

QUESTIONS TO ASK VENDORS

Once you find vendors you're interested in, set up an interview. If they're not local, don't worry—you can do an interview over the phone, or via Skype if that feels more personal for you. This section contains a list of questions for each specific vendor.

Be sure to ask all of your vendors for three client references and three vendor references, in addition to asking them what sets them apart from their competitors.

CATERER

- Do you specialize in a certain type of food?.....
- Have you ever worked at the venue where I'm planning to get married?.....
- Can you provide serving dishes, glassware, tableware, and linens?.....
- What's your average per person cost for a wedding, including bar?.....
- Do you include alcohol in your pricing? If so, do you charge based on consumption or based on an hourly rate?.....
- Can we provide our own alcohol?.....
- Do you charge a corkage fee for wine we bring in? If so, how much?
- What are your requirements on-site (such as power, water, kitchen space)?.....
- What are your overtime charges?.....
- Are there choices in the waitstaff attire?
- What are the background and training of the chef?.....
- How will the food be cooked on-site? Are items cooked ahead or fresh on-site?.....
- How is the service staff (manager, captain, runners, bussers) organized and how does the flow of service work?.....
- How many tables does each server have?.....
- Is gratuity included?.....
- Do you provide candles and, if so, how many per table?.....
- Can you provide flowers? Do you have photos of what you have done in the past?.....
(Tip: Only use your caterer to do flowers if you want something incredibly simple.)
- Can you provide table numbers and, if so, what do they look like?.....
- Do you charge a cake-cutting fee? If so, how much per slice?.....
- Do you offer wedding cakes?.....
- When will you need a final guest count?.....
- Can we see photos of your food presentation?.....
- I have a food allergy. Is this something you can work with?.....
- Do you need to know about guest allergies far in advance? What about food preferences (vegan, non-pork, etc.)?.....

CAKE MAKER

- What is your price range per slice?.....
- Can we see photos of your cakes?.....
- Can we show you a photo of a cake design we'd like you to replicate?.....
- Is there an extra charge to deliver the cake?.....
- How long before the reception do you usually deliver the cake?.....
- Do you set up the cake?.....
- Will you provide flowers for the cake?
- Can you provide a stand for the cake or a tower for cupcakes?.....
- Do you use fresh, frozen, organic, or vegan ingredients?.....
- Can you do a sheet cake for serving and a smaller cake for display if we want to save money?
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PHOTOGRAPHER/VIDEOGRAPHER

- What are your package options?.....
- Do you charge hourly if we decide to go over the amount of time we booked? If so, what is that charge?.....
- How many hours do you suggest we book you for?.....
- Does your fee include any prints or albums or a DVD of images? What about an online gallery for our friends and family?.....
- Do you shoot film or digital?.....
- How many weddings do you shoot in a weekend? Year?.....
- Do you include an assistant photographer (or second shooter) or assistant videographer on-site?.....
- How long will it take for us to get our photos or edited video after the wedding?
- Do you require a meal or travel expenses?
- Will you personally be shooting the wedding?.....
- What is the retainer amount to reserve your services?.....
- When is the remaining balance due?.....
- Are the hours of filming consecutive?.....
- Do we provide music for the video?
- How many photos will we get? Are they edited? If so, are they color corrected or completely retouched?
- If we decide to order an album, what would it look like? How much does an album cost and how long does it take to get one made?.....
- Do you include an engagement shoot? (This is highly recommended, as it's a good way to get to know your photographer and become comfortable in front of the camera.).....
- Can we have the digital rights to our photos?.....
- Will you submit my wedding images to be published in magazines or online? What about as stock photos? If so, do our have the right to refuse specific images?.....

MUSICIAN/DJ

- How would you describe your musical style or the tone you set when you play weddings?
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- Do you own your own equipment? Will we need to rent any audio equipment?.....
- Do you require electrical outlets?.....
- Can you act (or not act) like an emcee for the evening?.....
- What's your hourly rate, or do you charge a flat fee?.....
- How long will you play?.....
- How many breaks will you take?.....
- Do you require a meal?.....
- Can you provide a sample playlist or audio demo?.....
- Do you have any upcoming performances I can attend?.....
- What's your typical setup (table, signage, props)?.....
- How many years have you been playing?.....
- Do you have a referral list of past clients we can contact?.....
- Will all of your equipment be set up before my guests arrive?.....
- Will you supply any lighting for the dance floor?.....
- If you are not able to make it for any reason, do you have a replacement?.....
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FLORIST

- Can you work within our budget?.....
- Do you have a portfolio?.....
- How would you describe your style?.....
- What will be in season at the time of my wedding?.....
- What do you think will work best for flowers given the time of year and location in which we're getting married?.....
- What other decorations (aisle runners, lanterns, chuppahs, linens) can you provide?.....
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- How many weddings do you do in a weekend?.....
- Have you worked at this venue before?.....
- Who will deliver and set up my flowers?.....
- Will I be able to see samples of the arrangements before the wedding? (Florists do not typically put together sample bouquets, but you might be able to have them make sample centerpiece so you can understand exactly what the tables will look like.).....