



## **Questions to ask your venue before signing on the dotted line**

Dear Bride and Groom-to-be,

Congratulations on your engagement! Planning your wedding together is a very exciting season in any couple's journey, enjoy every moment of it.

Finding your wedding venue is one of the first, and most important, tasks on your to-do list. It is important to knock out this big task early on to secure your favorite spot. Your reception site is going to set the tone for your wedding, and many of the decision you make going forward will be depended on it.

Once you've got a clear vision for your wedding day, your budget, and a rough idea for the number of guests you'd like to invite, you're ready to start touring potential wedding venues!

When you're on the hunt for a venue, it's easy to fall in love at first sight. But forgetting to ask an important question could possibly lead an expensive surprise down the track. You need to ask the right questions to make sure you have a full understanding of what you're paying for.

Venues often can offer you package deals for things such as catering, entertainment, and decor. These services can really take a lot off your plate, but it's important to remember that each venue is different, and you'll have to play by different rules.

I highly recommend bringing along a video camera when you go visit a site. After visiting several venues, it's easy to forget the details of each location. Taking a quick video from each venue you visit and talk yourself through the space. This a great way to recall what you liked about each site.

It's also a great way to get a second opinion from your fiancé, best friend, or anyone else who's opinion might matter to you. At the very least, take a couple photos so you have record of each site you visited. Not all of us have an amazing photographic memory to fall back on.

To help you prepare for your venue viewing, I've put together a list of questions that cover the various aspects that you'll want to know about.

### **Ask these questions first:**

Is our date available?

How many people can this venue accommodate?

Who will be our point of contact before the wedding?

Is there an on-site venue coordinator?

Will the venue coordinator be available as the day-of-coordinator? If yes, what services are included? Are there any additional charges?

Is the venue available for exclusive use?

What time can the wedding start? What time will the guests need to leave the venue? How much are additional hours?

What's is the rental fee? What's included in that price? (Rentals, catering, lighting, decor, etc.)

### **Logistics**

Can the bridal party get ready at the venue?

Is a shuttle service available?

Is there public transportation easily accessible from the venue?

Are there any security services on-site? Do I need to hire my own security guards, or will the site hire them?

If I'm able to decorate, can I gain access the day before the wedding? If yes, when can I get access to the space to decorate and set up? How long do I have to set up and clean up?

How much assistance can I get with the set up/decor?

Are there any set up/tear down services available? How much does it cost?

Is there a plan B for rain or inclement weather?

### **Facilities**

Are there any suites or private rooms available during the wedding?

Is there parking available? How many spots? Will guests be charged?

Is the venue handicap accessible?

Is the venue child friendly? Are there any facilities available to keep them entertained?

How many restrooms are on site?

### **Ceremony**

What are the different options for ceremony area?

Is there an additional charge?

What is the setup for a shared ceremony/reception space?

How much time do we have for the ceremony rehearsal?

## **Reception**

Are plates / silverware / glassware provided or will we have to rent them?

Are tables, linens, and chairs provided or will I have to rent them? If so, what type of tables do you have? Are there other options?

What type of seating arrangements we can have?

Can I move things around, or do I have to leave everything as is?

Are there any decoration guidelines or restrictions? Can we use candles? Can we throw confetti?

Are there any decorations or stationery provided (flowers, cake stand, center pieces, red carpet)?  
Are there any options to choose from?

Do you have signage to direct guests to the wedding?

## **Food & beverages**

Is there a minimum spend? Are there any penalties for not meeting minimum?

Is there an in-house caterer? If so, can we do a tasting? How many people can attend?

What is included in the packages?

Can you accommodate special dietary requirements?

Do we have to use that caterer? If not, are there any limitations on which outside caterers we can use?

If I hire my own caterer, will they be able to access kitchen facilities?

What are the beverage choices? Are there any upgrade costs?

Are we allowed to bring our own alcohol? If yes, do you charge a corkage fee?

Are there any addition charges for bar/waiting staff?

Can I bring in a cake from an outside baker? Is there a cake-cutting fee?

## **Staff & coordination**

Do you work with specific vendors?

Do we have to use these vendors? If not, are there any limitation when working with outside vendors I should know about?

When can my vendors arrive to set up? How early can vendor deliveries be made?

### **The party**

Does the venue have a sound system with speakers? Or will it need to be rented?

Are there any noise restrictions?

Does the venue have microphones for the speeches? Or will it need to be rented?

Can I hook up an iPod / laptop into the sound system?

Where will the dancefloor go? How big is it? Will anything need to be moved?

Can the venue accommodate a live band or DJ? If yes, are there any restrictions?

Where could the band / DJ setup? Can they set up beforehand or will it need to happen during the changeover? Where can they gain access into the venue?

Are there any restrictions for the photographer in terms of flash usage?

How late will the bar be open?

Is there a charge for a bar extension?

What's the curfew?

Is it possible to extend the party? If yes, how much do you charge for extra hours?

### **Accommodation**

Are there any accommodation options? Will there be discounted rates for guests? When is the check-out time?

Is there a bridal suite included in the price? Are there rooms provided for the parents?

Do you have any hotel partnerships in the area guests could stay? Can you provide a list?

Is there reliable transportation in the area for guests to use?

### **Financials & liability**

What is required to secure the date?

Is there a payment schedule? What are the payment terms?

Are there any discounts for an off-season date? How about rates for different times of day (morning, afternoon, or evening)?

How much is the deposit? When is it due? Is it refundable in case of cancellation?

When is the full balance due?

What forms of payment do you accept?

When is the last possible date that we can make changes?

Are there any hidden costs like service charges, cleaning fees, or overtime charges?

What is your cancellation policy?

Do we need any insurance or permits?

Does the venue have public liability insurance?

Most importantly, this day is about celebrating your love. Be sure to have fun whilst planning it!

With love

Eldorét