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From One Bride-to-Be to the Next: The 8 Things You Need to Know Before You Go Dress Shopping

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by Katherine Callaghan

Going to boutiques and salons to scope out your dream dress can be exciting, and in some cases, a bit overwhelming. Unless you actually experience wedding dress shopping, there's a lot of things you may not know, and that's where I come in! So far, I've been to ten bridal boutiques, and before you even step foot in the salon, there are a lot of things to keep in mind to get the most of your experience!

Set a Budget

I'll be the first to (unfortunately) tell you that wedding dresses *quickly* rack up in price. Have a realistic budget in mind for what you want to spend on a dress. Make sure you articulate your budget to your bridal consultant. There's nothing worse than falling in love with a dress that's out of reach.

Go Prepared

Like any major purchase, it is vital to do your research beforehand. Start ripping magazine tears and gathering Pinterest pins of what you are envisioning. If you don't have a silhouette you favor or neckline you prefer, that's ok! You just want to give your bridal consultant a general idea of what you're thinking.

Don't Book Too Many Appointments

A bridal appointment is a typical one and a half to two hours depending on the salon. Going to too many salons in one day will make it hard to remember all the gowns you tried on. I made three bridal appointments in one day and that was a mistake. There were too many styles that at the end of the day I couldn't remember what I tried on. In one appointment, depending on how long you keep each gown on, you typically try on anywhere from 5-8 gowns. Multiple that by two or three salons and that's a lot of dresses!

Hair and Makeup Go a Long Way

I highly recommend wearing more than your everyday makeup to your appointment. You want to get a true gauge of what you'll look like as a bride. The same goes for your hair. If you think you're going to wear your hair up or down, it's wise to wear your hair similar to how you imagine. Of course, you're in the early stages of figuring out

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your bridal look, but you want to get the truest picture when you try on these gowns. It is really helpful when envisioning yourself as a bride and can really help narrow down your bridal vision.

Bring Shoes

Many of the bridal boutiques I went to advised me to bring heels, and for me, this was really helpful. This is a great opportunity to start testing heel heights and see how you manage in heels for a long period of time. During your bridal appointment, you're standing the entire time, and for the wedding, you're pretty much standing for the majority of the day. Personally, I'm a stiletto fanatic, and after wearing my stilettos to various appointments, one thing is certain, I will not be wearing sky-high stilettos on my wedding day!

Wear Appropriate Undergarments

This isn't the time or the place for the crazy-colored undergarments. Whether you want a slinky form-fitting silhouette or a princess ball gown, it is best to wear nude undergarments to not distract yourself, and anyone else you bring to the appointment, from the gown.

Start Thinking About Your Bridal Accessories

It's not just the dress that makes your bridal look. It's the veil and headpiece that is also important to your wedding day look. When you are trying on gowns, ask your consultant to try on veils and headpieces. Completing the look may change your mind about the gown!

Keep An Open Mind

From the magazine tears and Pinterest pins, your bridal consultant gets a feel for the type of gown you are looking for. If they have suggestions of gowns you may like, keep an open mind and try it. This is what they do for a living and they've seen all sorts of brides. The worse that can happen is you hate it and move on and keep trying on gowns? Trying on more wedding gowns isn't the worst thing in the world, right?

For more wedding dress inspiration, check out our Wedding Dress Finder (<http://www.bridalpulse.com/wedding-dress-gallery/>)!

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