

CHICAGO BRIDE

Jewish Wedding Event Planning Timeline

By Michele Schwartz

Mazel Tov! You're engaged. Now it is time to begin planning the *simcha*. The first challenge might be selecting a date. In order to decide on a date, you must first decide how much you want to stick to Jewish traditions. There are many dates on the secular calendar when a Jewish clergy will not perform a Jewish wedding. Once you have secured your date and your clergy, you can begin to think about what type of wedding you want, whom you want to invite, and what your budget will allow. **Do those things first!** After you have made these important decisions, take the next step by following a timeline that will bring your vision to life and help you in planning the perfect Jewish wedding.

Upon your engagement

- Select a date for the event & ask your Rabbi, Cantor or other officiant.
- Create a preliminary guest list.
- Establish a budget.
- Discuss whether you will have a themed social event, which may affect the type of venue you will need.
- Hire an event planner for all or parts of the celebration.

Nine Months in Advance

- Contract for reduced rates at a hotel for your out-of-town guests.
- Send Save the Date cards to your out-of-town guests and include hotel reservation information.

Six Months in Advance

- Meet with your caterer and decide on type of food service and menu.
- Decide on your décor and meet with necessary vendors. (Helpful hint: pin to your Pinterest board to find inspiration.)
- Begin to purchase specialty items you might want for your décor.
- Review your guest list again.

- Order invitations and thank you cards.
- Confirm any needed transportation.

Four Months in Advance

- Mail Save the Date cards to in town guests.
- Reserve needed rental items.

Two Months in Advance

- Mail invitations to arrive six weeks in advance and eight weeks in advance for out-of-town guests. Include RSVP information.
- Ask for RSVP information at least three weeks in advance of the party.
- Purchase DJ handouts, party favors and other gifts. Purchase other needed ritual items such as personalized kippot. Beware of delivery times!
- Make a list of people being honored and what role they will have.
- Hire valet and security if needed.

One Month in Advance

- Prepare your seating or arrangement list if you will have one.
- Review and confirm all of your vendors and pay any outstanding balances.
- Finalize your program.

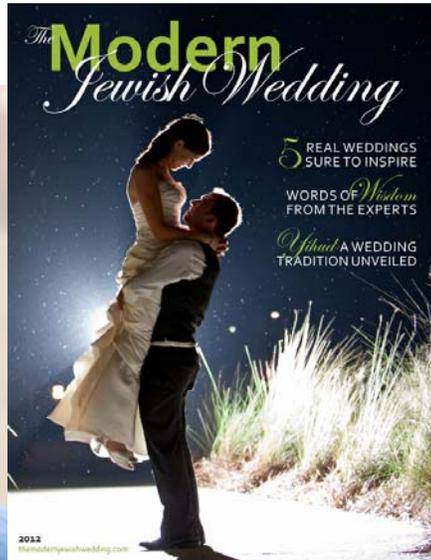
One Week in Advance

- Your event planner will confirm everything with everyone. Give final counts to caterer, a timeline to the DJ or band, delivery times to the rental, florist and lighting company, and confirm floor plan with your venue.
- Prepare hotel welcome baskets for the out-of-town guests.
- Begin baking (or having friends help with) hospitality suite goodies and/or Oneg Shabbat.

The Big Event

We'll say it again: Mazel Tov! The time planning your *simcha* went quickly! You hired the best vendors to be your team for the weekend. Don't try and micro-manage them. Instead, be sure to breathe easy and center yourself for all the upcoming activity. You can choose a variety of Jewish rituals to help you such as a Mikvah immersion, a Shabbat dinner with Motzi and Kiddish, or a blessing at services. All that's left is for you is to toast, "*L'Chaim!*"

<http://www.themodernjewishwedding.com/magazine-premiere-edition>



[Michele Schwartz](#) is the creator and editor of The Modern Jewish Wedding.com., the website of choice for anyone planning a Jewish wedding or a wedding with Jewish touches. She speaks frequently at wedding industry conferences training other professionals on how to plan and execute Jewish weddings or other life cycle events. She has been the lead event planner on several high profile Jewish community events for fundraising and community building. She continues to serve on the boards of event planning professional associations and numerous Jewish organizations. She recently survived the planning of her own child's Bat Mitzvah!

Chicago Bride Magazine
www.chicagobridemagazine.com