQs:

Do we have to have a receiving line?

Etiquette used to be that you had to have a receiving line immediately after the wedding ceremony. This is no longer the case, as many couples opt to skip the receiving line entirely and go table to table at the reception instead. If time is a concern, but you still wish to receive your guests, dismissing them from the church pew by pew is a great option, as guests will often bottleneck as they try to exit. With a traditional 250 guest receiving line easily taking as long as 30 minutes to get thru this option will allow you to control the pace at which your guests leave while family and friends can still greet them at the rear of the church. As any wedding photographer will tell you time we have to take wedding photos between the ceremony and reception is often at a premium so extra time is always appreciated.

What happens if our wedding photographer can't make it to the wedding?

It's very important to ask your photographer about their backup plan. Many photographers rely on a network of their peers as backup and will maintain a list of people whom they can call on short notice.

There's a one-hour gap between our wedding ceremony and our reception. Do we have to pay our wedding photographer for that time?

Most wedding photographers are commissioned to photograph your wedding day continuously. Depending on the distance between your ceremony and reception locations, this hour could be spent in your limousine traveling between the two venues. If that's the case, why not ask your photographer to ride in the limo with you and take some fun shots? If the two locations are near each other, or if the ceremony and reception are at the same venue, you could utilize this hour for group photos or portraits of the two of you. Alternately, your wedding photographer could document you mingling with your guests. Some wedding photographers may also use this time to take some detail shots of, for example, your table setting, centerpieces, and place cards... all the little things you have put a lot of effort into to create your beautiful wedding day.

Can our wedding videographer take photographs as well?

Wedding photography and wedding videography both require great skill, attention to detail, and motivation to capture those once-in-a-lifetime moments. Having one person dedicated to each medium is surely the best way to get great coverage. Companies that offer both wedding photography and wedding video services may provide an opportunity for some cost savings, but when using a company that offers dual coverage you should make certain that the photographers and



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videographers specialize in the equipment and techniques for the jobs they are hired to do. You probably don't want your wedding photography to be handled by a videographer who brings along an unskilled person to take pictures. Some videographers present cost savings by offering still pictures from the video they shoot. These photographs are technically and artistically inferior because a videographer's camera is designed for capturing movement, while a photographer's professional camera is designed to capture a moment.

Can we get a group shot of everyone at the wedding?

Discuss this special photo opportunity with your wedding photographer. A group shot of all your guests may be done with careful preparation on the part of you, your wedding photographer, and your guests. Talk to your photographer about how many people are expected to be in the photo, and where and when the photo should be taken. The photographer will need a location that will allow everyone to be seen in the photo. A great time to record a group shot is right after the ceremony, and this can be arranged by putting a note in the program informing guests that their presence is requested as soon as the service ends. Alternately, the officiant can make an announcement toward the end of the ceremony so that everyone remains for the photo. If the photo is to be done at the reception, you can have someone such as the DJ make an announcement to gather everyone.

Will our wedding photographer be taking pictures of me in my underwear?

The simple answer to this question is, "Not if you don't want me to." For many brides—putting on the dress is a moment full of excitement, anticipation, and even joyful tension. The people helping you—perhaps your mom and your friends—are so happy for you. This is the moment when it all becomes real for many brides—the dress is on and you're ready to go. For these reasons, your wedding photographer will want to be in the room with you. Your wedding photographer will be respectful of your feelings and will leave the room if that is your wish. The photographer can also turn away at the most delicate moments of the dressing process, or simply take photos of your face, so the moment is recorded, but there are no photos of you in your underwear. Let your photographer know your preferences, because above all, your wedding photographer wants you to feel completely comfortable.

How much time should we expect our wedding photographer to need for formal photographs?

Depending on your needs and the style of your wedding photographer, formals may take from minutes to a couple of hours to shoot. In general, each photograph requires an average of 3 to 5 minutes of time to set up and shoot. This takes into account such factors as locating someone who left to get a drink, gathering large groups together for a photograph, and getting elderly guests or children into position. You'll also want to allow additional time for photos of you and the groom alone, perhaps at an alternate location. Talk to your wedding photographer about the photos you would like, and he or she will likely be happy to help you create your photography schedule. Be warned, the more groupings of people you want photographed, the more time it will take. Your photographer will work efficiently, but when a guest is in the bathroom, there's not much that can be done to hurry the photo shoot. This is the reason for the 3-to-5 minute per photo average.



