



# hiring a photographer

leise jones photography

## Introduction

Whether you're hiring a photographer for a wedding, a portrait, an event, or to make promotional photos for your business, there are many factors in determining which photographer to hire. The three biggest things to consider are the photographer's personality, portfolio, and price. But here are some more tips to help you find the right photographer for the job.

### 1. Decide on your Budget

Think about how much you are willing to pay for professional photography services. (For wedding photography, this is typically between 5-10% of your total wedding budget.) A good photographer will respect your budget, no matter what it is, and tell you what services she can provide at that price.

### 2. Identify the style of photography you like

Every photographer approaches assignments and events with a unique eye and infuses their creativity into the final product. You may want photos that are traditional, artsy, photojournalistic, natural looking, posed, shot in a studio, shot on location, blurry, etc.

### 3. Ask yourself whether you want prints, digital files, or both

If you're making promotional photos for your business, do you need a digital file or a print? If you're hiring a wedding or portrait photographer, do you want prints, an album, or digital files? Photographers often base their price on the final product they are expected to deliver, so it helps to have some idea of what you want.

### 4. Decide how quickly you will need the final photos

If you're hiring a photographer for a corporate event or assignment, timing can be crucial. Some photographers might burn you a disc of images immediately; others take a week or two to get you edited images. Knowing when you need your images will help you find a photographer who can deliver them on time.

### 5. Have an idea of how you want to use the photos

If you're hiring a wedding or a family portrait photographer, the "usage" is fairly straightforward: you will hang the photos on your wall, give them to friends as gifts, and print albums. But if you're hiring a food, event, or advertising photographer, the usage can vary from websites to brochures to billboards. Check out the sidebar for examples of usage.

- Are the photos for the web?

*A good photographer will respect your budget and tell you what services she can provide at that price.*



- Are the photos for print?
- If they are for print, in what kinds of materials will they be used? How many people will see them? How large will the photos run?
- For how long do you require access to the photos?
- Do you require exclusive use of the photos?

## Talking to Photographers

You have probably already looked at photographers' websites and found some that you like. This is a great place to start — portfolio is key! Assuming you like their work, move ahead with contacting them to discuss specifics. But while you may be desperate to ask about price, there are lots of other questions you might want to ask. Here are a few to help get you started.

1. Are you available on the date(s) that I need? It's sort of a no-brainer, but if he or she isn't available or can't produce the photos on your deadline, then there is no point in continuing the conversation.

2. Have you done this kind of photo shoot before? If they don't have any experience with traditional Indian weddings, group shots with 150 people, or photo shoots involving live animals, then you may want to keep looking.

3. How would you approach a shoot like this? Keep in mind, you're not asking for a literal answer here. What you're looking for is a reasonable and thoughtful answer that shows this person has experience, is creative, can solve problems, and makes a plan.

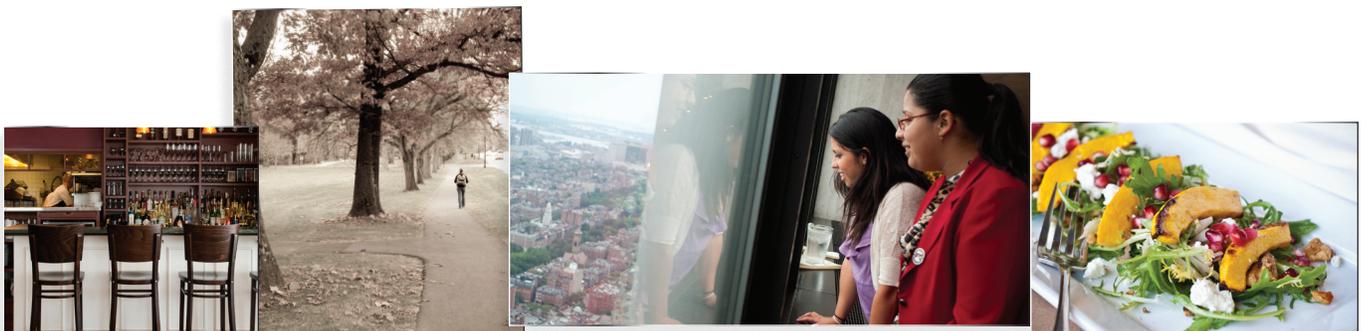
4. Do you work in a studio or on-location? If you're hiring a wedding or event photographer, this is a non-issue. But for commercial or portrait work, make sure the location of the shoot suits your needs.

5. Are you familiar with the venue or location where the photo shoot will take place? If you'll be working at a specific location, it helps to know if he or she has been to that place before. You may also ask if he or she would visit ahead of time to get a sense of the place.

6. Do you have liability insurance? You never know what kinds of accidents could happen at a photo shoot. Make sure that the photographer is covered in case he or she is liable for someone's injury.

7. Do you have clients sign a contract and if so, can I read it ahead of time? Contracts are designed to protect the photographer and to protect you! It's wise to agree on terms of a contract so that you and the

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- For how long do you require access to the photos?
- Do you require exclusive access (meaning no one else can use the photos) or non-exclusive access (meaning the photographer could license the photos to someone else as well)?



photographer understand cancellation policies, terms of usage, limits of liability, overtime fees, travel fees, etc.

8. How do you plan to use the images in your own self-promotion? Since photographers need to continuously show new work in order to get new clients, they will want to use some of the photos they shoot for you in their promotional materials (see the sidebar for more).

9. Do you work with assistants or second-shooters? It's fair for you to know exactly whom you are hiring (and paying for) in advance of the shoot.

10. Do you require any payment up front? Some wedding and event photographers require a deposit of some kind (in addition to a signed contract) in order to hold the date.

## Don't Forget Personality!

Nearly as important as everything else is finding someone who you like, who is professional, and with whom you feel comfortable. Her work may be amazing and beautiful, but if she comes across as bossy, disorganized, or impatient, you won't enjoy working with her. Only you can judge if someone's personality suits you, so take the time to get to know each photographer you are considering before making a final decision.

How might a photographer use my photos?

- *On their business's website or blog*
- *Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest*
- *In paid online or print ads (i.e. on The Knot, trade magazines, etc.)*
- *In portfolios or marketing pieces like brochures and postcards*
- *In editorial articles and features (i.e. wedding magazines, industry publications)*

I hope all of this information helps you find exactly the photographer you are looking for, no matter what special event you're planning or photo needs you have. If you want to know my answers to any of these questions, please get in touch! I would love to hear from you and would be honored to make beautiful photos that suit your needs.

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