

How to Plan Your Dream Elopement XD

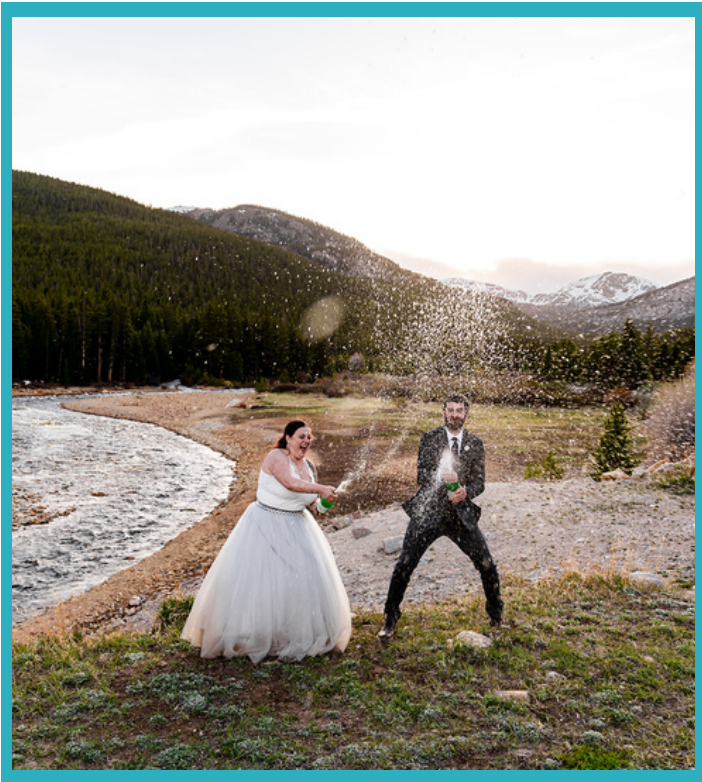
ADVENTURE
Amore 



If you've found your way to this guide, you're probably not looking for the typical wedding experience. Your life as a couple is full of passion and adventure, and you want a day that's as unique and awesome as you are.



There are as many types of elopements as there are couples, so it's sometimes hard to know where to start. My goal is to help take the mystery out of the process and inspire you to start planning your perfect day!



This important day can't be put into a box because it is authentic to who you two are. That's what makes elopements so special - they are wedding celebrations crafted for your authentic love story, focused just on you two (or, as I like to say... **my Amores** ❤️).



Hey there!

I'm Adam

Love fills me with more hope, joy, and optimism than anything else. And I want to create experiences for couples full of those same components—captured with photos that transport you back to those feelings (and that experience) for the rest of your life.

You are probably here because you want an extraordinary, super fun, gorgeous wedding day that's easy to plan and real low on stress.

Well, that's my specialty 😊. So take a look at this guide and feel free to reach out if you have any questions!

WANNA MAKE SURE WE'D VIBE AND BE A GREAT FIT?

It's An Immediate Yes From Me If ...

- We share these values: kindness, inclusivity, empathy, and growth
- You want to have an experience—one that leaves you different than when you arrived
- You crave adventure—seeing and experiencing new parts of the world, whether it's a new state or simply a trail you've never tackled before
- You aren't afraid to get a little dirty or dusty (might I suggest rolling down a grassy hill while attempting to hold hands and not pee yourselves from laughing so hard?)
- You know you'll have a great time regardless of what happens—rain or shine, your love wins, and we're making the most of it



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Let's start with some quick answers to the questions we hear most:

1 What Is An Elopement?

Simply put... an elopement is a day uniquely crafted for you to celebrate your love for each other. They are intimate ceremonies where you choose the exact activities you want to include and put your personal traditions and values at the forefront, instead of feeling bound to society's expectations.

2 How Much Does it Cost to Elope?

The average wedding in America costs about \$35,000. Most of that goes to a venue and feeding a whole lot of people you don't really care to hang out with the day of your wedding. By eloping, you can save between 60 and 90 percent of a traditional wedding cost and still have a wonderful experience that you'll cherish for the rest of your life.

3 How Long Does it Take to Plan an Elopement?

Elopements can be planned in as little as 2 weeks, though most elopements are planned in 3 - 4 months. The idea is to have an entire experience, from planning to the day of, that has as little stress as possible. An experienced elopement photographer can really help with that. (😊 I know a dude.)

