

Tips for

PLANNING AN OUT OF STATE ELOPEMENT

TIP 1 | ARRIVE 2-3 DAYS OR MORE BEFORE YOUR ELOPEMENT

It's really important to always add a couple of days to your trip before your elopement. This helps you to avoid any flight delays or stress that can be caused by flying out of state. And if all goes well and you have extra time, then you're able to explore the new location. You can take some time to enjoy being in the state that you're going to get married in.

TIP 2 | ARRIVE 2-3 DAYS OR MORE BEFORE YOUR ELOPEMENT

Just like with adding a few days before your elopement, we recommend staying in the state that you're eloping in for a few days after your wedding, too. It's extremely rare that we have to change your wedding date, but it can happen, and it's best if you have a couple of days of flexibility with your travel. This only ever happens if for some reason the location/weather is dangerous or it's mutually agreed upon. Overall, it's best to just add extra days before and after your wedding date when planning an out of state elopement. It definitely won't hurt!

TIP 3 | DOUBLE CHECK YOUR BAGS

Anytime you're leaving for a trip, you should definitely do this, but especially when you're having an out of state elopement! Before you leave your house, double/triple check your bags. We personally like to lay out all of our things on the bed or the floor before we pack them into our bags. This helps us organize everything and make sure that we didn't forget something important. You can also make lists to check when you're packing. And sure, this might seem like a simple tip, but it's sometimes overlooked when you're stressed or in a rush. So, make it a point to be organized.

TIP 4 | MAKE SURE EVERYTHING FITS AHEAD OF TIME

Get alterations done well in advance and make sure to double check all of your attire a few weeks before (in case you need anything else). For brides, we highly recommend making sure you have good options for undergarments that are going to fit well and be comfortable. If you're eloping in the winter, make sure to have nude leggings to keep your legs warm!

TIP 5 | CHOOSE VENDORS THAT ARE LOCAL TO THE AREA (OR WILLING TO TRAVEL)

When deciding on which vendors you want to include on your special day, make sure that you check how local they are to where you're getting married. For HMUA, photographers, florists, etc, you want to see if they're local to the area to avoid travel fees or get their expertise. Of course, you don't have to book local vendors! Book the people that you connect with and who you think are going to create the best experience for your special day. If they aren't local, make sure to check if they're willing to travel to your Airbnb/ceremony location and what they charge!

TIP 6 | BOOK LODGING IMMEDIATELY AFTER YOU PICK A LOCATION

The second that you choose a location, we recommend booking lodging accommodations. This is super important especially during the summer season and in popular areas (like Mount Rainier or other National Parks). If you book well in advance then you have good options for lodging instead of resorting to the only available place. Popular areas and busy seasons book out extremely quickly. This is a really important step that you don't want to procrastinate on when you're planning your out of state elopement.

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TIP 7 | MAKE DINNER RESERVATIONS AHEAD OF TIME

If you're planning on having a special dinner for your elopement (or even before/after your special day), you'll want to call ahead and make dinner reservations. It's just like with booking lodging, flights, or vendors. You want to have everything planned ahead of time so that you don't have to worry about anything on the day of your elopement. Especially with covid and popular restaurants being busy, it's important to plan ahead.

TIP 8 | APPLY EARLY FOR A SPECIAL USE PERMIT

In National and State Parks, it's common that a Special Use Permit or Wedding Permit is required in order to have an elopement or small wedding ceremony. It's usually an easy process and all it takes is going to the park website and searching for permits. Each park is different in their requirements and how long it takes to get a permit approved. Make sure to print and/or screenshot your permit so that you have it with you on your elopement day.

TIP 9 | FIND A GOOD OFFICIANT

For help with all of the legality of eloping out of state, hire a good officiant. Take the time to find someone who fits your needs. Don't just choose someone who is the least expensive. In some states, like Colorado, you're allowed to marry yourselves (self-solemnization). If that's the case, we can help you figure out your marriage license!

TIP 10 | TRANSPORTATION

Make sure you have your transportation mapped out! Many travel agencies and organizations, such as AAA, will have discounts for members. And travel websites, like Expedia, have similar deals that will help you save if you book a flight and a car through them. Plan out when you're arriving, how you'll pick up your rental car, how much you will need to travel, etc. Also make sure you pick the right rental car. If you're eloping in the wintertime or you need to drive along a forest service road in order to get to your ceremony location, you will need an all-wheel drive or four-wheel drive vehicle.

TIP 11 | LOCATION FOR YOUR OUT OF STATE ELOPEMENT CEREMONY

Not sure where your ceremony location will be? Make sure you take the time to do research on what spots interest you the most. Take the time to look at some inspiration online of other ceremonies and weddings. Look at your photographer/videographers website for location inspiration. A couple of ways to organize your ideas include: creating a Pinterest board for inspiration and adding locations & links to a Google Docs.

TIP 12 | VENUES FOR YOUR RECEPTION

Many eloping couples are also interested in having a reception at some point after their elopement ceremony. If you are interested in having the reception in the same location you got married, make sure you find a local hall or hotel that can host a large enough group that you are planning on having. If you are still going to keep the group on the smaller side, (think 30 people or less) it is likely that you would be able to have the reception at a restaurant. If you're planning your reception out of state, we 100% recommend hiring a wedding planner for this piece!

BONUS TIP: FOR MILITARY BRIDES

Lastly, one of our active military brides gave us this tip! She told us that Brides Across America gifts active duty military brides (or fiancés) and first responder brides a wedding dress. Meaning that you could receive a free wedding dress if you are active military or a first responder. They do the free dress giveaway around the Fourth of July and Labor Day. Brides for a Cause participates in this giveaway, and that is where our bride got her free dress. They have locations in Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, and Sacramento. There are also several other bridal shops that participate in the giveaway nationwide. Anyone that qualifies can get a free dress- it's not a drawing or lottery. Definitely check this out to see if you qualify!