

Weddings & Engagements: Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you for taking a few moments to review Monumental Arts' FAQs – in my 12 years professional photography experience, these should cover almost every question – of course, if you have further questions, we are more than happy to answer those, so please call 1-800-687-9350 or email us at monumentalarts@outlook.com.

The “Most Asked” Questions

Q: “How many weddings have you photographed before?”

A: The owner of Monumental Arts, K Michael, has personally photographed over 425 weddings, and now generally photographs between 30-40 a year now, in addition to other photography sessions like portraits and headshots. Other photographer's experience varies, but our Associate Photographers have photographed at least 60 weddings, and our Assistant Photographers between 5 and 20.

Q: “How many weddings will you shoot on my wedding day?”

A: Only one – yours! Once you book your wedding, we don't allow any other bookings that day – so whether you have a 1hr or a 10hr wedding, the day is yours.

Q: “I am having an “*insert ethnic or cultural*” wedding – have you done this before?”

A: We have experience shooting many different ethnic, cultural or “fusion” weddings: modern Muslim, Hindu, and Jewish weddings; Greek Orthodox and Lebanese weddings; traditional Eastern European and Russian Orthodox weddings; we've even photographed a nudist wedding (once, and no, I don't recommend it). Not only do we work with you before the wedding to ensure every tradition or cultural moment is captured, but whenever possible, we study and learn more to exceed your expectations.

Q: “Have you shot at my venue before?”

A: We have shot at over 200 venues around the region, so there is a chance that we have! With over 4000 venues available in the Mid Atlantic, there is a huge chance we have not, so I will perform a thorough walkthrough prior to your wedding.

Q: “We are a same sex couple – is that a problem?”

A: We are proud to support marriage equality within the LGBT community.

Q: “Which Photographer will be shooting my wedding?”

A: 95% of the time the primary photographer will be the owner of Monumental Arts, however, we'll make the decision based on availability, language abilities, and your referral. For example, if Drake shot the wedding of your friend who referred you to us, he would likely be the one photographing your wedding or event. In addition, if you are wondering whether there are differences in style and quality between the photographers, their isn't - each of Monumental Arts' professional photographers are brought on board with certain styles and abilities already fitting with the overall style our Clients expect when they hire Monumental Arts!

Q: “Do you provide partial day or hourly coverage?”

A: ABSOLUTELY! We are one of the few photographers that provides hourly rates and inclusive Wedding Collections. We offer Petite Weddings from 1-4hrs and inclusive Wedding Collections starting at 4hrs up to 12hrs.

Q: “What is a Viewing & Ordering Session?”

A: Your Viewing & Ordering Session is the opportunity to sit down with you privately after the wedding day and show you your wedding images – and it's an opportunity to order enlargements and albums.

Q: "I don't live nearby you so I can't do a Viewing Session?"

A: No problem, all your images will be uploaded onto your private online gallery where you'll have an opportunity to buy enlargements and albums – we're used to having couples come to the DC area for destination weddings, and are happy to work with you to ensure you have full service with your wedding images!

Full Service Photography

Q: "Does your studio provide videography services?"

A: Yes, absolutely! I work with some of the best videographers specializing in events and weddings!

Q: "Do you do destination weddings? What additional fees are associated with destination weddings?"

A: While Monumental Arts is based out of the Washington, DC metro area, we serve clients all around the world, and have photographed along much of the East Coast for destination weddings. Our destination wedding photography packages are simply our standard collections plus the cost of travel, reasonable accommodations and a \$500 per diem. Email monumentalarts@outlook.com for details.

Q: "Does your studio do headshots, individual portraits, family portraits, commercial photography, boudoir, modeling, or other types of photography?"

A: Monumental Arts is Full Service - and as a Client, you'll always receive 10% off any future needs after you've booked us once!

Q: "Do you shoot Quinceaneras, Debutants, Bat/Bar Mitzvahs, or Corporate Events?"

A: Yes. These are all considered "event photography" and we would love to help you.

Q: "My niece/nephew received a drone last Christmas and it takes great pictures. Do you do drone photography?"

A: Bottom line, no. There are SEVERE restrictions in the DC metro area, national parks, stadiums, and airports, and these restrictions make it nearly impossible to fly a drone legally. If you still want a drone to overfly your wedding for still photos or video, I'm happy to suggest professional drone operators licensed by the FAA. If any photographer tells you otherwise, they do not know what they are talking about.

Consultations Questions

Q: "How do I set up an appointment to meet you in person and see some of your work?"