4 Can Other People Come With Me?

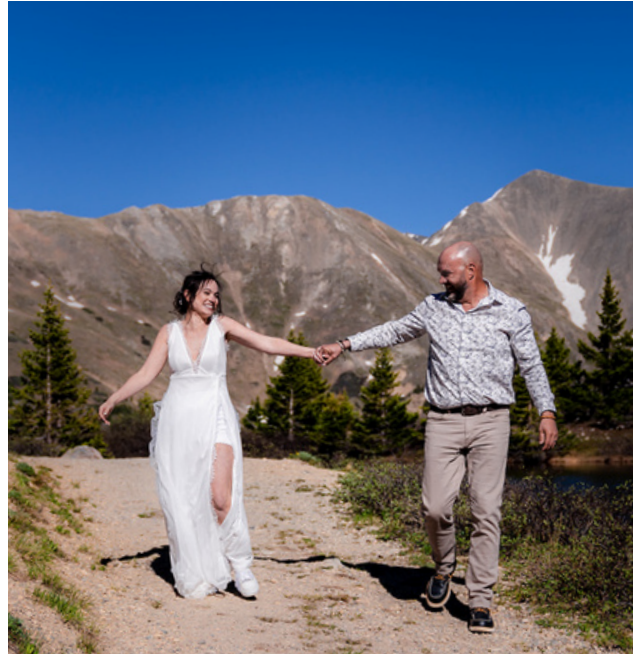
Of course! The key to an elopement is an intimate day focused just on you and your love, and celebrated how you desire. This can absolutely include your closest family and friends, and even your fur babies!

5 What Can We Do During An Elopement?

Pretty much anything you want! This is your day, and it should be exactly the way YOU want it. And you don't have to choose just one activity - some of our favorite elopements have multiple adventures, so don't be afraid to think **BIG!** This is another area where an experienced elopement photographer can help you craft the perfect day.

6 How Do We Plan Our Elopement?

This guide will give you a great start, so read on!



7 Steps to Plan Your Elopement

Now, planning an elopement is 9 million times easier than planning a big, expensive wedding where you have to invite and feed your cousin's 4th grade teacher... but there is still some planning involved to make sure you and your partner have a wonderful celebration of your love! Here are 7 steps to get you started:

1 Dream Big!

What feels like it'd be a great way to celebrate your day? If you could have your dream day without the wedding part, what does it look like? What does your dream adventure feel like? This is the time to think big - don't limit yourselves to just what you think is practical!

If you don't know exactly what your perfect day looks like just yet, don't worry! This is where the fun begins.

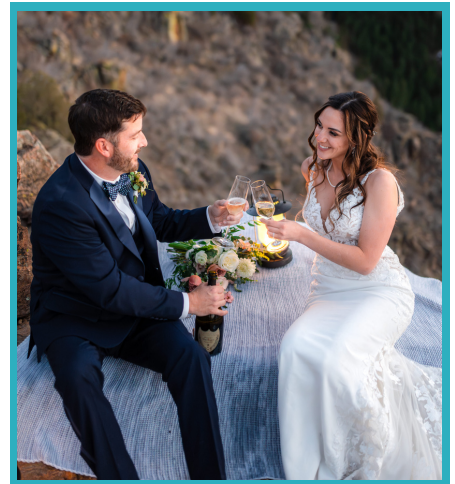
Sit down with your partner in a cozy spot in your home or another favorite place and talk about all the possibilities for your day. Write everything down and see if any themes emerge. Remember, the goal at this stage isn't to plan out the entire day, it's just to get an idea of what your dream day might look like as a couple. Remember, the options are endless right now, so **GO BIG!**



What Would Your PERFECT Day Feel Like?

