

## How to Find, Select, and Afford a Wedding Photographer

You are engaged and one of the most important days in your life is fast approaching. Your wedding day will be filled with happiness and emotion. Family and friends will be there; some you have not seen in many years. It will be a wonderful day for you to remember and share. There will be so many things going on of which most you will not even know about until you look at the wedding photographs.

Choosing a photographer may be a difficult and daunting task; and affording it may be even more cumbersome. You may be apt to ask a friend or relative to photograph it for you; this is surely to be a bad idea for many reasons. A professional wedding photographer knows how to capture all the moments of your wedding day with the best results by having years of experience and photography knowledge.

Finding a wedding photographer is not difficult because there are so many. There are many ways to go about finding one and many things you should know. The best way of course is to be referred from another wedding couple that recently had their wedding photographed by a specific photographer. Notice I said “photographer” not business or studio. Your decision should be based off of one photographer’s work; not the work of a group or large wedding photography studio with multiple photographers. Always check who will be photographing your wedding.

There are many other ways to find wedding photographers including the phone book, newspapers, billboards, and of course the internet. Over 70% of all brides and grooms search for wedding professionals online. There are a few things you should know about searching on the internet.

Take your time - The first photographers you will find are mostly because of large advertising budgets. This is not a bad thing but you should see all options available to you.

Be specific - When using a search engine search for your “state” and “professional wedding photographer”. Your search may look like this: Massachusetts “professional wedding photographer”. (Use everything that is italicized.) The part in quotes will eliminate all general photographers and just focus on wedding ones. You could even add your city/town for just local results. (Add the town after the state; do not put in the quoted part.) I recommend using Google ([www.google.com](http://www.google.com)).

Ok, so now you know how to find a wedding photographer. Now which one to choose? There are three primary factors that come into play when choosing a photographer; style, price, and personality. Style and price can usually be found on their website so we will start there.

Style – There are many styles such as traditional, photojournalism, candid, formal, etc. Some photographers offer only one style, but the best photographers can offer all of the styles and would normally incorporate them all into your wedding day coverage. It all depends on what you want. When viewing a photographer’s portfolio, remember these are their best shots. Always ask to see a full wedding.

Price – You can spend from \$500 to \$10,000 on a wedding photographer. The norm is to spend about 10% of your entire wedding budget on the photographer. Most photographers have packages that will include everything from the coverage to the album and final prints. Some photographers have complete a la carte pricing; if you are on a small budget this is the best way to go. You will be able to select just what you want. There are two things you need, the coverage and the ability to purchase the negatives or high resolution digital images. Watch out with the coverage; many photographers will charge an hourly fee beyond their normal time offered. When you receive

your negatives or digital images you can print what you want when you want wherever you like. Of course as a professional I recommend using a professional photography lab for your prints but you could certainly use Wal-Mart and save a bundle. Just keep in mind that the quality would be slightly lower. As for your wedding album buy it yourself and put it together yourself. The cost of buying an album from the photographer is usually double the actual cost. Then of course doing it this way you can get it when you want and when you have the money. Visit [www.albumsinc.com](http://www.albumsinc.com) to view many albums and you can purchase them right online.

Considering style and price select three top choices and schedule a meeting with them. There should be no cost for this. Before you meet with them you should pretty much want to hire them from what you learned about their style and price.

Personality - You want to meet with them to see how they present themselves and if your personalities match. You want someone that is personable and nice so that they will get along well with you, your family, and friends. Never make the decision at the meeting always go home and think about it and wait until you have met with all three. The best in the business will let their work, pricing, and personality do all the talking. The meeting should be a casual conversation to get to know each other and discuss your wedding day in general. There is no need to go into great detail now. Some photographer will try to "sell" you their services; never get sold on something. Remember you already decided you like the work and price before you got there so what are they trying to sell? Just meet with them to get to know them.

Once you make your decision contact the photographer and let them know. Also, be sure to contact the other two and thank them for their time but you have decided to use another photographer. They should be considerate and not try to continue selling you their services; if they do you made a good choice to go with the other photographer. With the photographer you chose go over the details on the phone and have them right up a wedding contract for you to review and sign. Do not pay a deposit until you have read and signed the contract (the photographer should sign the contract also). Read the contract thoroughly; everything you are supposed to receive should be written down and have the price and payment schedule. Always make note of their cancellation policy.

Congratulations you found a photographer and have one scheduled. You should now schedule to meet with them about a month before your wedding date to go over the details again.

Have a great wedding day!

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