

Event Planning 101: Your Guide to a Perfect Celebration

1. Define Your Event Goals

Before you dive into the logistics, ask yourself:

- What kind of atmosphere or experience do you want to create? (elegant, casual, formal, etc.)
- How many guests are you expecting?
- Do you want an event venue that provides event packages?
- Do you want a venue with an open bar policy or do you want the venue to provide the drinks?
- For weddings: Are you having the wedding and reception at the same location?
- For Quinces: Are you having the blessing and the reception at the same location?

This will help guide every decision you make from here on out.

2. Set a Budget

Your Budget will determine the venue, catering, decor, and other elements. Here's how to break it down:

- Venue: Typically, the largest expense
- Catering: Food and drinks can take up a significant portion
- Entertainment: Live bands, DJs, speakers and lighting, robots or cabezones (for quinces)
- Decor and rentals: Lighting, flowers, tables, chairs, linens, head table decor
- Additional costs: Photo and video, invitations, insurance, dress, transportation, late-night snacks, candy table or fruit table, photo booth, hair and makeup, tuxes, etc.
- Staff: waiters, bartenders, security, clean-up, etc.

****Average cost of an event in the U.S: Around \$34,000 (as of 2023) The cost can increase significantly for high-end venues or larger guest lists and the type of decor you would like for your event.**

****TIP: A good way to organize the logistics of an event is booking a venue that offers event packages where the larger items like food, cake, DJ, decor, and staffing are included.**

3. Find the Perfect Venue

The venue sets the tone for your event, so choosing the right one is essential. Here's what to consider:

- Capacity: make sure the venue can comfortably accommodate your guest list.
- Location: Is it accessible? Will guests need accommodations nearby?
- Amenities: Does the venue offer event packages that include catering, DJ, decor options? Does the venue offer get-ready rooms? Does the venue offer an area for a ceremony space?
- Date availability: Popular venues can book up quickly, so secure your spot early.
- Payment plan: How is the payment schedule?

4. Hire Vendors & Suppliers

Once you've secured your venue, it's time to book vendors. Here are some key ones to consider:

- Catering: Whether it's a sit-down dinner or buffet, choose a caterer that aligns with your event style.
- Photography/Videography: Capture the memories! Be sure to find a photographer whose style you love.
- Entertainment: Whether it's a DJ, live band, mariachi, saxophone player, etc., choose entertainment that suits the mood and type of event.
- Florists & Decorators: They'll help transform the venue into a magical space.
- Event Coordinator (Optional): If your event is large or complex, consider hiring a professional planner to manage the day-of details.
- Other vendors: Hair and Make-up, Transportation (limo or party bus), candy-table or fruit table, photo booth or 360 photo booth, robots or cabezones for the hora loca (for quinceañeras), marquee letters, bouquets and boutonnieres, etc.

****TIP:** By booking a venue that offers food, cake, entertainment, staff, and decorations it helps minimize the stress of juggling so many vendors and contracts

5. Send Invitations and Keep track of RSVPs

- **Save-the-Dates & Invitations:** Send them out well in advance, especially for larger events or weddings. Digital invites are becoming more common, but traditional paper invites are still a classic.
- **RSVP Management:** Consider using online platforms like Eventbrite or a wedding-specific site to manage RSVPs. Tracking guest responses helps with planning catering and seating.

*****TIP:** For weddings send invitations 8-12 weeks before the wedding. and Save the Dates 6-9 months in advance.

*****TIP** For Quinces: send invitations 6-8 weeks before the event

6. Finalize the details

As your event date nears, confirm all your arrangements:

- **Confirm with Vendors:** Double-check that everything is lined up (catering, entertainment, décor, etc.).
- **Create a Final Guest List:** Update your guest list with any changes or last-minute additions.
- **Create an Emergency Kit:** Pack essentials like safety pins, band-aids, extra makeup, or anything that might come in handy.
- **Pay off vendors:** some vendors can be paid the day of the event, but for other larger vendors like the venue, entertainment, cake, etc. payment is due before hand. Check with your vendors when payment is due.

7. Plan the Schedule and Timeline

Create a detailed timeline to keep everything on track:

- **Event Start and End Times:** Ensure your vendors know the schedule.
- **Arrival & Setup Times:** Coordinate with your team to allow enough time for setup.
- **Key Moments:** Plan the timing for speeches, performances, toasts, cake cutting, etc.
- **Rehearsal:** For weddings and quinceaneras, do a rehearsal to ensure everything runs smoothly.

8. Enjoy the Event!

The big day has arrived, and it's time to celebrate. Whether you're the planner or a guest, take a moment to soak it all in. If you've done the work ahead of time, everything should fall into place seamlessly.

Pro Tips for Stress-Free Planning:

- **Stay Organized:** Keep all contracts, receipts, and important documents in one place (digitally or in a folder).
- **Don't Over-Complicate Things:** Keep your vision clear and don't get bogged down in small details.
- **Delegate:** Don't be afraid to ask for help, whether from friends, family, or professionals.
- **Stay Calm:** It's easy to get overwhelmed, but remember—it's about creating lasting memories, not perfection!
- **Consider a Package Deal:** Some venues offer event packages (bundling services like catering, décor, and entertainment). By bundling these services, you save time on finding, negotiating with, and coordinating multiple vendors.