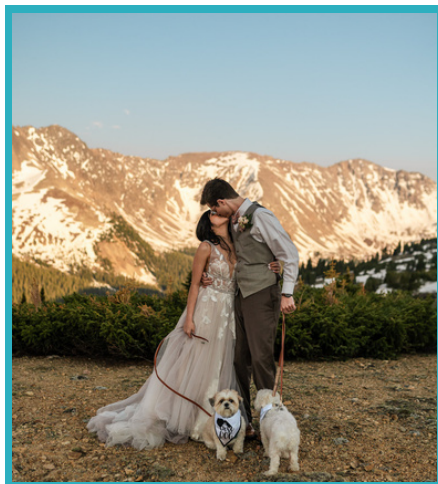
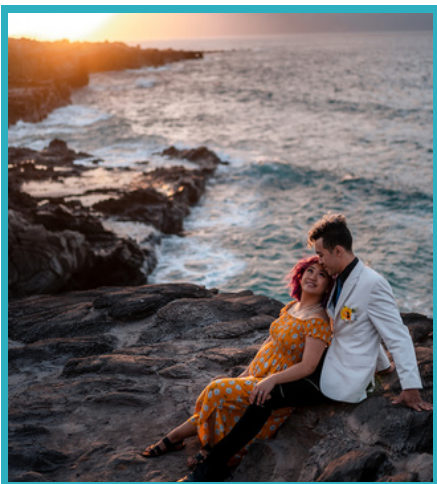
What activities make your heart race?

Do you love hiking? Are you obsessed with sunrises? Do you get down with driving around in cool vehicles? Are you a picnic couple, or do you want adrenaline spikes?



What is your ideal season or weather?

Are you dreaming of a snowy winter elopement? Do you want to bask in the summer sunshine? Or do you love the crisp air and brilliant colors of fall?



What locations or regions do you love?

Do you see yourselves getting married on the beach? On top of a mountain? Underneath the stars? Is there a place that is particularly special to you as a couple?

Are your friends and family there?

Elopements don't have to be just the two of you. Gone are the days when the only way to elope was to run off and getting married in secret. If you can't imagine your special day without your closest family, friends, or even your furbabies, there are multiple ways to include them into some or all of your plans!

What type of photography are you drawn to?

Are you drawn to photos that are dark and moody, or light and airy? Do you like photos that look natural, or do you prefer a more stylized look? If you're not sure, you can look for inspiration on Pinterest and Instagram, or even a Google search. Keywords like "Elopement Photographer" or "Adventure Elopement Photographer" are a good place to start, and you can add in more search terms as you narrow down the styles you like.





2 Make the Big Picture Decisions

Once you've got your dream list, it's time to make some of the big decisions! These include your budget, location, and photographer.

Think About the Money, Honey

Your budget is always an important consideration. Elopement costs can vary widely, and you'll want to have a good understanding of typical budget items and what you can afford as you start planning.

Things to Keep In Mind While Budget Planning

You are already saving money by choosing to elope vs. a traditional wedding

Many of the costs associated with a traditional wedding are simply not needed for a typical elopement. There are no large venue costs and you're not feeding and picking up a massive bar tab for hundreds of people. With those costs eliminated, you can invest in what is most important to you, whether that's a dress, an amazing location, stunning photography, or a delish chocolate cake (great, now i've really got chocolate on the mind - brb).

Saving money by eloping gives you budgetary flexibility to create the exact day of your dreams

There are a lot of options when it comes to your elopement. If you find a vendor (photographer, let's say) that can help you do your dream activity and it's just slightly beyond your original budget, consider if it's worth it. In 20 or 40 years, will you really regret spending a little bit more to have the perfect day?



Potential Elopement Budget Items:

- Travel Costs (flights, ground transportation, accommodation)
- Permit fees at your wedding site (we can help you figure that out)
- The wedding license
- Adventurous vendors
- Attire
- Hair & Makeup
- Rings
- Flowers (if you want 'em)
- Champagne and any food you want to savor as newlyweds - every proper celebration calls for a lil bubbly!
- Mini reception if you'll have a few guests

How Much Can You Save By Eloping?

While not all elopements or weddings are the same and costs can certainly vary, we can look at some average costs to get an idea of how much you can save by deciding to elope.

