



Our Wedding Dress Appointment Guide

The White Dress
a bridal boutique



Finding the perfect dress for your perfect day

Congratulations! You're getting married.

The weeks and months leading up to the wedding will be filled with joy and most likely, some stress as you plan for your big day, choosing everything from Instagram-able appetizers to a gorgeous get-away car.



For many brides, though, there is no decision more important than finding the right dress for her wedding. Wherever your aisle might be, everyone will be standing to see you radiant in *that* gown.

Wedding Dress Shopping Playlist



“All You Need Is Love”
by The Beatles



“Almost Like Being in Love”
by Nat King Cole



“At Last”
by Etta James



“I Say a Little Prayer”
by Aretha Franklin



“I Do”
by Colbie Caillat



“Ain’t No Mountain High Enough”
by Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell



“Walking on Sunshine”
by Katrina and the Waves



“The Way You Look Tonight”
by Frank Sinatra

At The White Dress, we’ve seen every kind of wedding and we have a dress for each one. But we know that sorting through all the available options can be overwhelming. That’s why we’ve created this guide. We’ll talk about the kinds of things that go into having a great dress shopping experience, from having a budget to deciding who to bring. We’ll also walk you through some popular styles and flattering fits and teach you the two rules of wedding dress selection.

If you read this guide carefully, by the time you book your first appointment, your time at the boutique should be peaceful and uncomplicated. As every bride knows, finding the right dress isn’t just about ticking off a checklist. It’s about how that dress makes you feel. A moment that emotional can’t be forced. It can only be facilitated.

Before you arrive at the bridal boutique search for inspiration

A lot of women have been thinking about their wedding dress since they were little girls, but actually buying a dress means turning that vision into a reality. Whether you have a very specific idea in mind already for your dress, or you feel overwhelmed by all the options, a quick scroll through Pinterest or flipping through a bridal magazine should give you some ideas. The internet makes it easier than ever to see a huge variety of gowns and easily save what you love.

The key is to try to limit your selection of images – it's hard to say what you'll actually respond to in person. You might be drawn to pictures of tulle ball gowns but prefer a lace sheath once you're trying on dresses. Almost every dress can look gorgeous on a model with the right styling. Still, looking for inspiration is fun, and it will give you a good starting point for your bridal appointment.

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Budgets make your bridal appointment better



Weddings are increasingly expensive. In **2016**, the Knot polled nearly **13,000** brides and grooms and found that the national average cost of a wedding was **\$35,329**. Of course, just like not every bride wears lace on her big day, not every bride plans to stick to the average budget. The important thing to know ahead of time is what you plan to spend...both for the purchase of the dress and for any alterations needed to get it fitting like a glove. Otherwise you might fall in love with a dress only to discover later that you can't afford it.

It's hard to find the right dress when you're thinking about the one that got away.

When you go to your bridal appointment, **be open with your consultant about what you can afford**. If you've found a good bridal shop, your dress consultant should respect your plans and work with you to find a dress at the right price. You should also be upfront about your goals for the appointment – it's okay to find your perfect dress without purchasing it immediately. You can also discreetly ask before you arrive whether the bridal consultants work on commission. At a commission-free store you know that your experience won't be tainted by an aggressive sales pitch.

The background of the image shows a wedding dress with intricate lace detailing hanging on a mannequin in a boutique. The dress is white with a long train and a lace train. The setting appears to be a well-lit room with wooden paneling and other dresses visible in the background.


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Don't choose a
dress before you
choose a
wedding date

Are you getting married in warm May or cold November? A wedding is beautiful any time of year, but the kind of dress you want could change based on a variety of factors. Though you should choose your dress because you absolutely love it, regardless of season, different fabrics could be more (or less) appropriate depending on the temperature so having a wedding date is helpful when shopping for your wedding dress.

It's also important to know the wedding date so that you have an idea of a timeframe. Most dresses must be ordered months in advance, and you'll need time for fittings and alterations as well.

We recommend shopping, at a minimum, 9-12 months ahead of the wedding.



*I*f you don't have 9-12 months, it doesn't mean you can't shop at a bridal boutique. Many places have dresses ready to ship or available for rush order, and occasionally even sample and stock dresses available for purchase.

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*You don't have to compromise on
the experience or your dress even if
time is short.*

.....

You may have a more limited selection available to choose from when time is an issue. Still, most bridal shops will do what they can to make the bride's vision a reality.

