



DESTINATION
Weddings

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WELCOME & Congrats

Congratulations on your recent nuptials and decision to have a Destination Wedding.

One in every 4 weddings is now a destination wedding so you are not alone in this decision. This is going to be one of the most special and exciting days of your life, one that you're going to want to remember forever. While there are a lot of different aspects to think about as you plan your destination wedding once everything starts coming together, all the time and effort that you put in will be well worth it.

Choosing the right destination and wedding location is going to be one of the biggest decisions you'll make while planning your wedding. Your destination wedding will be one of the most important and intimate days of your life, ensuring that you can look back on every beautiful moment years from now.

Destination Weddings have become increasingly popular these days and we doubt they are going anywhere anytime soon. It doesn't matter whether you're having a larger gathering or a more intimate affair, we're excited to be part of your special day, and to help you capture the joyful moments to remember for years to come. You deserve a picture-perfect wedding - the one you have been envisioning ever since you got engaged.

Whether you're planning a destination wedding, an intimate elopement, or a micro-wedding, we hope you will enjoy the tips in this guide as we help you bring your dream wedding day to life.

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Destination Weddings 101

WHAT EVERY COUPLE NEEDS TO KNOW

A Destination Wedding does not need to be overseas or International. In fact the definition of a destination wedding is that the wedding will take place 100+ miles from your hometown.

If inviting family and friends to travel with you to help celebrate your special day is important to you then you need to plan and send out save the dates ideally 6-18 months in advance. This way you allow the guests enough time to plan, save and book time off work if needed.

Select a destination that is easy to get to. Guests are more likely to attend, and they will be happy once they get there. Research has shown that guests attending a destination wedding will stay on average 3-5 days. Understand that cost, dates, time and distance will play a major role in how many guests attend.

If you decide to do a Destination Wedding in an international destination, will all guests be able to obtain a passport? A passport is the required legal document to enter any other country.

Typically, if you follow the above guidelines, approximately 30 – 40% of your guest invitees will attend your destination wedding.





Research the marriage requirements and laws before you select your destination. Each country and state have their own requirements, which can also change often. Make sure you are aware of what those requirements are before making that decision.



Work with a Destination Wedding travel specialist or hire a wedding planner. Interview them and ask questions about their experience and how many destination weddings they have planned. Ask them for testimonials from couples / resorts they have previously worked with.

A Destination Wedding specialist should have a trusted network of hotel and venue partners and will be able to negotiate group deals and room rates as well as negotiate and package together the entire wedding event costs.

Create a customized wedding website that you can share all the wedding ceremony and destination details with your invited guests.



Bespoke Travel Group offers a free wedding website and honeymoon gift registry to all our couples on www.bespoketravelgroup.honeymoonwishes.com.

<https://bespoketravelgroup.weddingdaycalendar.com/>

Many resorts offer day of planning / coordination, but it takes lots of organization and pre planning to have an unforgettable wedding experience and be married in a country that you have never been to before. The destination wedding specialist should be able to recommend a list of partnered hotels and resorts that they work with and in destination vendors that they work with, so that you do not have to research and source these on your own.

If time and budget allow, try to arrange a pre-visit or pre-stay to the destination / hotel that you will get married at. This can help ease concerns and you can meet the wedding team and vendors before the big day. You can also get a better idea and feel for the destination and any potential issues or challenges so you can work around these and always have a plan B.

Destination Wedding locations in the Caribbean, Hawaii and Mexico tend to be hot and humid. Try to choose an early morning or late afternoon ceremony time to avoid the hottest part of the day. If you must have a ceremony at the high of the sun then look for a location that at least offers some shade or provide shade and colorful handheld fans for guests.

Check out samples of the professional photographers work in destination. Photo and video will be the only tangible things you can have of your wedding day. Make sure you have a good understanding of the creative style and memories that they are going to capture. Ask about the process and procedures they will follow on the day and in particular their experience of your resort / location as they should have expert knowledge of the best photo locations.

Find local gifts and favors that reflect the authenticity of the destination to give to your guests as a thank you and memorable trinket of your special day. Think Wine in Italy, Macadamia nuts in Hawaii, Appleton Rum in Jamaica, Tequila or Agave in Mexico. Welcome gifts and bags are a lovely way to say thank you to your guests for attending.

Saving on costs is probably one of the reasons you want to have a destination wedding., but this doesn't mean you shouldn't create a budget. There will still be some costs, including traveling to your destination, hotel accommodation, the wedding license, marriage certificate, wedding flowers, décor, video, photographer, hair and makeup, DJ / entertainment and food and drink reception cost.



DESTINATION WEDDING

Timeline Tips

A timeline is just as important for Destination Weddings as it is for traditional weddings, knowing that things are flowing as they should on the day will make your special day even more enjoyable. The less stress, the better.

