



Portraits
by Linda

Artful/ Authentic

Wedding Photography & Planning Guide
Helpful tips for newly engaged couples

ABOUT PORTRAITS BY LINDA



This is my family! My name is Linda DeColumna, and my husband of 43 years is behind me, as well as my two daughters and son-in-law. I love photography as most people seem to, but I've been fortunate enough

to have 15 years of experience behind me. I didn't start out photographing weddings. I started out with high school seniors. I love their energy, sense of adventure and optimism! I seem to be gravitating to vacationing families and weddings, while I still photograph a good amount of high school seniors. My business grows a little each year and I learn more every year also.

WHY I MADE THIS GUIDE

If you've never been married before, this is all new to you, unless you've been in a wedding party on many occasions! It's hard to know what to expect and that's why many couples hire a wedding planner to help them through the process.

This guide is designed to help you envision all the things that come with planning a wedding, and what decisions you will need to make along the way.



CHOOSING YOUR PHOTOGRAPHER

There are 3 things to think about when choosing a photographer.

1. Are your personalities a fit? You are going to be spending a lot of time with this person, on the day of your wedding, so it's important that they mesh with your personality.
2. Can they accomplish what you expect? Everything from the products, to their style, to the time they offer, are part of their services, and it's important to make sure that what they have to offer lines up with what you're looking for.
3. Are they within your budget? Everyone ranks photography differently as a priority for their wedding, which means some people will budget \$1000 and some people will budget \$10,000. So no matter what your budget for photography is, you should find a photographer who can find a way to work within your budget to achieve your goals.

IT'S A COMMITMENT!

Another important thing to consider when choosing a photographer is their contract terms when booking them. What does it take to secure a date with them and what will happen if you need to change a date or cancel? What will happen if they have to cancel or can't make it to your wedding? This should all be in your contract!



Lorem Ipsum

WHAT COVERAGE DO YOU NEED?

One of the hardest decisions for couples is determining how much coverage they need for their wedding. Many photographers offer standard packages that accomplish the same kind of coverage for most weddings, but I encourage couples to outline their priorities, so that we can determine what the best coverage option is.

1. What kinds of photos are most important to you? Make a list of your priority pictures: the photos that are really important for you to have when the wedding is over. This list will help you and your photographer determine the appropriate amount of wedding day coverage.
2. Does the package that you're looking at include something that you don't need or want? Whatever your preference is, you should always make sure that you are paying for a product and service that meets your goals.



SHOULD YOU HIRE A SECOND PHOTOGRAPHER?

Many photographers out there automatically include a second photographer in every wedding package they offer, while others provide them as an optional service. But how do you know if you need one?

1. Peace of mind. This is the number one reason a second can be a good idea. If an emergency happens, you know you will still have at least one photographer coming to photograph your big day. Also, if one photographer has equipment malfunctions, the other can continue working and there will be no missed coverage or delays.
- 2 Limited time line for preparations. If there is less than two hours for preparations and you want both you and your partner to be captured during that time, it is very difficult for one photographer to capture both in such a short time, even if you are at the same location.
3. A wedding that's a big affair. Weddings that are long days (8+ hours) or that have guest counts over 125 tend to become more strenuous on a single photographer. It's difficult for them to monitor and cover a crowd that large because at the reception they will be busy running around to try to get photos of everyone.



GO FOR THE ENGAGEMENT SESSION!

Some couples know for sure they want to have an engagement session done and others aren't sold on it. I love doing them and I highly recommend them to all couples for the following reasons:

1. They are a great opportunity for you and your photographer to get to know each other better. And you will see how your photographer works, which will make you more comfortable in front of the camera.

2. Most couples don't have professional photos of them besides their wedding photos. It's nice to have some more casual photos of the two of you as well, and sometimes the time line of the wedding doesn't allow for as much time for pictures of the two of you as you might like.