A: I offer convenient online booking at www.monumental-arts.genbook.com – this online booking platform lets you look at my availability and choose the best date and time for your consultation. It also gives you an opportunity to see the options I offer for different types of sessions, as well as reviews from recent Clients! You can also contact our owner and chief photographer at 1-800-687-9350 or email him at monumentalarts@outlook.com.

Q: "Do you travel to meet Clients?"

A: I prefer meeting at my studio and office in Fort Washington to best show you our many options, past weddings images, our enlargements and canvas prints, as well as our full studio setup, however, we know many people are busy and may need to meet at their office, at their home, or a friend's home. We will do what we can to accommodate your needs. Depending on certain ADA restrictions, we do not have wheelchair accessibility at our studio. We always recommend a late afternoon or early evening consultation, but we will meet you when we have availability to fit in your schedule.

Q: "We're really busy and won't be able to meet. Are there any other options?"

A: We would love to meet with you prior to your engagement shoot or wedding; however if you're too busy or too far away, we can handle everything remotely. Just call Monumental Arts about what you hope to achieve from that meeting and we can think of ways of achieving them. For example, if one of your goals is to see more work, we can gladly show you complete events online. If your goal is to talk

about packages and get a sense of the photographer's personality, telephone calls appointments can be arranged. Skype may also work!

Q: "We live out-of-town. Is it possible for our family/friends to meet with you instead?"

A: We'd love to meet your relatives or your bridal party contact locally, answer their question, and review our work with them. If possible, we'd like to at least talk with you to get to know you better. However, the contract we sign is between Monumental Arts and you and your significant other as our Client. This also applies to payment – regardless of who pays for the wedding photography, you and your significant other are our Clients.

Q: "Can we Skype?"

A: Although in person is best, we will schedule a Skype session if it works best for you – our Skype ID is monumentalarts@outlook.com.

Q: "Can I see a full event from start to finish?"

A: Of course you may! We pride ourselves on the consistency of our work. We understand all photographers put up their best shots from each wedding on their websites so it's hard to determine how well he or she will perform on the wedding day. That is why we encourage all of our potential clients to view full events from photographers they meet with to see how well the photographer performs throughout the day. Face to face meetings of course at the best!

Style Questions

Q: "What is your photography style?"

A: Monumental Arts is noted for a wedding photography style rooted in traditional and modern wedding photojournalism with Fine Art photography influence. We love using unique perspectives, angles, compositions and artistic post production refining to tell your wedding story. We pride ourselves on not just being photographers, but rather *artists creating unique and expressive imagery*. To see examples of our quality and style, please visit our Portfolio samples.

Q: "My venue is really dark. How does your studio handle these situations?"

A: We have shot in the darkest of dark chapels and reception halls so no need to worry! If the situation allows, we will set up additional lighting to ensure we get bright crisp pictures. Some chapels do not allow for flash photography; and for that reason, we shoot on professional cameras with superb low-light performance and lenses.

Q: "Are there style or quality difference among your photographers?"

A: No. We take every measure to ensure consistent style and quality among our photographers - the quality and style of photography you receive will be consistent.

Editing / Photo Shop / Retouching Questions

Q: "What do you mean by 'touching up' photos?"

A: "Touching up" or "retouching" in our studio is the same as basic editing in post production. See the question below for clarification.

Q: "Do you touch up or edit all the images – do you Photoshop?"

A: Every image we deliver is edited with our style of basic post production. This involves color correction, exposure adjustment, selective black and white processing, clarity adjustments, tone-mapping, and other corrections. In addition, this includes blemish and stray-hair removal, as well as softening/smoothing of some lines. Some photographers will not post produce any images, or will only post produce "select" images from your wedding. This means that you may have pictures that are too dark, have strange skin tones, or other common flaws.

Q: "What is the difference between basic and advanced post-production?"

A: Advanced post production is anything that requires extensive, custom work in Photoshop includes removal of bags under eyes, braces or "head swapping", removal of entire objects from the scene, changing the size and shape of body parts or other objects in the scene, adding objects to a scene, and other custom work. We charge per image for the custom post production, as the time required ranges depending on the complexity of the project. Please contact us for a quote for custom post production.

Q: "Do you deliver every image you shoot?"