Arrive at your bridal boutique with a venue and theme in mind

We aren't saying you can't wear a ball gown in a barn, but you might want to think carefully about venue before you decide on a dress. Some dresses are extremely heavy, have very delicate material, or have a very long train as you walk down the aisle. All of these features are lovely in the right settings and difficult to manage in others. If you know you'll be getting married on a beach in Northern Michigan, for instance, your bridal consultant can make specific recommendations for appropriate dresses.

It's also helpful to know your overall wedding theme before you pick out the dress. Are you drawn to romantic weddings with delicate details, muted hues and over the top florals? Do you prefer something bold and modern? *Bring a few pictures of wedding style that inspires you to your appointments*...or better yet, send a link of your wedding and/or wedding dress Pinterest board. It will help your consultant understand your taste and, like knowing the venue, make her recommendations more helpful to you.

Making a day of it




You may try on many dresses and visit a few bridal salons before you find the gown that makes you feel truly special. To avoid feeling exhausted and overwhelmed, make special plans for the days you try on the dresses.

Maybe test run a few bridal mani-pedi's with your best friend or go on a date with your fiancée. Enjoy this special time, as rushed and stressful as it can feel.



Find a wedding dress boutique that makes you feel comfortable



Don't just research the dresses—research the shops as well! You can look at reviews on Google, Facebook, and The Knot, as well as relying on recommendations from trusted friends. At this point you probably have some friends who have shopped for their own wedding dresses. Ask for their opinions about what worked well. You should also ask about other aspects of their dress buying experience. For instance, you should know if they had their dress altered in-house or took it to a seamstress. Not every bridal salon offers alterations.

Before you set up the appointment, speak to someone at the boutique yourself and try to get a feel for the establishment. *The experience of being at a dress appointment can be very special, and you want to feel comfortable enough to express your emotions.* This is also a good time to ask about sizes available for fittings. Not every bridal shop will carry a wide range of sample sizes like we do, and you'll want to be sure to check on whether the salon can accommodate your fitting and offer a wide selection of styles and sizes.

Limit your entourage on the big day



It's understandable that you'd want to share your wedding dress experience with family and friends, but a big crowd usually only adds confusion. A bridal boutique is an intimate setting. Bring a few trusted friends and family members; the people you feel like you're going to need with you to make such an important decision. That might mean planning around your mom's schedule or waiting until your best friend can fly into town.

When possible, it's better to wait until the right people are there than to feel lonely or uncertain because they aren't... and you just can't recreate that "this is the dress" moment! *(Helpful hint: Don't forget to book your visit in advance to ensure that the day and time that works for everyone is also available at the boutique.)*

There might be people you'd like to bring along just for fun, but who aren't VIP decision makers. *If that's the case, consider bringing those friends back for a celebratory "this is my dress!" appointment*, or to shop for bridesmaid dresses. There are a lot of ways to include your friends and family without bringing them to the initial appointment.

A crowded room with lots of opinions will often detract from the quality of your overall experience.

A black and white photograph of three women standing by a large window with sheer curtains. The woman on the left is smiling and looking towards the other two. The woman in the middle is holding a smartphone up to take a photo. The woman on the right is also holding a smartphone. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from the window. The right side of the image has a purple overlay with white text.

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Choosing Your Wedding Dress



While we can recommend styles and silhouettes, there is no reason to feel limited by anyone else's opinion. Just remember the two rules of wedding dress selection: the gown you choose should (1) feel like you and (2) make you feel beautiful.

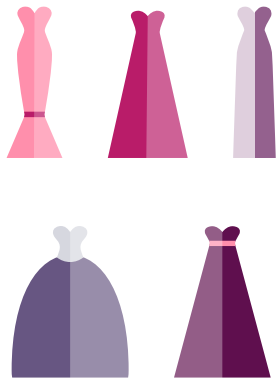
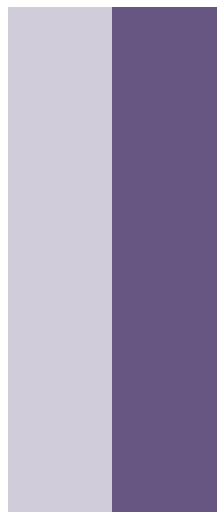
At the end of the day, your opinion is the only one that matters and these two criteria can go a long way to narrowing down the seemingly endless options.