DESTINATION WEDDING TIMELINE TIPS

- + Start with the most important things. Every couple is different when it comes to what matters the most. For example, if sunset shots are the most important to you, work your timeline around them. Give more time to the things you value and the rest can be scheduled in between
- + Plan in advance. Your timeline is not something you should leave for the month before your wedding. Try to put a timeline together at least 6 months ahead of time, ensuring you have room to make changes and for vendors to make suggestions.
- + Keep an open mind. As we have learned in the last year or so, things can change at any moment. When creating your timeline, be flexible, some things will more than likely need to be switched around.

DESTINATION WEDDING

Timeline Examples

This is a very basic timeline is based on a resort/hotel summer destination wedding:

- + 11am - 4pm: Bridal Hair, Makeup, and Getting Ready (Include Photos with Bridal Party)
- + 4:15pm: First Look
- + 4:30-5pm: Ceremony begins
- + 5-6:30pm: Cocktail reception, appetizers allows time for Couple and Family Photos
- + 6:30-11pm: Dinner and Wedding Reception

If you want to be very specific, your timeline could look more like this:

- + 10-11am: Wake Up and Breakfast with Bridal Party
- + 10am: Resort / vendors Start with Setup
- + 11 - 1pm: Hair and Makeup for Bridal Party
- + 12am: Photographer Arrives for Getting Ready Photos
- + 1 - 4pm: Bridal Hair, Makeup, and Getting Ready (Incl Photos with Bridal Party)
- + 4:15pm: First Look
- + 4:30-5pm: Ceremony
- + 5-6:30pm: Couple and Family Photos, Cocktail reception and appetizers
- + 5:30pm: Guests enter Reception venue and Live music starts
- + 6:30 - 7:30pm: Cocktails and First Dance
- + 7:30-8:30 pm: Dinner
- + 8:30-9:30pm: Cake Cutting and Toasts
- + 9:30-11pm: Dancing

Just as there is no specific wedding formula, no two destination wedding timelines are the same. Make the day what you want it to be. Plus, with fewer guests, you can enjoy far more flexibility.

THE DOS & DON'TS OF PLANNING YOUR

elopement

DO IT BECAUSE IT'S WHAT YOU WANT

Elope because that's what you and your partner really want to do, not to make a statement. Eloping can eliminate a lot of the usual costs and fuss associated with weddings. It also rules out any family drama - at least on the day anyway. Think twice about your decision to elope and then start getting excited.

DO MAKE IT SPECIAL

Just because your guest list is two people long doesn't mean your day will be any less special. There are so many ways to make this day even more memorable. From dining at a fancy restaurant and writing personalized vows, to ordering that delicious cake you've had your eye on. This day can be whatever you and your partner want it to be.

DO PICK A DISTINCT LOCATION

Wherever you elope, make sure the location means something to you both. Whether you want to head to court in your best outfits or plan a romantic trip to Paris, choose a location or destination you will remember forever. If you are traveling far make sure you are aware of any legalities and requirements for eloping there.

DO WEAR SOMETHING GLAMOROUS

You don't need a big white dress if you don't want to, but you should both look and feel great on the day of your wedding - you will have a photographer after all. You can even add some personalized touches such as your grandma's locket to make

DO PLAN YOUR REVEAL

Revealing your destination wedding or elopement is an exciting moment, so give it some thought before you make the big announcement. How can you make it your own? How can you incorporate your unique personalities into the reveal? If you don't want a big reveal, you can simply share the news with those closest to you using one of your professional photos.

DO CREATE A BUDGET

Saving on costs is probably one of the reasons you want to elope, but this doesn't mean you shouldn't create a budget. There will still be some costs, including traveling to your destination, the wedding license, your photographer, hair and makeup, and any food and accommodation.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE LEGALITIES

Wherever you decide to have a destination wedding or elope, make sure you have a thorough understanding of the legalities. This includes the steps to take before getting married and the documentation you will need. Know the difference between a legal ceremony and a symbolic ceremony. The last thing you want is to run into issues on the day of your wedding.

DON'T FEEL GUILTY

It's natural to experience some guilt when you decide to have a destination wedding or elope. However, you need to remember this is about you and your partner, nobody else. You always have the option to celebrate with those closest to you after the wedding, so get excited about your choice.

DON'T MEET YOUR WEDDING PLANNER OR VENDORS ON THE DAY

Try to meet your officiant, photographer, and any other vendors you decide to use prior to your wedding day. It's essential that you get along with anyone who will share in this day with you. They should also understand your needs ahead of time, ensuring you get what you want.

DON'T FORGO THE TIMELINE

Destination Wedding planning and Elopements might not be as detailed and busy a day as a traditional wedding, but you should still have a plan of action. Your wedding planner and photographer will also expect some sort of a timeline from you - it doesn't need to be complicated, but it should be in place.

DON'T CHOOSE A DRESS

Because that is the "In" style or designer right now. Choose a dress that compliments your body and accentuates your best features. Remember that most locations will be hot and humid, and a heavy layered dress will be most uncomfortable after a short time. Go shopping with a friend or family member you know will be honest with you.

