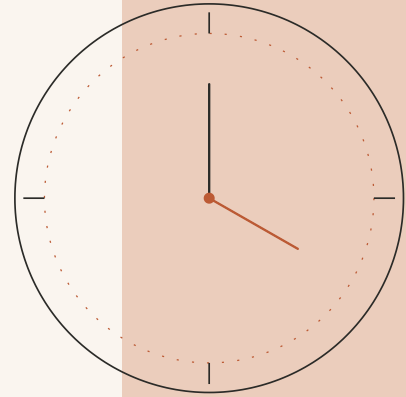


OSCAR MALO PHOTOGRAPHY



The Wedding Day *Timeline* Guide

*How to plan a day that feels unhurried — and
photographs beautifully from the first detail to the last
dance.*

A PLANNING GUIDE FOR COUPLES

OSCARMALO.COM

A good timeline is *invisible*.

When the schedule is right, nobody notices it. You aren't watching the clock, your families aren't waiting around, and every moment you care about has room to happen on its own.

Most of the stress couples feel on a wedding day doesn't come from big problems. It comes from small ones stacking up: hair runs fifteen minutes long, the shuttle is late, family photos start without Grandma, and suddenly sunset portraits are gone. A thoughtful timeline absorbs those moments before they ever reach you.

This guide walks through the way I build timelines with couples — two complete sample days you can adapt, a family-photo list, and the small details that keep everything on track. Use it as a starting point, then shape it around your venue, your people, and your light.

01

Build around the light

Find your sunset time first.

Everything outdoors — especially your portraits — works backward from it.

02

Pad every transition

Getting dressed, moving locations, gathering family. Each one takes longer than it looks on paper.

03

Protect your time together

Schedule a few quiet minutes as a couple. They're often the moments you remember most.

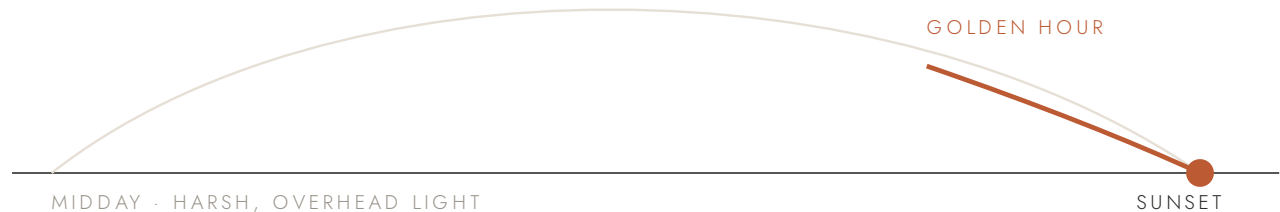
Treat every time in this guide as a suggestion, not a rule. The best timeline is the one that fits the way *you* want the day to feel.

— *Oscar*

STEP ONE

Start with *sunset*.

The single most useful number for your timeline is your sunset time. It decides when your ceremony should start, when portraits happen, and how the evening unfolds.



Approximate sunset in Los Angeles

MID-MONTH	SUNSET
January	5:06 pm
February	5:36 pm
March*	7:00 pm
April	7:24 pm
May	7:47 pm
June	8:05 pm
July	8:04 pm
August	7:39 pm
September	6:59 pm
October	6:18 pm
November*	4:49 pm
December	4:44 pm

* Daylight saving time shifts sunset by an hour in early March and early November — a wedding on either side of the change can look very different. Look up the exact time for your date and venue; inland, coastal, and mountain locations vary.

How to use it

<i>60–15 min before</i>	Golden hour. Soft, warm, flattering light — the window for your couple portraits.
<i>20 min before</i>	Ideal moment to step away from the reception for 15–20 minutes.
<i>Sunset</i>	The sun drops behind hills or buildings — often earlier than the official time.
<i>Up to 20 min after</i>	Blue hour. Moody, glowing skies; beautiful for silhouettes and venue shots.

Summer tip: a 1:00 pm outdoor ceremony in Southern California means squinting and hard shadows. If midday is unavoidable, ask your venue about shaded or covered spots for portraits.

SAMPLE TIMELINE A

With a *first look*

LATE SEPTEMBER

CEREMONY 4:30 PM

SUNSET ≈ 6:55 PM

8 HOURS COVERAGE

12:30	Photography begins — details Dress, rings, invitation suite, shoes, jewelry, florals, heirlooms	30 MIN
1:00	Getting-ready candid — final touches, letters, gifts	45 MIN
1:45	Getting dressed — with your closest people	20 MIN
2:05	Partner's getting-ready portraits	25 MIN
2:30	First look & couple portraits Private, unhurried, and the emotional heart of the afternoon	45 MIN
3:15	Wedding party photos	30 MIN
3:45	Touch-ups, water, out of sight before guests arrive	45 MIN
4:30	Ceremony	30 MIN
5:00	Family formals, then join your cocktail hour	30 MIN
5:30	Cocktail hour — guest candid & reception details	45 MIN
6:15	Grand entrance & first dance	10 MIN
6:25	Welcome toast & dinner service	10 MIN
6:35	Golden-hour portraits Slip away between courses — your guests will barely notice	20 MIN
6:55	Toasts	20 MIN
7:15	Cake cutting & parent dances	20 MIN
7:35	Open dancing	55 MIN
8:30	Photography wraps — or a staged send-off	—

Why couples love it

Nerves settle before the ceremony, nearly every portrait is finished early, and you get to enjoy your own cocktail hour.