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Do I need to provide a meal for my wedding photographer at the reception?

It is best to ask your wedding photographer his or her preference. A wedding photographer who requires a meal will include a meal provision in your wedding photography contract. Some photographers may bring their own food, and others may not like to eat while working. However, most photographers appreciate a meal if they are working a full day at your wedding. Generally, weddings are event-packed days and don't leave a lot of time to stop for lunch or dinner, and you'll want your photographer to be full of energy. If your wedding photographer's meal is served at the same time as your own, and that of the DJ or band, he or she will be sure not to miss important events that may occur right after dinner.

Can we expect our wedding photographer to take table shots?

This will depend on the wedding photographer's approach and style. There is a trend toward fewer photographers offering table shots, for a number of reasons, the first of which is that times have changed: At most weddings, the only time everyone might be seated at their tables is when dinner is served, forcing the wedding photographer to interrupt the guests' meal for photos. If one person is missing from the table, the photographer has to revisit the table. Multiply that times 20 tables and you can see how the photographer could miss important events during the reception! Most wedding photographers will photograph the head tables and parent tables, if you request it. Some wedding photographers will only agree to table shots if the bride and groom are present for each of these photos, which may make guests more willing to cooperate. Some wedding photographers charge an additional fee for table photographs or will require a minimum order of such photographs.

Will our wedding photographer attend the wedding rehearsal?

Some wedding photographers offer to attend the rehearsal in order to get an early look at the venue. This allows them to check their equipment settings and plan out how they will shoot the event. The photographer may also use this time to introduce himself to the officiant, coordinator, or family members in preparation for the ceremony. Other wedding photographers may arrive a little early on the day of the wedding to accomplish similar tasks. Some wedding photographers include the rehearsal in their fee; others will charge an additional fee.

Can our wedding photographer make me look thinner? How about taller, prettier, or smarter?

"Thinner" and "taller" are do-able, and "prettier" can be a joint effort, but "smarter" is up to you! If it's important to you that your wedding photographer be able to make you look thinner, taller, or prettier, then you're going to want to choose one who can flatter you with proper lighting and posing techniques. But be aware that when you're on the dance floor being photographed, no one is posing you! Thinner and taller can sometimes be achieved through digital image manipulation, but be aware your wedding photographer will likely charge an hourly fee for this very involved task. Be sure to discuss your concerns with prospective wedding photographers to learn whether they're able to accommodate your wishes.

Will our wedding photographer allow our friends to take pictures at the wedding?

No doubt your friends and family are excited to attend your wedding and will want to take pictures, too. This activity is usually welcomed by wedding photographers. At the same time, you don't want your guests to block the professional wedding photographer or somehow prevent the photographer from capturing an image. For example, a guest who steps out into the aisle during the ceremony to get a picture may be visible in that priceless photo of your dad walking you down the aisle. Or, by



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taking pictures along with the wedding photographer during the formal-portrait session, a picture-taking guest may cause you or others in the shot to look away from the professional photographer and toward the camera of a guest. This will slow down the professional picture-taking process considerably. But as long as your guests do not impact the job of the professional wedding photographer, there should be no issue with them taking pictures at your wedding.

Will our wedding photographer charge us for travel between the ceremony and the reception?

If your ceremony and reception are being held at separate locations, there may or may not be an additional travel fee. Depending on the distance between the two venues, some wedding photographers will charge a travel fee to cover their time and/or costs. Others will include unlimited locations within the time frame they are covering your wedding. Be sure to discuss all travel issues with your wedding photographer in advance so that you're aware of all the costs involved.

How far will our wedding photographer travel for our wedding?

It depends on your wedding photographer's travel policy. Some photographers are not willing to travel outside the local area he or she serves, whereas others are willing to travel nationally or even internationally. Depending on the distance, you may be responsible for travel expenses either as a flat fee or as itemized charges that include travel time, hotel lodging, meals, and/or airfare.

Our officiant has told us, "No pictures during the ceremony." What do we do?

