

FREE WEDDING PLANNER

Small & Intimate Wedding Planner

Design a celebration that feels intentionally close, beautifully proportioned, and fully complete.

FEWER GUESTS · DEEPER EXPERIENCE

Small Describes Scale. Intimate Describes Feeling.

A reduced guest count creates possibilities, but closeness only happens when the guest list, room, ceremony, meal, and timeline are designed to support it.

SET THE BOUNDARY

Choose a true guest ceiling and one invitation rule before names, venue packages, or family requests expand the plan.

DESIGN FOR CLOSENESS

Use the smaller group to improve conversation, visibility, participation, hospitality, and time with each guest.

KEEP IT COMPLETE

Choose the elements that create a full emotional arc. Completeness does not require every large-wedding tradition.

USE THIS PLANNER BEFORE YOU FINALIZE

- ☐ The guest-count ceiling and invitation boundary
- ☐ A venue or room that feels occupied
- ☐ The ceremony arrangement and guest proximity
- ☐ The table layout and meal experience
- ☐ Activities, entertainment, and open social time
- ☐ The people and relationships photography must preserve
- ☐ The traditions and moments that make the day feel complete
- ☐ One coherent plan that can guide later bookings

THIS IS A DECISION PLANNER

It will not replace your budget, guest list, vendor tracker, seating chart, or timeline. Use it to decide what those tools should be building toward.

THE FEELING WE WANT GUESTS TO LEAVE WITH

Define the Experience Before the Number

The useful question is not whether a publication would label your wedding small. Decide what the reduced guest count must make possible, then choose the ceiling that protects it.

CURRENT ESTIMATED GUEST COUNT

ABSOLUTE GUEST-COUNT CEILING

WHAT SHOULD THE SMALLER LIST PROTECT?

- ☐ Speak meaningfully with every guest
- ☐ Seat everyone in one conversational zone
- ☐ Create a ceremony that feels close
- ☐ Prioritize a memorable shared meal

WHAT SHOULD IT MAKE POSSIBLE?

- ☐ Photograph nearly every important relationship
- ☐ Use a smaller or nontraditional venue
- ☐ Reduce total spending
- ☐ Spend more intentionally per guest

OUR ONE-SENTENCE PURPOSE FOR KEEPING THE WEDDING SMALL

Decision	Our answer	Boundary this creates
Guest ceiling		
Desired atmosphere		
Top experience priority		
What we will not enlarge		

Create a Consistent Invitation Rule

A small list stays small when categories are decided before individual exceptions. Apply the same relationship standard across both sides whenever possible.

Guest category	Invite	Do not invite	Rule / exception
Immediate family	☐	☐	
Extended family	☐	☐	
Close friends	☐	☐	
Coworkers	☐	☐	
Family friends	☐	☐	
Spouses / partners	☐	☐	
Other plus-ones	☐	☐	
Children	☐	☐	
Guests requested by parents	☐	☐	

WE INVITE SOMEONE WHEN...

WE CONSIDER AN EXCEPTION WHEN...

USE PRESENCE, NOT PREDICTED DECLINES

Every invitation should represent a seat you are prepared to provide. Do not protect the ceiling by assuming some guests will say no.

Communicate a Small Guest List With Care

A limited list is easier to respect when the wording is warm, direct, and consistent. Decide the message and the person who will answer questions before invitations are sent.

BEFORE INVITATIONS

- ☐ Address invitations to every named guest
- ☐ State the child policy directly, if applicable
- ☐ Offer a plus-one only when one is included
- ☐ Align both families on the same boundary
- ☐ Decide when wedding details may be shared publicly

WHEN QUESTIONS ARRIVE

- ☐ Use one warm, consistent response
- ☐ Do not blame the venue or budget unless it is true
- ☐ Avoid separate negotiations about the list
- ☐ Name who handles pressure or repeated requests
- ☐ Record every approved exception in the guest plan

COMMUNICATION PLAN

SITUATION	EXACT MESSAGE / BOUNDARY	REPLY OWNER	IF PRESSURE CONTINUES
Unnamed plus-one			
Children			
Additional relatives			
Friend or coworker assumes an invitation			
Livestream or alternate inclusion			
Announcement / social sharing			

CLARITY IS KINDER THAN HINTING

Invitations, envelopes, and wedding-website wording should identify exactly who is included. Ambiguity creates pressure later and can make a consistent boundary feel personal.