Want the aisle moment too?

Save something for the ceremony anyway — a private letter, or vows heard for the very first time.

SAMPLE TIMELINE B

A traditional day — no first look

MID-JUNE CEREMONY 5:30 PM SUNSET ≈ 8:05 PM 8 HOURS COVERAGE

1:30	Photography begins — details	30 MIN
2:00	Getting-ready candids	45 MIN
2:45	Getting dressed	20 MIN
3:05	Individual portraits of each of you — separately	30 MIN
3:35	Each of you with your side of the wedding party	40 MIN
4:15	Rest, hydrate, final touch-ups — out of sight Meanwhile: ceremony and reception details photographed before guests arrive	75 MIN
5:30	Ceremony	30 MIN
6:00	Family formals	30 MIN
6:30	Full wedding party together, then couple portraits	30 MIN
7:00	Grand entrance, first dance & dinner	35 MIN
7:35	Golden-hour portraits The warmest light of the day, and a breather together	20 MIN
7:55	Toasts	20 MIN
8:15	Cake cutting & parent dances	20 MIN
8:35	Open dancing	55 MIN
9:30	Photography wraps	—

The trade-off

Every portrait with the two of you together happens after the ceremony, so you'll miss most of cocktail hour. A long summer evening makes this much easier.

Working with 6 hours instead of 8?

Start coverage at getting dressed and end after the first few open dances. The details can be styled and photographed in the first 20 minutes.

The *family photo* list

Family photos are the part of the day most likely to run long — and the part your parents and grandparents care about most. A written list keeps them fast and complete.

Keep it focused

Aim for 10–15 groupings. Each takes about two minutes, so fifteen is a full half hour.

Name a wrangler

Ask a cousin or friend who knows everyone to call the next group up. It saves more time than anything else.

Largest groups first

Start big and include grandparents early, so older guests can sit down and enjoy the rest of the evening.

A starting list — adjust for your families

01 Couple with both immediate families

02 Couple with Partner A's extended family

03 Couple with Partner A's immediate family

04 Couple with Partner A's parents

05 Partner A with their parents

06 Couple with Partner A's grandparents

07 Couple with Partner A's siblings

08 Couple with Partner B's extended family

09 Couple with Partner B's immediate family

10 Couple with Partner B's parents

11 Partner B with their parents

12 Couple with Partner B's grandparents

13 Couple with Partner B's siblings

14 Couple with padrinos / godparents

15

16

Send your list, with names, to your photographer at least two weeks ahead, and note anything sensitive — divorced parents, a recent loss, someone who can't stand for long. It lets everything be handled gracefully in the moment.

What keeps the day *on time*

None of these take much effort. Together, they're the difference between a schedule that holds and one that slips.

☐ **Add 15 minutes before the ceremony**

The one buffer you should never skip. If everything runs on time, you get a calm moment to yourself.

☐ **Don't book yourself last in the hair & makeup chair**

Being second-to-last gives the team room to absorb delays before they reach you.

☐ **Gather your details in one box**

Rings, invitation suite, shoes, jewelry, perfume, vow books, and heirlooms — ready when photography begins.

☐ **Choose a bright, tidy room**

A window and a little open space make getting-ready photos look effortless.

☐ **Multiply travel time by 1.5**

Between a church and a reception venue, LA traffic, parking, and loading guests always add up.

☐ **Consider an unplugged ceremony**

A short announcement keeps phones down and your guests' faces — not screens — in the aisle photos.

☐ **Schedule toasts early**

Right after the entrance or between courses — while everyone is seated, attentive, and in good light.

☐ **Feed your vendors when you eat**

Your photographer is then ready the moment you are, instead of eating while toasts begin.

☐ **Plan send-offs with your venue**

Sparklers, bubbles, or petals need about 15 minutes to set up and a quick check of venue rules.

☐ **Share one final timeline**

Send the same version to your planner, venue, DJ, and photographer — and to whoever will be holding your phone.

The same principles, *a different rhythm*

Quinceañeras carry their own traditions, and each one deserves time to be photographed well. Here is a simple framework that fits most celebrations.

EARLY AUGUST MASS 1:00 PM SUNSET ≈ 7:50 PM

12:00	Getting ready & details Dress, crown or tiara, shoes, the last doll, family keepsakes	60 MIN
1:00	Misa de acción de gracias Thanksgiving mass with family and padrinos	60 MIN
2:00	Family & padrinos photos at the church	20 MIN
2:20	Portraits with the court of honor	40 MIN
3:00	Break & travel to the reception	VARIES
6:00	Grand entrance & the vals	20 MIN
6:20	Traditions — cambio de zapatos, última muñeca	20 MIN
6:40	Brindis & dinner	40 MIN
7:20	Golden-hour portraits — just the quinceañera	20 MIN
7:40	Baile sorpresa & open dancing	—

Plan the surprise dance

Let your photographer know where it starts and who's in it, so nothing is missed.

Keep the court together

Have the damas and chambelanes ready right after mass while energy is high.

Rehearse the vals once on site

It shows everyone where to stand — and where the best angles are.

Mind the gap

A long break between mass and reception is normal; plan touch-ups and rest into it.

NEXT STEPS

Let's plan a day that feels like *yours*.

Every venue, family, and season brings its own rhythm. If you have a date in mind, I'd love to hear about it — where you're celebrating, what matters most to you, and the moments you can't wait to see again.

CHECK YOUR DATE

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