A: We eliminate duplicate images, test shots, missed focused shots, shots with bad expressions and other images that may dilute the overall product delivery. For example, because we shoot with low apertures, sometimes we take a few extra shots to make sure we have the perfect focus. We don't expect you to have the expertise or the time to zoom into each image to select the one with the sharpest focus, so we spend hours doing that on our end. In another example, candid laughs and emotional tears are some of the best images from the day. Unfortunately, they can also yield some unflattering facial expressions. We might snap a few extras of any of these moments to make sure we have a great shot with the ideal expression for the moment. With our expertise of processing tens of thousands of images, we eliminate ones that we feel are duplicates and only deliver the best one.

Q: "What size can we print our photos up to with our high resolution images?"

A: In most cases, you can print high resolution images up to 30×40 without any quality loss. If you'd like to print larger than 30×40, additional post-production will be required. For pricing on these services, please contact us for more information.

Q: "Do you provide the digital negatives or RAW files from my engagement session and/or wedding day?"

A: Each of our packages comes with a retouched JPG images. However, we do not provide RAW (unprocessed) files from our shoots because we believe in delivering a finished product. In fact, we're often shooting with the end (post-produced) product in mind. However if you absolutely want your RAW images, we will provided them to you along with our post-produced JPG's for an additional fee of \$25,000 non-negotiable, which will include full copyright release to you as well. You will own the images and files.

Q: "Do you provide the 'digital negatives' after the shoot?"

A: All of our packages come with a password protected online gallery that contains the full resolution image.

Q: "Can I get a DVD of the images?"

A: Because we provide your images to you via your online gallery, there is an additional charge for image USBs or DVDs.

Viewing & Ordering Session Questions

Q: "I don't want my photos posted online, on Facebook or in a blog – do you offer privacy?"

A: We realize that weddings are intimate events and not all of our clients want their wedding posted, so we do *ensure privacy and offer a privacy clause within our contract if requested*. In addition, we also offer a non-disclosure clause for an additional fee.

Q: "Can I get all the JPEG and RAW files?"

A: No, we only provide our edited JPEG images.

Q: "Do you give the copyright?"

A: This is a complicated question, because most people mistake "copyright" with "print release". Monumental Arts will always maintain copyright – however, all images come with Web Release licensing, and all high-resolution images come with Print Release so you can print the image at any retail printing location. However, we make no quality guarantees about any retail printing (such as

Wal-Mart, CVS, etc), which is why we recommend using our commercial printing shop provided in your gallery. Your only limitation is that you cannot sell the image.

Q: "We are in a hurry to see our photos, can we rush the post-production"

A: Yes – for a cost.

Engagement Session Questions

Q: "When should we do our engagement session?"

A: We encourage you to do your engagement session as soon as possible. The latest we suggest is at least eight weeks prior to the wedding date due to the time necessary to post produce each image (4 weeks) and complete your product order(s) (1-4 weeks).

Q: "Can we schedule our engagement session for the weekend?"

A: We work with your schedule to book your session, whether it's a weekend or a week day, but if it's a weekend, we recommend Sundays as the better day. We also like to shoot on weekdays because locations are typically less crowded, evenings are usually best due to lighting.

Q: "When can we expect to see our photos from our engagement session?"

A: Post production for engagement sessions are completed within three weeks after the date of the shoot. If you require the images to be completed prior to three weeks after the date of the shoot, a rush-processing fee of 50% will be charged. If you want them finished in less than a week, there is a 100% rush processing fee (that's 100% of the cost).

Q: "When and where can we view our engagement pictures?"

A: We schedule a Viewing Session around the six-week time for you to view your images and place your initial orders. The image link and password will be sent to you following the Viewing Session. We can come to your home, place of work, or you can come to our office in Ft Washington, MD.

Q: "How many images do you typically deliver from an engagement session? From a wedding?"

A: We never give a minimum or maximum of images for any session, because we provide you the *best* images.

Q: "I really like it when you Photoshop our name and date into images, is that included in the package pricing?"

A: Custom save-the-date images are available and can be added on to any Collection. Or you can order prepared Save the Date cards from your gallery.

Q: "How do I get started on my engagement album or guest book?"

A: We will walk you through every step during the Viewing Session. Plus, we provide you a form to help you decide which images you want in your guest book or engagement album.

Wedding Day Questions

Q: "How many hours do you suggest we set aside for wedding day photos?"

A: The amount of time we suggest you set aside for photos depends on the time of day, wedding party size, family size, and the location of the "formal photo" time, first look, reception, and any travel time – always keep in mind travel time between any location. Here are some good estimates:

Preparation Shots – Duration: 1 – 2hours

Ideally we would have 1hr with the bride and 1hr with the groom – but this can overlap with two photographers. This can involve getting the dress on, family or cultural traditions, makeup and hair touchup, individual and group shots, as well as fun time with the bridal party before the wedding ceremony.