Will the Venue Feel Intentionally Occupied?

Evaluate the room at your expected attendance, not only its maximum capacity. A venue can hold the group and still feel too empty, segmented, or operationally awkward.

Venue / room	Expected count	Layout tested	Total cost	Fit score 1-5

SCALE & CONNECTION

- ☐ Room feels occupied at the real count
- ☐ Ceremony seats can stay close to the couple
- ☐ Dinner fits one connected zone
- ☐ No large dead areas dominate the view
- ☐ Guests can transition without scattering
- ☐ Dance floor or social area matches the group

OPERATIONS & VALUE

- ☐ Food-and-beverage minimum understood
- ☐ Site fee and fixed costs compared
- ☐ Privacy during the event confirmed
- ☐ Accessibility works throughout the event
- ☐ Sound and service needs are realistic
- ☐ Weather backup preserves the same feeling

THE VENUE WORKS BECAUSE...

Design a Ceremony Guests Can Feel Part Of

Use the smaller group to improve proximity, sightlines, sound, and participation. Intimacy comes from connection, not from removing formality.

CEREMONY ARRANGEMENT

- ☐ Traditional rows
- ☐ Slightly curved rows
- ☐ Semicircle
- ☐ Full circle
- ☐ Standing ceremony
- ☐ Dinner-table ceremony
- ☐ Other intentional arrangement

DISTANCE FROM GUESTS TO COUPLE

AISE AND PROCESSIONAL FORMAT

SOUND / AMPLIFICATION DECISION

Meaningful element	Who is involved	Why it belongs	What is needed
Vows			
Reading			
Family / cultural ritual			
Music			
Guest participation			

CLOSE STILL NEEDS CLEAR SOUND

Outdoor noise and reflective rooms can make vows difficult to hear even with few guests. Test the real conditions instead of assuming amplification is unnecessary.

Choose the Table Format Around Conversation

At a small wedding, every seat carries more social weight. Choose the layout that supports real relationships and guest comfort rather than copying a ballroom plan at reduced scale.

ONE LONG TABLE

Strong shared experience; check width, sightlines, and conversation distance.

U-SHAPED TABLES

Creates a central focus while keeping the group visually connected.

CONNECTED SMALL TABLES

Useful when relationship groups need some structure without feeling separated.

RESTAURANT LAYOUT

Can feel natural and polished; confirm privacy, circulation, and table placement.

Relationship / household	Best placement	Conversation need	Accessibility / comfort

CHOSEN LAYOUT

COUPLE'S SEATS

CONVERSATION RISK TO SOLVE

Make the Shared Meal Part of the Experience

A smaller group may open food formats that are difficult at scale. Choose the service style for the room, budget, timing, dietary needs, and kind of interaction you want.

FORMATS TO CONSIDER

- ☐ Plated dinner
- ☐ Family-style meal
- ☐ Tasting menu
- ☐ Restaurant service

ADDITIONAL FORMATS

- ☐ Elevated brunch
- ☐ Buffet or stations
- ☐ Cocktail-style reception
- ☐ Other

Meal decision	Our plan	Question to confirm
Service style		
Menu / courses		
Dietary accommodations		
Bar structure		
Dessert / cake		
Minimum spend		
Staffing and service timing		

WHAT SHOULD GUESTS REMEMBER ABOUT THE MEAL?