DON'T EXPECT GIFTS

Since guests are making a hefty investment of time and money to attend your destination wedding, it's best not to expect any gifts. Consider a honeymoon gift registry if anyone insists on giving you a wedding gift. If anyone does

HOW SHOULD I TRAVEL ON A PLANE WITH MY WEDDING DRESS?

Traveling with a destination wedding dress can seem tricky, and perhaps even a bit stressful. But it doesn't have to be. To ensure your gown makes it to your destination safely, we recommend either having it with you in your carry-on, or better yet, taking your dress on board the airplane in a garment bag. Most airlines will accommodate wedding couples by allowing them to hang their day-of attire in the closet for you. It's always a good idea to call ahead and see what their policies are, to make sure you have all your ducks in a row. Then, simply sit back and enjoy the ride to paradise!

SECURE TRAVEL AND WEDDING INSURANCE

When it comes to getting married in a foreign location, it's best to expect the unexpected. Investing in travel protection and or wedding insurance will help protect your financial investment and offer some emotional assurance—plus, some venues even require it. It's best to sign up well in advance (though some companies can accommodate a tight turnaround) and get crystal-clear on what policies there are and the type of coverage you're signing up for.

HAVE A BACK UP PLAN

When choosing your destination wedding venue always ask for the back up plan of ceremony and reception locations in the event of inclement weather. Of course the dream is to be married under clear blue skies, but sometimes Mother nature has other ideas. It can be possible to stall the ceremony time for a while but better to know there is a back up plan just in case.

BE PATIENT

Be Patient - Don't keep a constant eye on the clock. Remember that many tropical islands run on "island time"—things happen when they happen—so don't mistake a vendor's laid-back attitude for incompetence. Avoid the temptation to micromanage from afar. Instead, schedule regular check-ins and then trust your destination wedding planner to work their magic.



SAMPLE WEDDING PACKAGE

Pricing

LUXURY WEDDING

from \$10,500 and includes up to 40 guests, choice of beach or garden location, ceremony officiant, solo musician, wedding ceremony décor, cocktail hour with open bar and served appetizers, Full private reception dinner served with three course menu, bridal hair and make-up, bridal bouquet and boutonniere, private romantic dinner on beach for couple, 50-minute couples massage and much more.



PRIVATE ISLAND WEDDING

from \$5,000 and includes private wedding ceremony on a secluded lush tropical island, Wedding officiant, Up to 40 adult only guests, One-hour open bar with hot and cold appetizers, two tiered designer wedding cake, romantically decorated ceremony gazebo, fresh bridal bouquet and boutonniere, deluxe 2 hour photo shoot and up to 24 printed photos, 25 minute couples, private dinner on beach for couple and much more.



LAVISH WEDDING

from \$5,100 choice of wedding ceremony locations, Wedding officiant, Up to 20 guests, Private one hour open bar with hot and cold appetizers, Private three hour wedding reception including 3 course plated dinner, white linens, open bar, waiter staff and place settings, designer wedding cake, romantically decorated ceremony gazebo, fresh bridal bouquet and boutonniere, deluxe 2 hour photo shoot and up to 24 printed photos, 25 minute couples, private dinner on beach for couple and much more.



VOW RENEWAL

from \$399 and includes, choice of beach or tropical garden ceremony locations, up to 10 guests, wedding officiant, renewal certificate, fresh bridal bouquet and boutonniere, wedding cake for up to 10 guests, private dinner on beach for 2, couples massage and much more.

ELOPEMENT

from \$500 and includes, choice of beach or tropical garden ceremony locations, wedding officiant, marriage certificate, floral bouquet, wedding cake for 2, private dinner on beach for 2, couples massage and much more.





**YOUR
DAY
YOUR
WAY**

WHY YOU SHOULD HIRE A PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHER FOR YOUR DESTINATION WEDDING

A destination wedding may be different from a traditional wedding in many ways but that doesn't mean you should skip out on hiring a professional photographer.

REGARDLESS OF THE SIZE OF YOUR CELEBRATION,
IT DESERVES TO BE CAPTURED AND REMEMBERED.

It may be tempting to cut costs and ask a friend or family member to photograph or video your event. Yes, they may take great selfies or own a digital camera, but this does not mean they know how to take good wedding photos. Plus, your guests are there to celebrate and enjoy the day with you.

There are several reasons why hiring a professional photographer is a must for your destination wedding

- + They have experience shooting weddings of all sizes and styles. They know which moments to look out for and how to capture the emotion of the day.
- + They have professional equipment that is serviced regularly. There is nothing like the peace of mind that comes with knowing you will not be left without any photos of your big day.
- + Then there's the editing. A professional photographer has the skills necessary to give you print-worthy photos that you can display in your home or add to an album.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR

Destination Wedding

MORE MEMORABLE

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