

# 10 Tips for Planning Your Extraordinary Hill Country Wedding

Have you spent hours sifting through pages and pages of bridal mags and Google results to start planning your wedding, only to feel stressed out, overwhelmed, and stuck in analysis paralysis?

We see you, brilliant bride...and we know how stressful it is. You've got a career, a family, a social life, and a dozen daily to-dos already taking up tons of bandwidth. Adding all the intricacies of planning a spectacular celebration to that list of demands? That's a tall order, even for a savvy, professional belle-of-the-ball such as yourself. And love isn't a competition...but, let's be honest, you want your guests to walk away saying yours was *the best wedding they've ever attended*.

You want more than just a pretty party, although pretty is important, too.

At Wildflowers & Whiskey, we plan and produce Texas Hill Country weddings as distinct as your love story. Whether you are Texas born-and-raised or flying in to have a destination wedding, here, pretty parties are just the beginning. We seek out opportunities to tell your story in unforgettable ways and ensure there's

intention behind every last guest touch-point in order to craft celebrations as meaningful as they are stunning. Because you're not just a bride. You're a Texas Hill Country bride.

We are not your typical Central Texas wedding planners. Wildflowers & Whiskey clients receive next-level, white-glove service and provided planning that simply is not offered by any other planner in our area. Here, we elevate the down-home, breathe life into boring bridal expectations, and serve up a fresh, elevated approach to wedding planning (always with a side of whiskey and some serious fun).

Our founder, Julia, is a Logistics Queen; she dreams in details and is *always* ten steps ahead. A born-romantic and Austin native, Julia's first foray into the wedding-planning world happened by chance when her friend's wedding planner didn't show. Julia grabbed the reins (like any good Texan) and soon realized she'd found her true calling: to celebrate love and community. She founded her planning company Native Roots (now Wildflowers & Whiskey) in 2014, developed relationships with Central Texas' most sought-after vendors, and has been planning acclaimed outdoor weddings in the Texas Hill Country ever since.

Bring on all of the moving parts at once and countless balls (or bouquets) in the air—she's here to catch them all so you can experience your engagement, *sans* stress.

A former earth scientist turned event-production expert, Julia's no stranger to all-things high-stakes, timeline-driven, and chock-full of moving parts. She lives for logistics and prides herself on remaining ten steps ahead (hello, contingency plan C). There's no idea too wild (and no whiskey too strong) for Julia's taste—bold visions speak straight to her heart, and off-the-beaten path is right up her adventurous alley.

We know there's no beautiful big picture without impeccable management of minutiae. We hone in on the finest details and always seek out opportunities to add intentional touches to ensure your Texas Hill Country wedding is anything but cookie-cutter or carbon-copied.

Planning & designing even a modest wedding is no small undertaking. It involves juggling a Mack-Truck-load of moving parts with tons of nuances...subtleties a novice is unlikely to meet head-on (without a lot of headaches and sleepless nights, anyway.) And did you know that brides- and grooms-to-be spend an average of 200-300 hours finalizing the details of their big day? Stacked on top of everything else you've got going on, all that time and stress can be a real drain, leaving your energy low and tempers high. And the *last* thing you want is to get in a spat with your fiancé or family during this special time. That's even lower on your to-do list than letting subpar vendors set up shop

at your event (that's not on your list at all, thank-you-very-much.)

Speaking of vendors...finding the best of the best on your own can be an impossible challenge. Without an experienced guide, how will you know who to book? There are dozens and dozens of event pros in the area, and if, like most brides-to-be, you've never gone through the event-planning process before, you risk getting overwhelmed and stuck in analysis paralysis *long* before you start debating on those gorgeous tablecloth accents on Pinterest.

So leave the logistics up to our seasoned professionals and allow yourself to *enjoy* your engagement. Here, it's never just about a one-time party—it's about the cause for celebration at hand. Our proprietary planning process is designed to allow you to relax and experience your engagement—rather than rush to the aisle. At Wildflowers & Whiskey, it's always a wedding journey—never a planning emergency. We make the planning process effortless, purposeful, and as smooth as a great glass of whiskey.

When you're a Wildflowers & Whiskey couple, our little black book is yours for the taking. You'll have access to the best event pros Central Texas has to offer and we'll handle all the nitty gritty details so you don't have to.