Your wedding photographer will want to clarify exactly what "no pictures" means. It could mean that pictures can be taken during the processional and recessional only, or that no flash pictures can be taken during the ceremony, or that pictures can only be taken from the rear of the venue. Or, it could indeed mean that absolutely no pictures at all can be taken. The "no pictures" rule may stem from religious tradition, or it may simply be in place because the officiant feels that photography is a distraction during the ceremony. In any case, communication is the key to getting great photographs during your ceremony. The couple, the parents, or even the wedding photographer may be able to work out a solution with the officiant that is acceptable to all parties. However, if there is a steadfast refusal to allow picture-taking, the best alternative is a re-enactment after the ceremony. Some officiates will participate in ceremony reenactments, but this may not be a satisfactory alternative if your primary interest is to capture genuine moments of emotion.

Sometimes photos at wedding receptions look dark in the background. Why is this?

If the room is dark, the picture will be, too. The wedding photographer's flash will only light whatever is directly in front of it. If you're standing in front of a flash, you're brightly lit, but the back of a big reception hall, off in the distance, will remain dark. Wedding photographers can use certain techniques to brighten the background of an image. For example, the photographer can expose the picture for a longer period of time for a brighter image overall. But if people are moving while the shutter is open, the camera will capture that movement and the people in the background will come out blurry in the image. Some wedding photographers place extra lights around the room. This brightens the background, but the extra flashes around the room can be noticeable to guests.



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If our reception runs late, will our wedding photographer stay to cover it? How much more will this cost?

Weddings are a celebration, and celebrations have a way of running late. Most wedding photographers will be willing to stay and finish covering the event, and will charge an overtime fee for the additional hours. Discuss this with your photographer prior to the wedding so that you know whether he or she would be willing to stay for additional time, and how much he or she would charge for those extra hours.

How many hours will our wedding photographer shoot?

The answer to this question is really up to you. How much coverage of your wedding day do you want? Some couples want professional coverage of the entire day, from the bride's time at the hairdresser to the very end of the reception or possibly even longer. It's not uncommon now for couples to request "day after" coverage or photography for the entire wedding weekend, including the rehearsal dinner. Other couples may want only the ceremony photographed, with perhaps a few formal portraits afterwards. You will want to find a wedding photographer who offers a package that suits your needs. The amount of coverage you'll receive is just one of many matters you should discuss with your wedding photographer, as he or she may have suggestions on how best to cover your day.

After the Wedding FAQs:

Why will our wedding photographer give us a deadline for creating the album?

One reason some wedding photographers impose this deadline is that it helps them manage timelines within their studios. This allows the photographer to provide great customer service to each client. Another reason is that after the exhausting experience of planning a wedding, couples often return from their honeymoon and take a break. Believe it or not, it is common for brides and grooms to take months, and even years to select their photos. Before the wedding, each of those couples insisted they'd never ever wait. But it happens. Frequently!

If a couple waits until two years after the wedding to select their album photos, prices will have most likely increased in that time. Therefore, some photographers may impose a surcharge on wedding album orders that come in past the deadline. In some cases, the photographer may even tell you that your album is forfeited if the order is not received by the deadline. Check your contract to be sure you understand the terms and conditions of ordering albums, as different wedding photographers have different policies.

Will our wedding photographer email pictures of the flowers to our florist?

Each wedding photographer works differently, but most like to form good relationships with other wedding vendors, which in turn can lead to word-of-mouth recommendations to potential clients on both sides. Florists are always on the lookout for good pictures of their products, and there's no better way for them to get high-quality photographs than to obtain them from the official wedding photographer. Most wedding photographers will be happy to work with your florist.



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My wedding photographs are pictures of me, and I paid for them—so why don't I own them?

You do own your wedding photographs! The prints that you contracted for, the albums, the CD's, the DVD's. You've paid for them, and they are yours. Most professional photographers retain the rights to their artistic vision-- what they shoot through the lens, studied, and perfected-- and you purchase the ownership of the products that come from that artistic vision. A wedding photographer's studio is a business, and by selling his artistic vision, he or she feeds his family. The reason CD's and DVD's are sometimes copy-protected is that so those who are tempted can't steal that artistic vision to make free products for themselves. Many major and small stores that handle consumer photography printing will refuse to make copies of work stamped with a photographer's copyright. There are wedding photography studios that will allow you to purchase the originals so that you can make duplicates, which usually won't be as high quality nor as carefully edited as those you'd purchase from a professional wedding photographer.

Can I make copies of the CD or DVD of my wedding images?