Average Costs for a Traditional Wedding:

- Venue: \$10,000
- Travel: \$20 - \$3,000
- Invitations: \$500
- Reception band or DJ: \$2,500
- Photographer: \$3,000
- Officiant: \$250
- Catering: \$7,000
- Rehearsal dinner: \$1,500
- Décor and florals: \$1,500
- Attire: \$200 - \$2,000
- Bouquet: \$100
- Hair and makeup: \$250

TOTAL: \$26,820 - \$31,600

Average Costs for an Elopement:

- Travel: \$20 - \$3,000
- Photographer: \$3,000
- Attire: \$200 - \$2,000
- Bouquet: \$100
- Hair and makeup: \$250
- Officiant: \$250
- Food and drink: \$100 - \$500

TOTAL: \$3,920 - \$9,100

**Potential Savings:
\$17,220 - \$27,680**



Choose Your Location

My top tip for choosing where to go for your elopement? Think about your personality as a couple! Where are your favorite spots, what are your favorite kind of views, where do you go to celebrate milestone moments? Usually you'll have an aha moment and a spot that is super meaningful for your love will become clear.

What to Consider When Choosing Your Destination:

- 1** What activity (or activities) do you like to do?
- 2** What time of day or time of year aligns best with those activities?
- 3** Do any of your activities require special equipment, guides, or rentals?
- 4** Does your location require a permit? How far in advance do you need to apply?
- 5** What are the local customs or marriage license requirements?
- 6** What will you wear? Will there be multiple outfits required for different activities?
- 7** Will you have guests? How many?
- 8** Is accessibility a consideration for you or any of your guests? If so, how will you ensure that everyone can participate?
- 9** Will food and/or drinks be served? If so, will you transport and serve it, or will you need to hire a vendor?
- 10** Are you or your guests traveling? If so, what accommodations are available nearby? Will transportation be needed for you or your guests?

And don't worry... the best elopement photographers will help you with all this.



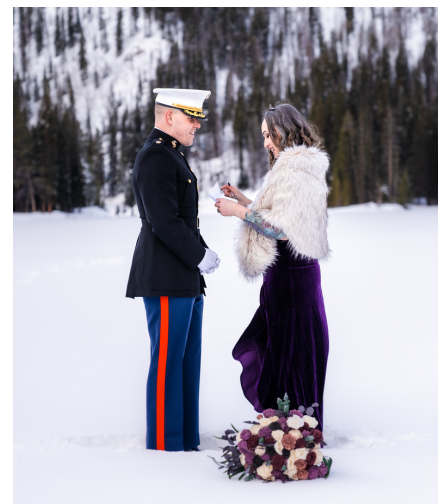
Choose Your Photographer

It goes without saying that it takes more than just a good price and friendly personality when it comes to finding the perfect photographer for your elopement. Let's take some time to really understand what you are looking for in a photographer. Then, find someone who fits this style perfectly.

And guess what? The best photographers, can also help provide planning guidance. They can answer a lot of your questions, point you in the right direction, and assist you in more ways than you realize.

Researching Photographers

Start by looking for photographers that can fulfill your dream. If you want to elope on a mountaintop, look for Colorado elopement photographers, or Rocky Mountain elopement photographers, or stunning mountain elopements, or mountain adventure elopements. Try different search queries, and see what comes up. You can use Google, Pinterest, and Instagram to find skilled photographers. Resources like WanderingWeddings, Junebug Weddings and LooksLikeFilm also have directories of elopement photographers that can be beneficial in your search.



Questions to Find the Perfect Photographer

Can the photographer make your dreams come true?

That means finding someone who has experience with the type of elopement you're envisioning. If you want to go on a 10 mile hike to a mountaintop, you want an elopement photographer that loves to hike and go on adventures, not one who lives in a venue hall.

Do the words on their website or social media speak to your soul?

Start by looking for photographers that can fulfill your dream. If you want to elope on a mountaintop, look for Colorado elopement photographers, or Rocky Mountain elopement photographers, or stunning mountain elopements, or mountain adventure elopements. Try different search queries, and see what comes up. You can use Google, Pinterest, and Instagram to find skilled photographers. Resources like WanderingWeddings, Junebug Weddings and LooksLikeFilm also have directories of elopement photographers that can be beneficial in your search.

Does their style align with yours?

If you love earthy, natural vibes, you're probably not going to want a photographer who mostly shoots highly stylized photos in a studio. Envision how you want your photos to look, and find photographers who fit that style.

How much will they help with planning?

Many photographers, like myself, include planning guidance in our services. The good ones will dive in and learn all about you. They'll ask questions and guide you towards creating a unique elopement experience that is perfect for you. I also have a recommended vendor list that I share with all my couples.