And cookie cutter and contrived? Not exactly our thing. At Wildflowers & Whiskey, we craft distinct celebrations centered around your love story and rooted in your wildest wishes. If it's a stress-free, impeccably designed, impossible-to-recreate experience you're after...you've come to the right place.

We've been throwing elevated events that are as natural, awe-inspiring, and unforgettable as Texas Hill Country itself since 2014. And in that time, we've learned a thing or two about making a spectacular soiree go off without a hitch. In this report, we'll go over the factors that go into throwing a distinctive, inspiring event that's rooted in your love story *and* free of last-minute dilemmas.

Let's get your wedding planning party started and ensure you and your guests have a magical time.

### **1. Book a Venue with a View: Let Hill Country Beauty Work for You.**

With its breathtaking landscape, the Texas Hill Country is one of the fastest-growing destination wedding locations for good reason. Dripping Springs, the Wedding Capital of Texas, attracts smitten, aisle-bound couples from all over the world. Probably because a backdrop of wildflower-studded rolling hills sets quite the stage! Even if you want to say "I do" indoors, book a venue that showcases the natural beauty of the

Hill Country. You'll save big on your decor budget so you can put more towards one-of-a-kind wedding experiences.

If you're seeking an affair that's alive with the magic of the great outdoors, well, there is *no* better place to say "I do" than here. Along with its scenic beauty, the Texas Hill Country features mild temperatures throughout 9 months of the year and receives a low annual rainfall. You can host part of your wedding outdoors or do the whole shebang in the open air. In this time of social distancing, hosting an all-outdoor event is your safest bet, and you won't fall victim to size restrictions.

You'll need an event planner who specializes in outdoor celebrations, as tented affairs bring on another set of logistics and infrastructure to consider. We specialize in immersive open-air celebrations in the Texas Hill Country. We've executed flawless events everywhere from desolate deserts to remote mountain tops and are never afraid to travel off the beaten path—because we know that's where the most magical settings lie.

Pro tip: Think outside the box! You've got more options than the traditional kinds of venues. Historical structures, Texas dance halls, private estates, and private ranches can be perfect, one-of-kind locales for you to celebrate your love.

**2. Managing Outdoor Logistics.** Having a tented affair at a private residence or ranch? While ideal for a certain kind of magic, getting hitched outdoors creates some important logistical issues you can't gloss over. You'll need to take some infrastructure into consideration. For starters, you'll need tented areas for shelter and a generator set up to provide power (you need those lights lit up and your perfect wedding song to play loud enough for your whole party to hear, after all!) Other considerations for outdoor events include terrain and soil type, depth to bedrock, a wind plan, restrooms, ice storage, and plenty of parking, as well as at least one area that's temperature-controlled, including your bride and groom suites. Terrain, soil type and depth to bedrock will determine whether or not you can insert stakes to erect your tents, and lighting and restrooms might not be provided.

You'll also need to consider your vendors' travel expenses and guest overnight accommodations. You don't want to scramble over budget or places to lodge at the last minute.

**3. Pick Your Perfect Wedding Season.** You'll want the details of your celebration carefully curated and coordinated with the time of year. This is

how we define Hill Country Wedding Seasons here at Wildflowers & Whiskey Events:

- a. **Wildflower Wedding Season** – Spring (mid-March-May) – This season provides an eye-catching backdrop for your big day. Bluebonnets spread across the hills at the end of March, and wildflowers continue to bloom into the summer. Temperatures are warm, not too hot. Note: this is one of the two most popular wedding seasons in Central Texas.
- b. **Southern Warmth Season** – early summer (June) – This season is lush and green with wildflowers still in bloom. Most days are warm like our friendly Texas locals but those temperatures border on hot. If your guests are accustomed to cooler weather, daytime activities could pose an issue. Evenings do get nice and cool, though. So, have yourself a sunset affair this time of year.
- c. **‘Sippin’ Whiskey by the Fire’ Season** – fall (Oct-Dec) – This season, the leaves fall, days get shorter and the air turns chilly, though not cold. This is the second of the popular wedding seasons in Central Texas. Think fire pits and a whiskey hot chocolate bar.
- d. **Top Secret Season** – winter (Jan-Feb) – Winter weddings are the best kept secret in the Texas Hill Country! The weather is mild and dry. Tourism slows down, and there’s a sense of “fireplace cozy” in the air that makes this season a magical time to tie the knot.