3. They can be used for the save-the-dates, invitations, and other wedding accessories. Some couples use an engagement photo as a guest-book, or they use the photos to decorate the venue or table centerpieces.



PLANNING YOUR DAY

Now that you've chosen your photographer, outlined your photographic priorities and determined your coverage, it's time to plan the day with your photographer. When I plan the day with couples there are four major parts of the day. The next several pages will outline how I approach each part of the day with couples, as well as provide helpful tools for planning your big day!



PREPARATIONS



CEREMONY



PORTRAITS



RECEPTION

PREPARATIONS

This part of the day is when you and your intended are getting ready with your family and friends before your ceremony. There are two kinds of photos that usually happen during this time: detail images and getting dressed images. I like to reserve at a minimum, an hour for each person getting married in order to adequately capture preparation images for each of them.

DETAILS - FOR LADIES

Details are usually the first thing I try to photograph when I arrive. They are all of the little things that accent your look for the day: your shoes, jewelry, special gifts or notes, flowers, and even the details on your dress.

DETAILS FOR GENTS

As with ladies, I like to capture these first and they will include things like cuff links, ties, vests, jackets, shoes, colognes & gifts.

If detail shots are a priority for you, it's best to have them all together and waiting for your photographer when they arrive so they can be done quickly.



GETTING READY - FOR LADIES

Depending on what your priorities are and the time line you have developed, getting ready images can include everything from goofing off and having fun with your bridesmaids, having your hair and makeup done, all the way up to being laced into your dress.



GETTING READY - FOR GENTS

Getting ready images for men tend to take less time and fanfare than ladies, but in my opinion are no less important; it is all still part of the story of the day. They can include the men taking some time to play a game of cards and exchanging gifts, as well as getting dressed.



HOW I WORK:

I'm a photojournalist, so my goal is to capture your wedding as authentically as I can. During the preparations portion of the day, I don't really do any posing, though sometimes I will give some direction. Mostly, I will simply provide guidance on where the best place to get dressed is, taking the lighting or background into consideration.

THE CEREMONY

The ceremony is perhaps the most important and anticipated moment of your day. Whether you opt for religious, secular or traditional, the ceremony is where you exchange vows that represent the love that is unique to you and your intended in front of the most important people in your lives: your family and friends. The next few pages outline some important things to consider for the photography of your ceremony.



HOW I WORK:

As a photojournalist, the sanctity of your ceremony is very important to me. I try not to be intrusive while still capturing the moment as authentically and fully as possible. I will be moving around a bit, in order to photograph the scene from multiple angles, though I try to keep my distance and will never get up onto the stage with you and insert myself into what is going on. I may pass in front of a guest, but I try never to impede a guest's view for an extended amount of time.

LIGHTING - INSIDE OR OUTSIDE

Choosing your ceremony site means that there are different photographic opportunities, but also some different things to think about in terms of lighting and how it will affect your photos.

INSIDE A BUILDING

Some inside locations have nice natural lighting with big windows pouring light in from all directions. Or they have many interior lighting fixtures, making it so having enough light for your photographer is a non-issue. However, some locations, though they seem bright enough to our naked eye, are actually considered dark to a photographer's camera. In such situations, there are two options that photographers can go with: Flash or higher ISO.

FLASH

Many places forbid flash during the ceremony, making this option limited. However, in private venues the rules are more lenient. Some couples find it distracting, while others do not. Ultimately, if the option is there and you and your photographer think it's a good idea, go for it! It preserves clarity and color.

HIGHER ISO

This is a setting photographers use and the most common approach to take. It handles most low-light situations with ease. The only thing to note is that in extremely low-light situations, the ISO may have to be raised to a point where the photos may develop a softness and grain, creating an artistic vintage look!

OUTSIDE - BACKYARDS & BEYOND

Many people love outdoor weddings. I happen to love them too! But outdoor weddings can provide their own unique challenges, like unpredictable weather and distracting noises. Here are some tips to help make your outdoor photos beautiful.

