

Tips for Picking Your Perfect Venue!

Venue Communication & Service

How has your experience been with getting answers quickly and completely while researching venues? Are emails responded to promptly & personalized or are they mass responses? Do you have a venue representative's direct phone number or even cell phone? Are you leaving voicemails or having to call multiple times? Do you feel like just another contract or are you receiving friendly & personal service? Make sure to read reviews- this will save you lots of headaches!

Size & Inclement Weather Plan

Get an estimated guest count and then find a venue that can accommodate guest tables (divide guest count by 8 to get total guest tables) and dance area (20 x 30 will work). If the venue can only accommodate your guest count using outdoor space, you will want to add the cost of renting a tent in case of bad weather. Tents will rent from \$1k to \$5k. Ask the venue for pictures of "bad weather" wedding days & make sure you're comfortable with the back up plan.

Venue Hours

How many hours will you be allowed to use the venue without having to pay for additional hours? Typically, a wedding lasts six hours (1hr ceremony, 1hr cocktail hour, 1hr dinner and 3hr reception for a total of six hours). However, you must also account for setup and breakdown. You will want to set aside a minimum of 5hrs for setup and 1hr for breakdown. Therefore, you will want to have access to the venue for a minimum of 12 hours. Also, find out what restrictions you have to visit the venue ahead of your wedding- are site visits allowed and will you be able to use the venue for photo sessions without a fee?

Venue Restrictions

Find out the venue restrictions. Are you required to vacate the place by 10 PM? Do you need to hire security? Do you need to hire a cleaning crew? When does the music end? Do you need to have your own insurance? Are permits required? Etc... The easiest way to avoid any problems is to ask the venue rep in an email or on your tour, "What are your venue restrictions?" Ask for a copy of the contract!

Venue Facilities

Although it may sound like a no brainer, you need to find out if the venue provides electricity, AC/Heating, parking, restrooms, cleaning, trash dumpsters, trash cans, elevator use, tables and chairs. Also find out if the kitchen is large enough to accommodate a catering team of 4-8? Will you be required to clean the restrooms? Will you have to clean and mop the entire venue? Do they provide an online seating planner & furniture set up? Break down the furniture at the end of the night included? What is the damage deposit & is it a charge or an authorization / check- also, when is the damage deposit due?

Bridal & Groom Suites

Does the venue have a bridal suite with private restroom, dressing area, mirrors, hooks, enough space for bridesmaids, etc...? Does the venue offer a groom's room with tv, couches, table, private restroom? If these are not provided you will need to rent hotel rooms nearby. Also, are these suites open to you the entire duration of your rental or only for set times?

Vendor Restrictions

Are you required to use their vendors such as floral, caterers, day of coordinator, or buy alcohol through the venue, etc.? Being forced to use in-house vendors could increase the cost of your wedding by thousands of dollars. Be sure to ask about alcohol, where many fees are often incurred through pricing per guest, corkage fees, mark-ups on the product, etc.