Notice we did not include the Crispy & Sweltering season of Texas summer (July–Sept.) Unlike the rest of the U.S., summer isn’t a big wedding season here...it’s too blazin’ hot! While some brides do choose to marry this time of year for the deep off-season discounts, we don’t recommend it. Unless your invite list consists of very heat-tolerant guests and you have a climate-controlled section...or you get hitched in a bikini (or a walk-in freezer!)

**4. Incorporate Hill Country Culture.** You want an extraordinary wedding your guests will be talking about for years to come. Lucky you, brilliant bride...Central Texas has a rich and one-of-a-kind culture, flush with amazing artists. Infuse these elements into your celebration for an unforgettable experience that can’t be beat.

- a. Entertainment.** From performance arts like acrobatics, fire dancing, and live painting to bluesy grooves and honky-tonk bands, Central Texas has your stage covered! Choose from a wide array of local talent to custom-build an event that’s impossible to recreate.
- b. Buy Local.** Central Texas is known for its artisan crafts. Wineries, distilleries and breweries abound. Wow your guests with gifts of Texas alcohol, olive oil, local caramels and savory snacks (ask us for details!)

- c. **Guest Interactive.** Center your event on distinct moments as unforgettable as the Texas Hill Country, itself. Armadillo racing, whiskey tasting, leather belt making...the unique opportunities are endless. Whether it's an aerial silk artist or a personalized scotch toast, every celebration we plan includes a signature "wow-factor" moment inspired by your love story and designed to ensure your guests revel in the memories of your wedding for years to come.
- 5. **Plan Early.** Alright, beautiful bride, this may be hard to hear, but...we recommend planning at least 18 months out. We know – you're ready to tie the knot *now*. But like our summers, the Central Texas wedding market is on *fire*. You need some lead time to get your pick of the best dates and Hill Country vendors. We'd like to add that your engagement is the shortest period of your relationship, and we believe it should be *experienced*...as a wedding journey, not a rush to the aisle. So, sop it up with one of grandma's biscuits and enjoy calling each other "fiancé" for a little longer while you plan.
- 6. **Book Accommodations in Advance.** Some rural parts of the region are catching up with the high demand of accommodations but rooms book up fast. Send your Save the Dates 10 to 12 months in advance -- this will give your guests plenty of time to book room and board. Dripping Springs has new hotels under construction as well as 200 current short-term rentals.

For a fun, off-the-beaten path experience, we can't recommend bed and breakfasts enough. Fredericksburg has been rockin' the B & B scene since before Airbnb was a thing, and it's still going strong. Just solidify those plans early on.

7. **Stay a While: Cultivate Connection and Live it Up.** Schedule a few extra days in the area before and/or after your wedding weekend and soak up those destination add-ons! Excursions give you extra quality time with your guests and enrich your wedding experience, and there are loads to choose from.

Layer multiple events and activities into the experience. This is a wonderful way for both families to bond before and after your wedding day. A few fun ideas to get your motor going:

- Shop and eat in small Texas towns (or the big cities)
- Add in a New Couple Brunch at one of the Hill Country's authentic, craft, fine dining restaurants or hidden gem bbq joints
- Craft beverage tours (wineries, distilleries, and breweries, oh my!)
- Get down at a dance hall or two
- Get pampered at a high-end spa
- Do a wellness-focused activity like yoga or spin class

- Float a spring-fed river
- Enjoy parks and natural beauty (who can resist spring-fed waterfalls?) Options to consider are Lady Bird Lake in Austin, Westcave Preserve or the many other regional parks.

We're most at home under big blue skies and have a deep-rooted love-affair with nature and all of her splendor. We love our outdoor spaces, always pack out what we pack in, and continue to donate 1% of all profits to protect green space in the Texas Hill Country.

Note: Don't *over-plan* experiences. Stress, sweat, and surprise setbacks are the worst wedding guests! And jamming too much into your schedule is one way to invite them. That's why we recommend booking time before and after your wedding in the Texas Hill Country. You and your guests want to have fun, not rush.