Couples Session and/or First Look- Duration: 1 hour to 2 hours

We highly suggest doing this before the ceremony in conjunction with a “first look.” That way you can enjoy the rest of your day without having to worry about taking too much time out for photos. Also this is when the makeup and hair are fresh. We’ll set up a first look moment so it’ll still be a surprise when you see each other. Be sure to give us at least a full hour so we can capture the amazing shots you see in our portfolio.

Ceremony – Duration: 5 minutes to 1.5 hour

The ceremony portion can last as long as you and your officiant want it to.

Family Formals – Duration: 0.5 hour to 1 hour

I will have a list of pictures that you want with your family/friends right after the ceremony. Typically this is done at the altar but we can do it any location you’d like. Also, have one person from each side of the family that is really organized (and loud) to move people in and out of photos.

Bridal Party & Couples Formals – Duration: 0.5 hour to 1.5 hours

This is where we take the bridal party out for some fun shots. An option is to schedule this during the cocktail hour or between the end of the ceremony and the start of the reception. This is also nice to handle before the ceremony so that you can rest and enjoy your day afterwards.

Reception – Duration: 1 hour to 6 hours

The amount of time the photographer is at your reception is dependent on the activities planned – cocktail hour, dinner and dancing, father/daughter & mother/son dances, traditional “wedding party” events, bouquet and garter toss, and cake cutting, as well as the formal exit, sparklers, rice toss, etc. We are happy to work with you to minimize the amount of time a photographer is at your reception (thus reducing the cost to you).

Q: “I have a lot of downtime in between events on my wedding day. Will I be charged for that downtime?”

A: Our quoted are for continuous time. The fact is, photographers never truly resting during the wedding day: whether we’re backing up images, traveling to the second location, setting up for the second venue, taking venue or detail shots like the rings or decorations, or making up for lost time because of inevitable wedding day delays. In many cases, we use that “downtime” to take you and your significant other out for a photo session or more family portraits. However, if there is several hours between the end of one event and the start of the next, we will work out some options.

Q: “What happens if we go over the contracted amount of time?”

A: We understand that not everything goes as planned during a wedding. We never pack up before the contracted time; and moreover we’re not leaving on the dot when the contracted time is up. Instead, we will ask you near the end of your contracted time whether or not you would like to extend. If you would like us to stay, we will charge via an invoice the rates specified in your contract rounded to the closest 30 minute increment.

Q: “Why do we need to charge for additional coverage?”

A: We’ve dedicated our professional time and expertise to your wedding. However, we need to charge for additional coverage primarily because there are costs of having the team stay for additional hours, including supplementary compensation for the photographer(s) and any assistants we bring. Furthermore, the additional images taken all need to be post produced, adding to our overall costs.

Albums, Prints & Photo Books Questions

Q: “How long does it take to get my prints?”

A: Product creation times vary, however in general, print orders will be shipped within 1-7 days after the product order is submitted. Priority shipping is available.

Q: "How long does it take to get my album or guest book?"

A: As with our other products, production times vary. However you can expect to receive your album 4-6 weeks after approving your order. The process before placing the order varies in duration depending on how quickly you respond to the instructions for the album design as well as the amount of changes you request after the initial designs, sent to you via PDF "proof". Some brides complete this within a month or two, others take over a year. Similar to the post production process, if you require rush-processing, a 25% RUSH fee will be charged. Additional fees for rush shipping may also apply.

Q: "How many pages and images do we get in our wedding day album?"

A: Our heirloom albums are 8x8 for 20 pages, 10x10 for 24 pages, and 12x12 for 30 pages. Generally, each page is 1-3 images, or 1-6 across two pages (one sheet). If you'd like to add more pages and images, each additional sheet can be added at additional cost and includes the design time/revisions and three retouched images.

Q: "Can I add more pages and images to my album?"

A: Each additional page can be added for additional cost and includes the design time/revisions and retouched images.

Q: "Do you provide framing services as well?"

A: Absolutely, just ask!

Q: "How do I get started on my wedding album?"

A: We will walk you through every step during the Viewing Session. Plus, we provide you a form to help you decide which images you want in your heirloom album.

Equipment questions

Q: "What type of camera/equipment do you use?"

