

A HELPFUL GUIDE TO ELOPEMENT BUDGETING

You just got engaged !! Congratulations! Now you are starting to consider a lot of factors, where, when, who, how. It can be really overwhelming so first just take a breathe and enjoy the fact that you are going to get to spend forever with your person.

A key area to consider as you start elopement planning is the budget. How much money can you afford to spend and how much do you want to spend? How can you keep track of your expenditure and stop your budget from spiralling out of control? **We have a budget template that goes along with this guide that you are welcome to take and make your own!**

First ask the question

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO US?

The most important part of this planning process is doing what makes you the happiest. For some people happiest is surrounded by all their family and friends. For others it is an epic excursion with just their officiant and photographer. Either way, you need to have a serious conversation about what you are looking for and let that guide you through this process. Having a clear idea of your goals and vision for your perfect day is going to help you put your budget to work maximizing every aspect of this experience for you.

some suggested factors to talk through:

- Date

- Location / Season

- Travel

- Guests (if any)

- Details (bouquet,dress, etc)

- Vendors



DO YOUR RESEARCH

Asking how much an elopement costs is similar to questioning how long a piece of string is. It really does depend on a number of factors, including the size, location and date. Once you've established these logistics, you can start looking into the different costs in each area. Disregard the average prices magazines give you and concentrate on researching vendors either in your chosen location or according to your priorities to build a realistic list of prices. By researching these costs you will then have a realistic idea of what you can get for your money.

What's your elopement going to cost?

Now that you've asked your questions and done your preliminary research you will now have some guide prices to work towards and you can adjust your budget/ allocations as you need to. This is where you start to see real numbers on the sheet and things become more practical and less hypothetical. This is when prioritising the most important elements of your day becomes crucial, as you may want to allocate more money to certain areas and source them early.

As a rough guide, if you are having guests at your elopement Most people would designate 40-50% of their budget for the reception (including the venue, food and drink costs), leaving the rest of the budget to cover everything else.

Just because something's important to you, it doesn't necessarily mean you need to spend more on it, so much as it's something you won't want to compromise on.

WHO IS PAYING?

Will both you and your fiancé be covering the cost of your wedding? Be realistic, look at your finances and work out how much you can afford. The start of married life is not the time to be getting into debt. Will you need to start saving or do you already have a pot put aside?

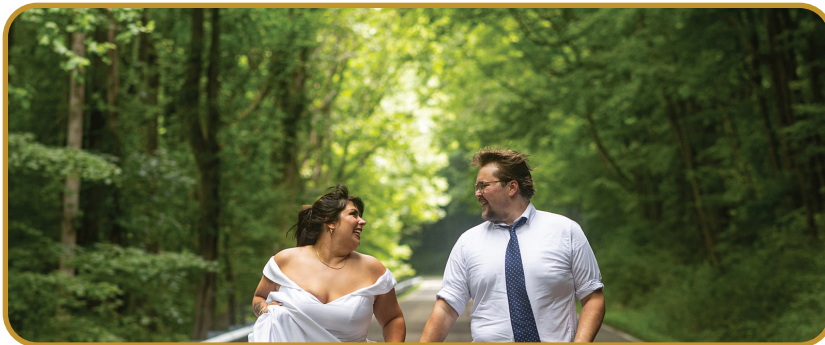
Don't be afraid to have a real conversation with your vendors about budget. See if they have payment options or if they can work with you. Don't forget to prioritize fit and vendors that



want to work with you will make it happen if they can!

Sometimes less is more. Two elements that are perfect for your day are better than 1 perfect element and 4 that are just a detractor.

Are there any family members who want to help? If so it's worth talking to them early on to establish what they're expecting in return: is it a no obligation gift or are they going to want a large say in what the money is being spent on?



It's always a good idea to use gifted money for a particular area of the wedding (such as the flowers or drinks) and give them some input into that particular element. If you feel it's going to compromise the kind of experience you want then consider declining their generosity.

GET ORGANISED

One of the first things we do is recommend setting up a budget spreadsheet (we have a killer one where you found this guide) This is for you to list everything needed, especially the little things like postage for invitations, alteration costs for dresses, accessories and so on, and allocate the estimated spend. You are also going to want a column for the actual spend – you can then compare the two columns and reallocate funds within your budget if necessary to keep to your target.

Give Yourself A Contingency Budget

Inevitably things may end up costing more than you thought or something might come up that you hadn't budgeted for, so we recommend costing in a contingency budget. Have a figure you'd like to spend and then another figure that if really pushed you could stretch to. General wisdom states that your contingency fund should be 20% of your budget.

Finally, whatever your budget is there will always be areas where, with a little time and some creativity, you can make great savings.

We cannot tell you how excited we are for you as you take the plunge on this incredible day and adventure of marriage together.