- 8. Give Your Guests a Warm Texas Welcome.** Greet your guests with southern hospitality, luxurious comforts, and new experiences to boot.
  - a. Treat your guests to a mocktail or cocktail made with local ingredients like whiskey and honey upon arrival.
  - b. We love kicking things off with a Welcome Party. This can precede a Rehearsal Dinner or be held on another day entirely.

- c. Make your guests feel at home with gift baskets at their hotel. Stock with goodies like Texas wine, whiskey, caramels, salty snacks and olive oil. Include a Weekend Guide on what to do with your wedding itinerary and excursions in the area.
- d. Want to really wow your guests? Hire a concierge to welcome them to their home away from home. This is a fabulous way to keep everyone in the know. Plus, your Travel Liaison will handle any guest travel delays or questions – allowing you love birds to stay focused on the celebration at hand.

We believe beauty is everywhere—in the rolling hills around us, in the aesthetics of an impeccably designed event, and in the energy in the air as friends and family gather to celebrate. We always design with an eye toward highlighting and embracing the innate beauty of people, places, and love stories.

## **9. Plan for Seamless Travel.**

- a. Give your guests a seamless travel plan. Tell them exactly when to arrive in order to complete the itinerary, from the Welcome Dinner Party to the Post-Wedding Adventures. Don't let travel or scheduling snafus take away from your celebration.
- b. **Rent that vehicle.** They say, "Everything's bigger in Texas..." And that goes for the beautiful landscapes and vastness of locations, too. Our scenery and points of interests can be a drive. You'll want a

rental car – scratch that...a rental SUV -- to carry around your belongings and perhaps bring along some VIPs to explore. Except, of course, for touring wineries or whiskey distilleries. A chauffeur company will help you sample craft beverages of the Texas Hill Country responsibly.

- c. **Know Your Airports.** Austin Bergstrom International Airport (AUS) and San Antonio International Airport (SAT) are our major commercial airports. For private jets, there's Gillespie County Airport near Fredericksburg. We'll work with you to determine if there's a closer regional airport you could fly in to. We recommend you pack your dress in your carry-on bag (check with your airline prior) and get it steamed upon arrival.
  - d. **Use Shuttle Services & Tour Companies.** There are plenty of shuttles in the area! You won't be left high and dry trying to transport your guests from hotel to venue.
- 10. Shoes!** You probably don't need help finding the perfect outfit. But something you may not have considered is proper footwear. The great outdoors is magical...but not too forgiving with certain kinds of shoes. Bust out those boots or don some beautiful wedges -- just leave the stilettos at home. And tell your guests to do the same via your wedding website.

**CONNECT WITH US SOCIALLY**

Want to see the fun things we're up to? Join our email list for special announcements, new resources, and real wedding highlights.

Check out our Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest for inspiration and real time updates!

We are your preferred bevvy if you:

- Are too busy to take on another full-time job to plan and design your wedding
- Fancy stylish, spectacular soirees
- Are in love with the idea of an outdoor affair
- Want access to the best vendors Central Texas has to offer
- Want your wedding to be a one-of-a-kind experience you've never seen before
- Want your wedding guests to keep talking about your wedding for years to come
- Want to *enjoy* your engagement -- not sweat the details
- Want less stress and more time to do you
- Are ready to turn your wedding worry into wedding glory
- Want an industry pro who specializes in outdoor weddings
- Appreciate above-and-beyond white glove service
- Want a *fun* wedding planning experience

We know it's a lot, and it may seem overwhelming. But we're here to help make this process seamless, inviting, and fun.

And yes, you could absolutely take this on, yourself, brilliant bride. You could scroll through pages of search results and vendor reviews and spend your time researching, consulting, and finalizing your plans. But we've got the connections and expertise to make your wedding run seamlessly, *sans* stress.

And if you truly want a signature celebration unlike *anything* you or your guests have experienced before, you need a team of passionate, organized, seasoned industry experts in your corner.

Here, we serve up a fresh, elevated approach to wedding planning...always with a side of whiskey and some serious fun. Sound like something you can raise a glass to? Good—let's get to it.

Book a free consult and let's throw you the best ball of them all.