Reach Out to Some Photographers

Once you have a fairly good idea about the photographers you are interested in, it's time to set up some calls. While some questions will be asked directly to the photographer, other answers can be deduced through their demeanor and tone. Pay attention to how the photographer interacts with you. **Are they interested in your story? Are they asking questions about you, your personality, and your partner? Are they genuinely interested in finding out what your ideal day looks like?**



I recommend to my **Amores** that they make a few lists to help when researching and speaking with potential elopement photographers:

- 1** Create a list of photographers you like, then go ahead and schedule that first call.
- 2** Have a list ready of activities you are interested in, and ask about these activities on your call.
- 3** Create a list of what each photographer has to say. Ask them questions. See if their values align with yours and if they can help craft a unique, and wonderful elopement experience for you.
- 4** Once you find a vendor you vibe with, pick a date and lock them in!



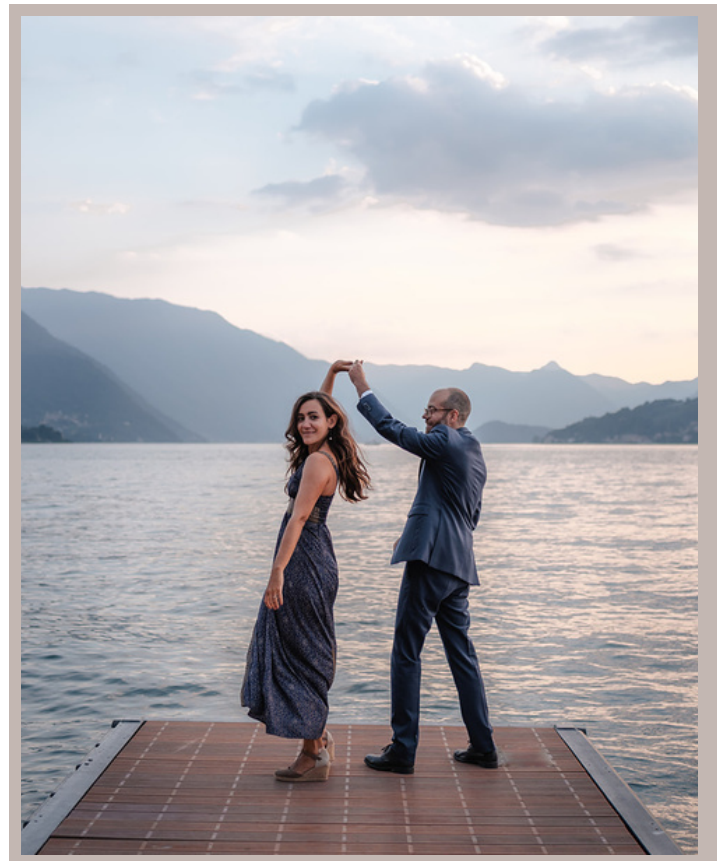
3 General Plan

Now that the biggest decisions are out of the way, it's time to figure out what activities you will include, who will be involved, and what time of day you will elope.

Plan Your Activities

One of the best things about eloping is that you can incorporate pretty much any activity you want into your day. Want to race snowmobiles to your ceremony site? Arrive in a helicopter? Or take a leisurely hike to a serene lake? Whatever your vibe, the right adventure elopement photographer can help to make your dreams a reality.

Need some ideas and inspiration? Check out our [Ultimate Guide to Elopement Ideas](#).



Decide If Guests Will Be Included

As you are well aware, society expects that everyone gets married in a (very) specific way. Family and friends oftentimes expect that you, too, will take the traditional marriage route. While that route can be a lot of fun, it's not for everyone. And it may not be for you. Here's what you need to consider when deciding whether and how to include family or friends in your celebration:

If family or friends will be included in your day:

- **Remind them of the focus.** Try explaining to guests what this day is about in your initial invite, "This wedding will be a little different than most, we will not have all of the traditions, but things included in the celebration are incredibly important to me and my partner. We want to ensure that all of the guests respect that!"
- **Take care of your guests.** When deciding who to include in certain activities, make sure to consider your guests activity level and mobility. It's important to be realistic about what will make your guests the most comfortable and plan accordingly.
- **Make guests aware of Leave No Trace Principles.** If you're eloping in nature, let guests know in advance about expectations like carry in/carry out and respecting their natural surroundings.
- **Consider an after (or beforehand) party.** Unlike a traditional wedding, there is no expectation that guests are included in all parts of an elopement. You may want to have an intimate ceremony just the two of you and a party afterward, or include a few close family or friends in the ceremony and have a private adventure after.