A: Monumental Arts only uses Canon-authorized professional-grade camera bodies and lenses. We have at least 2 backup cameras and full set of lenses with us at all times, as well as all the extra equipment necessary, such as memory cards, rechargeable batteries, flashes, stands and lighting, and any other equipment we may need during your wedding.

Q: "I really want to know what equipment you use?"

A: You are welcome to call and we will "talk shop" so you know that I know about my gear and equipment – we can talk about the 8 camera bodies I own, or the 12 lenses, or the backup gear, or the backup gear to the backup gear. We can talk about my Emergency Kit I bring to every wedding. We can talk about my process for saving your images and keeping everything backed up. I'm an open book.

Image backup questions

Q: "Do you backup our images? How can we ensure that our images won't be lost?"

A: We have never lost an image from a wedding due to the following backup workflow for each our events: During the shoot, we change out our memory cards following each major event throughout the day. After the shoot, we back up the CF card to a local drive, while archiving the CF card until final images are delivered. Once the images are completed we copy the images to an offsite location and save another copy for our archives. At any given point, there are two copies of the files. Following image delivery, we destroy all RAW files and archive the final JPG images "forever".

Insurance, Tax & Legal Questions

Q: "Do you have liability insurance?"

A: Yes, we are a professional business, and make sure we are legal. Many venues require the photographer to have proof of Liability Insurance. So before hiring "Uncle Joe", make sure he's got insurance. Insurance is ultimately for YOUR protection.

Q: "What rights do I have to the digital prints?"

A: You have what's called "Personal Use" of your images. You have the right to digitally post your images whenever you want, wherever you want. However you may never sell your images for a profit nor publish your images for a contest or profit without the written consent of Monumental Arts, as Monumental Arts holds the copyright.

Payment Questions

Q: "How do I reserve you for my date?"

A: All dates are reserved once we receive your signed contract and Retainer. I offer convenient online booking at www.monumental-arts.genbook.com.

Q: "What if we exceed our contracted time for our engagement shoot and/or wedding day coverage?"

A: Standard rates apply for overtime. This is written into your contract and will be invoiced following the wedding. No images will be released until total payment is made.

Q: "Is there an additional fee if we pay via credit card or PayPal?"

A: Never - we want to ensure you are offered convenience to pay.

Q: "If we cancel the wedding, will we receive our Retainer back?"

A: No. Retainers are not a deposit and are non-refundable as they retain services and pricing.

Q: "If we change our wedding to a different date, will we be able to use our payment towards a future date?"

A: Yes, but with three caveats - 1) assuming we are available, 2) it's more than three months from your wedding date, and 3) you can only change the date once. If any of these criteria are met, then we cannot help you on your new date without the loss of the retainer.

Q: "Are there travel fees associated with the Engagement Session and/or Wedding Day shoot(s)?"

A: Travel fees are included in our initial negotiations - however, a general rule of thumb is the "counties" within the DC metro area are included (DC; Fairfax, Arlington, Loudoun, Prince William, Faquire, and Stafford counties plus the City of Fredericksburg in Virginia; PG, Montgomery, St Charles, Frederick, and Howard, Anne Arundel counties, plus Baltimore City/County and Kent Island in Maryland). All other session destinations not mentioned and/or beyond 125 miles roundtrip are to be negotiated and will be handled on a situational basis.

Q: "Why do you charge travel fees?"

A: Travel fees are not intended to nickel and dime our Clients. The primary purpose is to provide adequate compensation for our photographers and assistants for the additional time spent in travel. Trips beyond the Beltway, for example, can take over 2 hours each way, time for which we have to compensate our team. For this reason, coupled with the costs of reimbursing the team for the actual costs of travel, these fees are unfortunately necessary.

Q: "Do you offer any discounts on weekday weddings, Sunday weddings, or weddings during the offseason?"

A: We do not offer discounts on Sunday or weekday weddings. "Wedding season" is year round here in the DC metro area, so because of that we are shooting throughout the year. We also cannot offer discounts on weekday weddings, as all of the costs (second photographer rates, etc) associated with the wedding remain the same.

Q: "If I pay for my package in cash will we be able to avoid paying sales tax or receive a discounts?"

A: Unfortunately, collecting in cash does not exempt a photography studio from paying tax on the amount of the entire package price when a physical product is delivered, whether that product be an album, image DVD or any other physical product. However, all taxes are included in all products delivered, so there is no extra costs to you.

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STILL didn't answer your question? Please call 1-800-687-9350 and we'll discuss further!