Whether or not you can make copies of the CD or DVD containing your wedding photos depends on your agreement with your photographer. Some wedding photographers have a policy against duplication, and price your wedding photography package based on providing a set number of discs. If you want additional copies of the discs, you would pay for them at the studio's standard rate. Some wedding photographers will encourage you to make many copies of the disc. In either case, it's important to remember that no one really knows with certainty how long optical media will last, and that some discs are easily scratched and thus rendered unusable. In addition, methods of storing data may change in the future. If your wedding photographer does not allow you to copy your disc, you may want to purchase an additional set or two to store in a separate, safe, location.

If our wedding photographer provides us with a photo CD, can we send some of our favorite images to our other vendors?

The disc of images you receive from your wedding photographer is likely licensed for personal use only. If you have some images that you would like to share with your vendors, you should contact your wedding photographer. He or she will be glad to know that you are so happy with your pictures and will usually have no problem sending images to your other vendors. In fact, the wedding photographer may already have a specific plan in place for distributing images to other vendors as well as to publications.

Why do enlargements of wedding photos cost so much?

Have you ever seen a big blurry enlargement? Wedding photographers don't want you to adorn your walls with cheap reprints. Instead, they put a lot of time and expertise into making enlargements. The wedding photographer often makes color corrections, adjusts the brightness to make the image "pop," and crops the image to further refine and improve it prior to printing. The photographer then has to factor in the costs of either printing the images on his or her own printer, or submitting them to a lab for printing. Many wedding photographers will further enhance the image with the type of artistic touches that impressed you so much about the photographer you hired. All of these factors raise the value of the print beyond the cost of mere ink and paper.



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Can I choose black-and-white, sepia, or color for any shot?

The simple answer is to discuss this with your wedding photographer. Images captured in color can usually be converted later to black-and-white or sepia. However, it's impossible to convert images shot on black-and-white film to color. For artistic reasons, some wedding photographers may require that certain images be shown only in color or only in black-and-white, with no other option available- reasons would be coloring or shading of that particular image, or a photographer's artistic preference. Some wedding photographers may ask you to choose either all color or all black-and-white, while still others may allow you to pick and choose how you want each individual image presented. Clarify your preferences with your photographer before your wedding to ensure that he or she can deliver the kind of images you want.

How much input will we have in the design of our wedding album?

There are a range of approaches to designing wedding albums, and a range of wedding album designs. Some wedding photographers will ask you to provide a list of all of the shots you want to include in your album, in order of appearance. Others may ask for no selections or input at all, instead presenting you with a finished design of their own concept. Most wedding photographers fall somewhere in between, working your input and photo selections into the final design. The degree of input required can depend on the style of wedding album chosen. The most traditional matted album which consists of one photo per page requires far less input than an intricate coffee table album that consists of intricate designs and montages on each page.

What is color correction?

Color correction refers to the computer process by which your wedding photographer adjusts the color balance, skin tone, brightness, contrast, and color saturation of a photograph to enhance the quality of the final print.

What does basic retouching cover?

Basic retouching usually includes fixing minor skin blemishes, minor acne, shiny foreheads, laugh lines, and other small imperfections. It is "basic," meaning it will not drastically change the image to alter your true appearance. The goal of basic retouching is to make you look your best without making you look like someone else. Most professional wedding photographers include some form of basic retouching to your final photographic prints. Extensive retouching that is not necessarily included in your wedding package might consist of removing glare from glasses, make me look thin, make me look younger, and removing hair styled to fall onto your face, or removing people from photographs. Many wedding photography studios will charge an additional hourly fee for extensive retouching.

How quickly will we receive our proofs from our wedding photographer?

Turnaround time for proofs varies from one wedding photographer to the next, and largely depends on the type of proofs you're receiving. Some photographers offer a CD of photos you view on your computer; others offer an online site at which you can view your proofs. Generally, online or CD proofs will be available to you more quickly than printed proofs, which take a longer time to create. Some photographers offer 4x6 inch prints as your proofs. While others offer a bound magazine with a number of wedding images on each page. With all of these variables in mind, a reasonable turnaround time for proofs can be anywhere from a few days to three weeks.



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What do wedding photographers do with the photos they don't use?

To show you and your wedding in the best way possible, many wedding photographers will delete unflattering images, and those that are technically inferior (for instance the flash didn't fire) and show you a final collection of images that accurately represent your wedding. Some wedding photographers will save all of these unflattering images, and may make them available to you as needed. For instance, if there's no photo of one of your guests, your wedding photographer may go into those less-than-perfect images in hopes of finding your camera shy guest. In any event, your wedding photographer will always provide you with the number of images promised in your contract.