If guests will not be included in your day:

- **Remember that this is all about you and your personal choice.** You deserve to have a day that fulfills your dreams, not those of anyone else.
- **Write down all the reasons why you want to elope.** This can just be for you, but it may also serve as a healthy reminder of why you are making this decision and will give you confidence as you go forward. Possible reasons may include:
 - We wanted an intimate day that's just focused on just the two of us
 - We wanted to get married in a location that was meaningful to us
 - We don't want to worry about family having to fly from all over the country
 - We wanted to integrate our own traditions, and don't care much for the usual wedding customs
 - We are working through family dynamics and realized that an elopement was the best way to keep the day focused on our love
 - We are eloping to save money for a (house, land, hot air balloon, etc.)
 - We want to have a day just for ourselves, and then we'll have a big party will.

How Do We Tell Our Friends and Family?

The discrepancy between what is expected and what you want to do may cause stress, but planning for this discrepancy can help diminish your anxiety, leaving you with a more enjoyable planning process. Here are a few ways to prepare yourself and others for your elopement news:

- ✕ Make a list of the close friends and family who you'll want to tell personally. Tailor your message to your audience, and be sure to fully explain what an elopement is and why it's important to you.
- ✕ If you want to include someone in another way, let them know immediately! Share ideas on how they can be included, either through an invitation, or helping with some planning, attire shopping, prop making, or writing messages to be read or viewed during the ceremony,
- ✕ Understand that it may take time for some people to come around to the idea. You can help by reiterating your excitement, focusing on the positives, and sharing stories or photos of others who have eloped.
- ✕ For those folks who you don't feel you need to tell personally, you may want to share your excitement for this incredible journey in a more public way. You can share your news through social media or sending out engagement or elopement announcement cards.
- ✕ Or, make it a surprise announcement! Do the thang and then share it with the world! You may love how happy everyone is for you!



Common Elopement Objections and Responses

In an ideal world, everyone you love would be just as excited about your elopement as you are. But because society has trained us to think we all need to have a traditional marriage, some family and friends may not understand why you want to do things differently. If this is something you think you will encounter, it might help to be prepared with responses to these common elopement objections:

But we were going to pay for it

"That's truly generous of you! One of the reasons we are eloping is to save money for a down payment on our house/donation to a cause we care about/future children's college tuition/ the largest chocolate cake the world has ever seen. If you would like to contribute financially, we would love it if you could donate the savings towards helping us pay for a few of the other expenses (good chocolate ain't cheap)!"

We want to be included

"And we want you to be included! A) You are going to join us for the adventure, so buckle up cause it's gonna be a lot of fun! B) We want you to be included, and here's how..." (Include the ways you want them involved.) C) It'll just be the two of us, but we'll celebrate with you afterward.

Isn't it selfish to have a day focused on just you two?

"An elopement is an authentic representation of our love, that's focused on us. It's literally about my boo and me getting married, not the 200 guests. That being said, we are looking forward to including you in the process! What do you know about baking chocolate cakes?"

But your other siblings/family/friends/great cousin four times removed did it, shouldn't you?

"We are so happy for them and their decision. But when it comes to weddings, we want to do it our way! We're so excited and we want you to be excited, too."

It's tradition

"We are so committed to our (cough *badass*) love that we are creating our own traditions. And we are so thankful you are here to support us through this new journey."

4 Detailed Planning

Once you know your location, activities, and guest list (if any), it's time to start planning out all the details! Here are all the resources you need to keep everything straight as you plan.

Elopement Checklists

Elopements are awesome because they can be anything you want them to be. There's no wedding venue or family member telling you what you need to do when. While that is super exciting, it can also make it hard to keep track of all the details.

To help, we've compiled everything you need to consider in a series of spreadsheets. You can access the checklist at [this link](#). Feel free to copy, save, use, and share this document to help you plan your perfect day!