FIND THE SHADE

It will be much more comfortable for the wedding party, if they are not under the sweltering sun! Also, full sunlight can create less than flattering shadows and highlights. Having your ceremony under shady trees, an arbor or a tent is a great way to enjoy the outdoors, and also keep everyone comfortable and looking their best.



PLAN FOR LATE AFTERNOON

If shade can't be found, your best bet is to plan for later in the afternoon, starting your ceremony about three hours before sunset. The light will be less harsh, it will be cooler and you will be able to know where the sun will be, so you can have it setting behind your ceremony, which will be easier on the photographer and help make your photos look better!

PORTRAITS

This part of the day is probably the most looked forward to. Some can dread it, too! Every couple has a list of “must-have” photos with family members and friends, but the idea of wrangling them together and actually taking that many photos can be a challenge and you just want to get it over with. Then, there’s the idea of spending some time alone with your partner and your photographer to take some romantic photos of just the two of you, but often, there doesn’t seem to be enough time left over for all of that. Especially when all the guests are at the reception waiting for the wedding party to show up. Without a doubt this is one of the most important parts of the day for the photographer because these are the photos that will be given as gifts and hung up on walls, so it’s essential we do them well and don’t miss any. The following pages talk about the three main sections of the Portraits part of the day, with a few suggestions on how to make them go smoother.



FAMILY PORTRAITS

Groupings that contain the couple’s immediate families, grandparents and sometimes their extended families and close friends.



WEDDING PARTY

A mixture of traditional and fun photos of the couple and the wedding party.



COUPLE PORTRAITS

Traditional and romantic portraits of the couple together to commemorate this special day!

WHEN DO PORTRAITS TAKE PLACE?

There are many different options to the timing of taking the portraits. It's up to you and your timeline. The most important thing is to plan enough time for them! The most common thing to do is have all the portraits taken during the cocktail hour after the ceremony. However, here are some options to think about.

Before the Ceremony

1. First Look/Couple Portraits
2. Wedding Party Portraits

Cocktail Hour

3. Family Portraits

Before the Ceremony

1. First Look
2. Family Portraits

Cocktail Hour

3. Wedding Party Portraits
4. Couple Portraits

Before Ceremony

1. Separate Wedding Party Portraits
- Cocktail Hour
2. Family Portraits
 3. Whole Wedding Party Portraits
 4. Couple Portraits

FIRST LOOK OR NOT

Some couples know they want a first look, others want to save that moment for the aisle. Many ask for my opinion. I love doing them and I think they can help alleviate the stress of doing all the portraits during the cocktail hour. We can work together to do some of the other desired portraits before the ceremony, helping everyone feel less rushed and more relaxed. This is especially helpful if you're a Pinterest addict and want some of the more fun and complex photos with your partner or wedding party. Some people worry that seeing each other before the ceremony will take the emotion away from it, so it just depends on what you prefer.



FAMILY PORTRAITS

Family portraits are one of the most difficult things for couples to coordinate for their wedding, I think. Couples are always anxious about who they should be including. Not to mention that, depending on the size of your family, it's a lot of people and can be like herding chickens! The next page has a list of common family portraits, but here are my tips for staying stress-free when portrait time comes:

Be realistic about the people-time ratio. When you give your list to your photographer, they will let you know if it's too many groupings for the time allotted. Definitely, include immediate family, be selective about extended family. Unless an extended relative is extremely close to you, it probably isn't necessary to have a formal portrait of them during this time.

Your photographer would be more than happy to capture a more casual one during the reception. Think about how you'll use the photos after your wedding and select your groupings based on that. Get everyone on the same page. Make sure you let everyone who you want to be in these photos know that you want them, tell them where they need to be and when. Also, let them know that they should be aware and listening to the photographer so they know when it's their turn!