Why will we have to wait so long to get our digital wedding photographs?

Your digital wedding photographs may take time to deliver in part due to the sheer number of images taken at the event. Your wedding photographer shoots hundreds—if not thousands—of images per wedding. Even digital images require individual attention. The color must be corrected so a white dress looks white, a black tux looks black; the brightness and contrast might need adjustment, and then each photograph has to be resized and duplicated. If your photographer provides online proofing, he or she also needs to prepare and upload the images for viewing. If your photographer provides printed proofs, after color and contrast correction, the photos have to be sized properly or cropped, digitally transferred to a lab for printing, and then shipped to your wedding photographer for quality review.

How quickly will we receive our wedding album?

Several factors will determine how quickly you'll get your wedding album. The first factor: how quickly you select your photos for the album! Some wedding photographers will give you a deadline for choosing your photos to keep the process moving. Some will even create an album design and select the photos themselves, and then offer you the opportunity to make revisions. Once the photos are selected, the album design process can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months, depending on the number of revisions you want. After you've approved the album layout, the pages are printed and then assembled into book form. This can be time-consuming—anywhere from a few weeks to a few months—because much of the work is done by hand. Add in the time it takes to ship the product, and you can estimate how long it will take to receive your wedding album. Also keep in mind that with the arrival of autumn, couples tend to take a strong interest in getting their albums completed in time for Christmas. If your wedding photographer is flooded with long-awaited photo selections from 25 clients in mid-October, it will take him or her longer to get the work done. Album manufacturers also face an increase in submissions this time of year, so the best advice for getting your album quickly is to select your photos as soon as possible after the wedding.

What are the different types of wedding albums?

The matted wedding album is a series of pages in which photographs are hand-mounted to each page and surrounded by a matte, or border. Matted wedding albums can include one or more photos per page, and can also include full or partial panorama photos. A flush-mount album consists of photos or photo layouts mounted to a board. The photos stretch to the very edge of the board, leaving no border at the edges. Magazine or coffee-table albums are similar in format to flush-mount albums. This design is called "magazine style" because the full-page layouts might remind you of a magazine spread, with numerous photographs assembled in interesting designs on each page. Each of these album types comes in a number of



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variations as offered by the many album manufacturers. Talk to your wedding photographer about specific wedding album details and choices.

Our wedding photographer mentioned “digital negatives.” What are these?

A digital negative is the digital equivalent of a film negative: It's the unaltered computer file that is recorded by a digital camera. When you shoot a roll of film, the lab processes the film and the result is a set of negatives. These negatives are then used to make prints. In the digital world, the image file—in other words, the computer file—produced by the camera is the digital negative. After skillful processing by your wedding photographer, this image file is what's sent to the photo lab to make a print.

Can we keep the printed proofs created by our wedding photographer?

Printed proofs are a great way to look through your hundreds of wedding photographs and make choices for your album or prints. While not all wedding photographers offer printed proofs, those who do usually allow you to keep them. Some wedding photographers offer proofs as part of the photography package, and others offer them a la carte (meaning you pay an additional fee for them, separate from the cost of your package). Your wedding photographer may present your proofs to you magazine-style (multiple photos printed in a bound book) or as 4" x 6" photos in a proof box or proof album.

I would like my wedding photographer to create an album for my grandparents. How would this work?

The grandparent album may be a miniature duplicate of your main wedding album, or it may be a custom wedding album designed just for them. Speak to your wedding photographer about the numerous available options.

Why does my print look different than the image on your website?

Each camera makes a print size that has its own rectangular shape – a large number of cameras have a ratio that for every 2 inches the print goes in one direction, it needs to go 3 in the other. That's why 4x6 prints are a popular size for small frames and proofs. A full frame print would make a perfect 8x12 -- but many brides want an 8x10 print because of the wide availability of 8x10 frames. To fit in the frame, part of the 8x12 image must be cropped off. If the photo is shot in such a way that the image might be compromised if an area was cropped off, there is an alternative. Rather than cropping, the total image can be reduced until it fits within the 8x10 area; but since the ratio must be maintained, the remaining area is filled with a border. In this way, the integrity of the original image is maintained.