***Note: Be sure to make a copy of this document to your own Google drive to edit.**

<div><div>ADVENTURE Amore</div><div>Elopement Planning Worksheet: Activities</div></div>							
Activity	Price	Duration	Season	Location	Can Guests Come?	Permit Requirements	How Far Out Do Yo
ATV							
Boat Trip							
Bungee Jump							
Canoe							
Champagne							
Cruise							
Dog Sledding							
Helicopter							
Hike							
Hot Air Balloon							
Ice Climbing							
Jeep Ride							
Kayaking							
Picnic							
Rock Climb							
Scuba Dive							
Sky Diving							
Small Plane							
Snowmobiles							
Snowshoe							
Stand Up Paddleboarding							
Stargazing							
Surf							
Whitewater Rafting							

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START HERE!

BUDGET

LOCATION

ACTIVITIES

LOGISTICS

ATTIRE

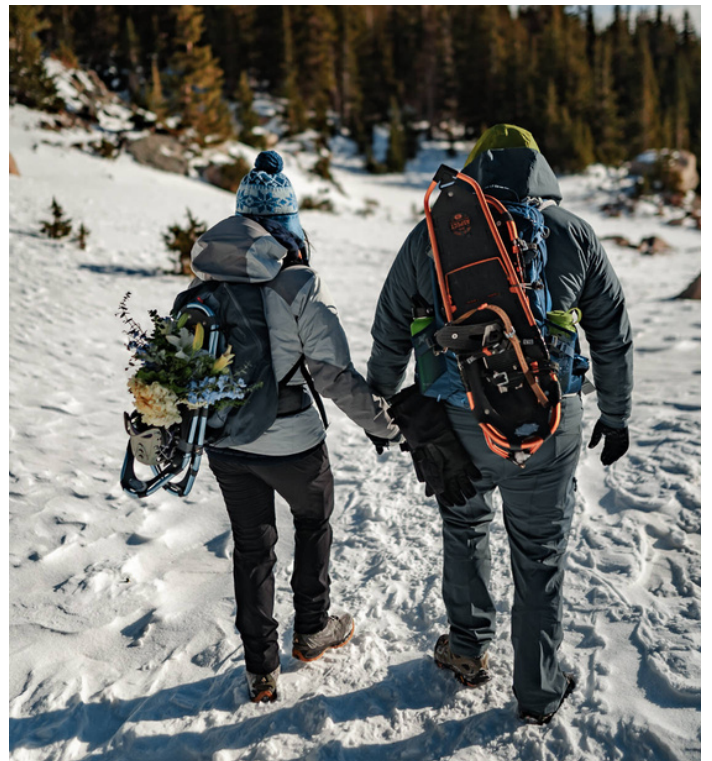
Choose Your Other Vendors

Depending on your elopement plans and budget, you may want to hire other vendors and a Planner or Coordinator to manage all the details. Planners and Coordinators are great if you want to be hands-off and let someone else find vendors and handle the logistics. A good Planner should work with you to make sure your day is exactly how you envision.

Whether you work with a Planner/Coordinator or not, a good photographer will also help with all the details of your day and should be able to recommend other trusted vendors.

Other Vendors You May Need:

- Hair and Makeup
- Wardrobe Stylist
- Florist
- Music
- Food and Drink (if you're including guests)
- Equipment or other rentals
- Special touches (custom items like personalized accessories)



Create Your Timeline

Depending on your plans, your elopement timeline may be anywhere from a few hours to an entire weekend.

For most locations, I recommend that at least part of your elopement take place in the early morning or late afternoon. This will give you that incredible sunrise or sunset light for your photos, and will also help to avoid the midday heat in warmer climates. That being said, the ideal timeline for you will very much depend on your location and activity plans.

As your adventure elopement photographer, a big part of my job is to recommend the right timeline to not only get the very best photos, but for the best overall experience.

Each elopement is unique, but here's an idea of what a full-day elopement timeline might look like:

6:00 AM: Sunrise hike to a stunning location

10:00 AM: Breakfast

11:00 AM – 2:00 PM: Rest

2:00 PM: Take a jeep ride through hard to reach gorgeous places

5:00 PM: Ceremony

6:00 PM: Picnic dinner

7:00 PM: Sunset

8:00 PM: Star photos



Lodging and Logistics

At this point, you'll also want to consider logistics for your day. If you or guests are traveling, this will include lodging and transportation.