COMMON FAMILY PORTRAITS

FAMILY SIDES

Couple with both Parents together

Couple with each of their parents

Each Partner with their Siblings

Couple with each of their Whole
Immediate Family

Each Partner With Their Grandparents

Bride with Mother & Grandmother

Groom with Father & Grandfather



DON'T FORGET YOUR KIDS!

WEDDING PARTY PORTRAITS

This is where a lot of people have the most fun. You're together with all your friends. There's laughter, hugs and sometimes a few tears. I like to mix up this part of the portraits by taking some traditional posed, some candid and some fun photos. Generally, there are five main groups taken: Whole Wedding Party, Bride with Maid of Honor, Bride with all attendants, Groom with Best Man, Groom with all attendants. Depending on how large your wedding party is and if time allows for it, you may be able to add more group variations or photos of you with all your attendants individually. This is usually determined on the day of your wedding by you and your photographer.



Pinterest Ideas

I won't lie, photographers have a love/hate relationship with Pinterest. It's a great tool for inspiration, but as with many things on the internet, it can set some unrealistic expectations. Most photographers are happy to look at an inspiration board. If you see something really cool on Pinterest that you want to try, send it to your photographer and ask them what it entails to pull it off. You might be surprised how much time, coordination and work actually goes into some of those sparkler pictures you see!

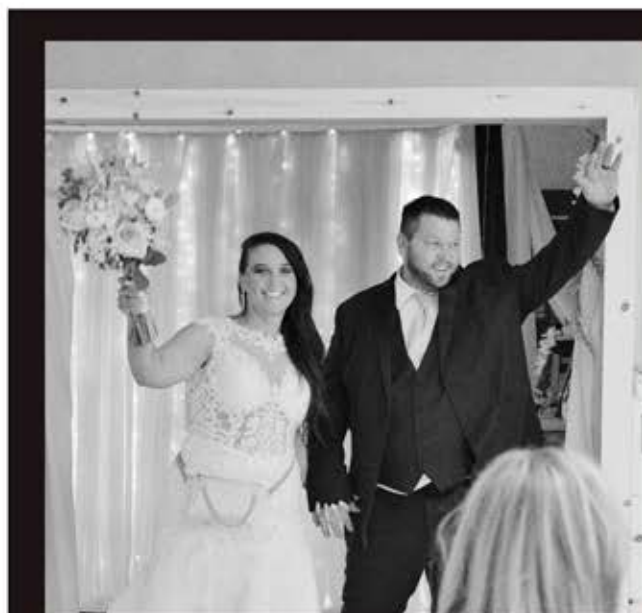
COUPLE PORTRAITS

By far my favorite part of the day, this is where you and your partner get to have a little bit of alone time and bask in the fact that it's your wedding day. I like to do a mix of candid and posed, and I love it when the bride and groom just be themselves and cuddle with each other.



THE RECEPTION

It's Party Time! The reception is where all sorts of fun things happen, from dinner to dancing and all the things that I like to call "mini events." This is where you will also have time to finally greet all of your guests and thank them for coming (very important).



INTRODUCTIONS



FIRST DANCE



FIRST DANCE



PARENT DANCES



SPEECHES



CAKE CUTTING



BOUGUET TOSS



GARTER TOSS

It's always best to inform your photographer of what mini events you plan on having, so they know what to expect. If you have a timeline laid out with your DJ or Caterer, be sure to give it to your photographer!

HOW LONG SHOULD MY PHOTOGRAPHER STAY?

Ultimately this depends on how high reception photos are on your priority list and what is planned, but I always recommend that couples contract me to stay for 3 hours of the reception. This covers dinner, mini-events and some general dancing time. It's very rare I need to stay to the end.

WHAT WILL BE DELIVERED WITH MY PACKAGE?

In addition to the online gallery, I also offer wall art and albums for professional heirlooms commemorating your wedding.

HOW MANY PICTURES WILL I GET?

Every photographer is different. Some guarantee a number for each and every wedding, but I don't, because every wedding is different. On average, engagement sessions have 30-50 total images delivered, and weddings see at least 200-300 images.