Plan Energy Without Over-Programming the Day

Conversation can be part of the entertainment. Add activities and music because they support the group, not because an open space in the schedule feels unfinished.

Moment	Desired energy	Plan	Duration	Skip / backup
Guest arrival				
Cocktail time				
Dinner				
Toasts				
After dinner				
Dancing				
Farewell				

MUSIC & MOVEMENT

- ☐ Solo musician or duo
- ☐ Small band
- ☐ DJ
- ☐ Curated playlist with professional sound

PARTICIPATION & CONNECTION

- ☐ Shared tasting or dessert moment
- ☐ Lawn or tabletop games
- ☐ Group photo
- ☐ Open conversation time

THE ONE EXPERIENCE THAT BEST FITS OUR GROUP

Photograph the Relationships That Matter

A smaller guest list can create a deeper record of the day. Identify the people, connections, and interactions the photographer should understand before building the shot plan.

Person / group	Relationship	Must-have image	Best moment	Context to know

RELATIONSHIP COVERAGE

- ☐ Complete guest group photograph
- ☐ Photograph with every household
- ☐ Parent and grandparent interactions

CANDID PRIORITIES

- ☐ Sibling and close-friend connections
- ☐ Guest reactions during ceremony and toasts
- ☐ Unstructured conversation during the meal

What Will Make the Wedding Feel Complete?

A complete wedding has a clear emotional arc, not a maximum number of traditions. Keep the elements that carry meaning and remove the ones that exist only to imitate a larger event.

Wedding element	Keep	Adapt	Skip	What makes it meaningful
Processional	☐	☐	☐	
Vows / ceremony	☐	☐	☐	
Readings or ritual	☐	☐	☐	
Cocktail time	☐	☐	☐	
Shared meal	☐	☐	☐	
Toasts	☐	☐	☐	
First dance / dancing	☐	☐	☐	
Cake or dessert	☐	☐	☐	
Music	☐	☐	☐	
Decor / atmosphere	☐	☐	☐	
Farewell	☐	☐	☐	

THE EMOTIONAL HIGH POINT

THE ENDING THAT FEELS RIGHT

DO NOT ADD TRADITIONS JUST TO MAKE THE DAY FEEL VALID

If the ceremony, hospitality, meal, relationships, and ending feel intentional, the day can feel fully complete without reproducing every convention.

Your Small & Intimate Wedding Blueprint

Transfer the decisions that should guide the venue, vendors, seating chart, timeline, and guest communication. If an answer is vague, return to the matching worksheet before booking around it.

PLANNING DECISION	FINAL DIRECTION	OWNER	NEXT ACTION	DEADLINE
Guest ceiling				
Invitation rule				
Guest communication				
Venue / room				
Ceremony format				
Table format				
Meal experience				
Entertainment				
Photography relationships				
Complete-feeling elements				

OUR NON-NEGOTIABLE

OUR BEST USE OF SCALE

OUR NEXT BOOKING DECISION

Does Every Choice Support the Same Wedding?

Use this page before major contracts and again after the guest list is finalized. A strong plan should remain coherent even if individual design details change.

THE BOUNDARY HOLDS

☐ Guest ceiling is explicit

☐ Invitation rule and wording are consistent

☐ Any exception still fits the ceiling and rule

☐ Venue fits the real count

CLOSENESS IS DESIGNED

☐ Ceremony keeps guests connected

☐ Tables support conversation

☐ Meal feels shared

☐ Activities fit the group

THE DAY FEELS COMPLETE

☐ Key relationships are identified

☐ Meaningful traditions are protected

☐ Unnecessary elements are removed

☐ The ending feels intentional

OPEN QUESTIONS BEFORE BOOKING

Question	Owner	Answer needed by	Decision affected

OUR PLAN FEELS COMPLETE BECAUSE...

THE NEXT DECISION IS...

NOTES & IDEAS

Notes

Use this space for names, venue questions, meaningful moments, and anything you want to revisit.