

Simple

Weddings & More

Questions to ask the Venue

Ask for a copy of the contract before visiting the venue. Some of these questions might be answered in the contract.

General Questions

- What is the max guest count? And how many guests can the venue hold *comfortably*?
This may depend on the table layout, round vs rectangular tables, etc... Be sure to talk about how many guests are realistic based on budget and who you really want to be there. Do not over-invite with the hope that some will decline.
- Could there be more than one event on the same day?
While this might not be a dealbreaker if the venue is large enough, it might make it more crowded for parking and restrooms.
- How many onsite parking spots are there? Is there a parking fee? Can cars be left overnight? If so, what time do they need to be removed from the lot?
- How many restrooms are available? Are they serviced throughout the night?
- Is the venue wheelchair accessible?
- Do you have liability insurance? If not, do you require it?
- Is there an onsite coordinator? Are they there on the day of the event?
If there is a coordinator, find out what days and times they are available to answer questions.

Food and Drink

- What is their policy on catering? Do you have to use their preferred caterer? Is there a discount for using their preferred caterer? Is there a food and beverage minimum? Do they accommodate special diets? Is there a cake-cutting/plating fee?
- If you can use your own caterer, what time can they start setting up? Is there a kitchen available for use? Or another setup area with access to water?
If you can use your own caterer, be sure to ask what the caterer needs such as a prepping area or table(s), access to water.

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- If there are leftovers, is there refrigeration available to store them until the end of the night?
If you are bringing home the leftovers, buy some disposable foil pans with lids. You'll need more than you think! If there is no refrigeration available and it's a hot summer day, you might want to plan on bringing some coolers. A box of gallon-sized zip-top bags works well too.
- What is their policy on bar service? If they do not supply alcohol, can you bring in liquor, wine and/or beer? Is there a corkage fee?
If you bring your own alcohol in, check with the store you purchase it from on their return policy for unopened bottles. Instruct the bartenders to not open any new bottles after a certain time. If they "run out" of a certain type of alcohol, most people will drink something else! Also, cans of beer are usually most cost-effective than a keg since they will keep much longer, or unopened cases can usually be returned.
- Do they provide service staff (wait staff, bartenders)? Is gratuity included for the staff?
If you provide bartenders yourself, ask if they have to be pro bono. If that is the case, you can usually put out a tip jar and make a generous "tip" at the end of the night.

Decorating

- Can you bring your own decorations? Can we store them at the venue or have them shipped there prior to the wedding? Is there a fee for storage?
- Do they provide a service for decorating and cleaning up?
- If you plan on doing your own decorating, when can you decorate?
- Do you have to clean up? If so, when does everything need to be cleaned up?
If you do have to clean up yourselves, be sure to ask someone to do it for you. You don't want the wedding party, parents, or the couple themselves cleaning up. Also, be sure to have someone transfer the gifts to a safe location or someone's vehicle shortly after the meal or before the dance starts.
- Are there any restrictions on decor? Are there limitations on what vendors can bring? Some places forbid any type of confetti or glitter. Some also will not allow candles.

Timing

- What time can the vendors come onsite?
- If the ceremony is there, what time can the wedding party start getting ready?

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- If the rehearsal and/or rehearsal dinner is held there, what time can it start? What time does it need to end?
- Can vendors visit the site before the date to check it out for lighting, possible equipment locations, photo op areas?
- What time does the reception need to end?

Ceremony

- If your ceremony will be there, is there a separate space or will it be shared with the meal/reception?
- Is there a backup location in case of bad weather if it's outside? How long before the ceremony do you have to decide to move it indoors?
- Is there an extra cost to have the ceremony there?
- If you plan on having your ceremony outdoors at a different location and the weather looks to be unfavorable, can you move it to the venue? How much notice does the venue need if you need to move it there? Is there an additional cost?
- Can you have your rehearsal and/or rehearsal dinner there? Is there an extra charge? Same questions regarding catering and alcohol.
- Are there separate spaces for both parties to get ready? Is there an extra charge?
- Can hair/makeup artists come directly to the venue?
- Are there limitations on what you can use for the ceremony? Arbor, incense, candles, flower petals, etc...
- If the ceremony space is flipped to become the dance space, who does the "flip"? Is there a fee?

Entertainment

- Can you have a live band/music?
- Are there noise restrictions/city ordinances?
- Is there a dancefloor?

Equipment and Supplies

- Are there supplies available to use or rent? What is the cost?
 - Tables
 - Chairs
 - Tablecloths
 - Napkins
 - Dinnerware
 - Silverware
 - Serving dishes
 - Glassware
 - Decorations

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- Do they have electronic equipment available for use? Microphones, speakers, lighting

Cost and Payment

- What does it cost to reserve your date?
- What type of payment do they take?
- When does the final payment need to be made?
- Is the deposit refundable?
- If there is an onsite coordinator, is there a cost for their services?
- Are there any other fees added on the day of? Are there local or state taxes?