While most locations have a variety of lodging options, I recommend that couples view their accommodations as more than just a place to stay. Your lodging could also serve as a home base for getting ready photos, a before- or afterparty location, or intimate photos after your event, so it's important that it fits the overall vibe of your event. AirBnB has some great options ([this cozy Colorado A-frame](#)) to fit most styles and budgets.

Same goes for transportation. If your day involves remote locations, a 4x4 may be in order. Or you can consider alternate transportation options - my Amores have taken everything from boats to helicopters to dogsleds to their elopements!

Other logistics to consider may include booking flights, transportation for guests, and planning meals.



5 Finalize Your Plans

Once you have all your details planned and have chosen your date, it's time to lock everything in! Secure any permits or licenses you need and lock in whatever reservations you need for lodging, transportation, rentals, or other vendors. Double check your Elopement Planning Checklists to make sure you have everything you need.

As the Day Approaches:

Make sure you have a plan to pick up your marriage license and any other items you may need (flowers, cake, etc.).

Remember to be flexible. Weather could change, other unforeseen events could arise.. The plan, and backup plan, may not go 100% according to plan, so just remember: An adventure that goes according to plan is just a well executed itinerary. 😊

When you know all the details are taken care of, you can sit back and enjoy the anticipation!





6 Elope

The adventure has been planned and the most important thing is that you and your boo are here and ready to celebrate!

Final Tips to Make Sure You Have the Best Day of Your Lives:

- Remember to be flexible with whatever comes on your day
- Make sure you have plenty of food, water, and the appropriate attire
- Be **PRESENT**. Remember to stop and smell the flowers, see the waterfalls, breath the air. Look at your partner up and down, left and right, and admire their beauty inside and out. Be present.
- As long as you are present and focused on the love and commitment you are making, the rest will be super fun and the photos will turn out great.



7 Relive Your Day!

You've done the thang and got married! But your celebration isn't fully over. You'll want to tell the world you got married - share the news with everyone!

Celebrate again and again. Every time you see new family and friends since you eloped, celebrate with them! **That's right - multiple parties!**

Select your favorite photos so you can relive your day over and over again with your printed photos and gorgeous photo albums!

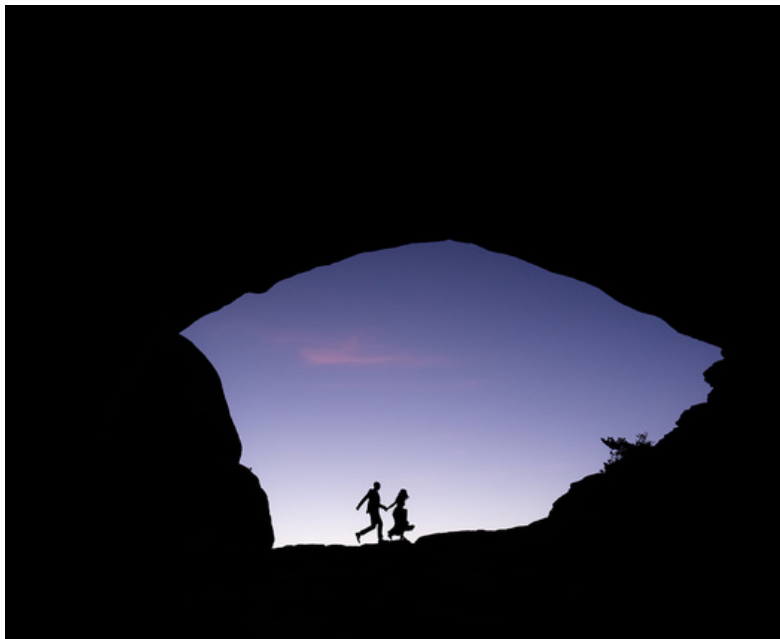


Are You Ready?

Hopefully this guide has inspired you to take the first steps toward your dream elopement. If you're ready to start planning, or just have questions, **I'd love to help!**

Reach out to say hi and get your FREE CONSULTATION





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