Our Wedding Dress Silhouette Guide

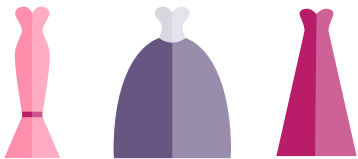


We feel that a bride should wear whatever makes her feel most beautiful, but we do understand there are general recommendations on what silhouette works best for which body type. The guide below breaks that down for you...but keep in mind that there are no hard-and-fast rules. We are a firm believer in "do you!"

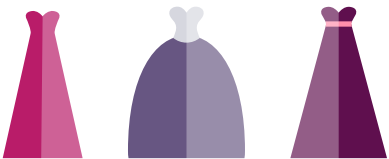
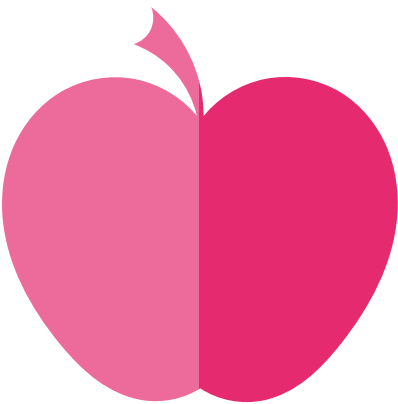
Slender



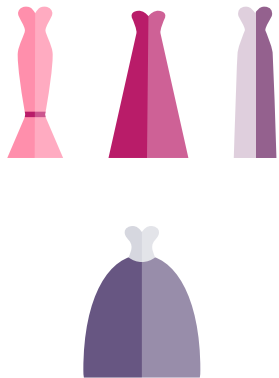
Heart



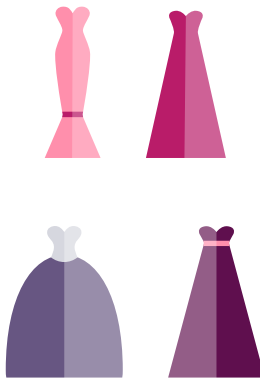
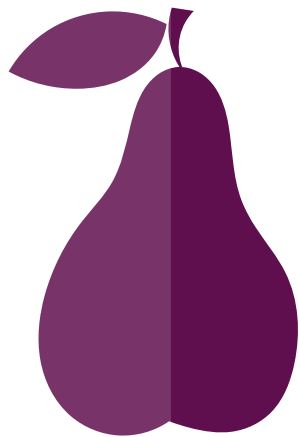
Apple



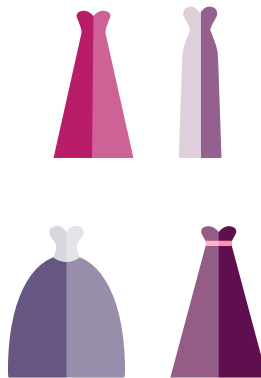
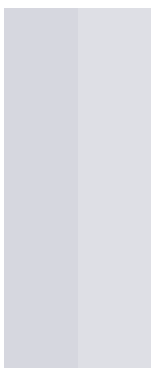
Hourglass



Pear



Petite



A woman in a white wedding dress is seen from behind, looking into a mirror. The scene is dimly lit, with light coming from a window on the left. The dress has a long, flowing train. The overall mood is romantic and elegant.

Having the best bridal experience



It's impossible to recreate the moment when you first put on your actual wedding dress. In that moment, you want to be able to make your decision without hesitation. You should know you can afford it, that all the right people are standing behind you, that it will come in time for the wedding, and that you're making such an important purchase from people you can trust.

A soft-focus photograph of a wedding preparation scene. A bride, seen from the back, wears a white lace dress and has her hair styled in an updo. A bridesmaid in a red dress is adjusting the bride's dress. In the foreground, the back of another person's head with a red headband is visible. The background shows a window with white curtains and a wooden door.

*At The White Dress we believe every bride should
have the best bridal experience possible, and we're
proud to make that happen every day.*

The Wedding Dress Checklist

- ☐ 👁 Search for inspiration
- ☐ 📅 Sit down and figure out your budget
- ☐ 📅 Pick a date
- ☐ 📍 Decide on a wedding venue
- ☐ 👥 Choose your entourage
- ☐ 📅 Set your first appointment at a bridal boutique
- ☐ 🔍 Find your dress!



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