

THE DESTINATION WEDDING WORKBOOK

Introduction

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Would you like to get married on your honeymoon? Destination weddings are becoming more and more popular with couples who are eager to skip the fuss of a traditional wedding and jump right into the fun. Around the world, you'll find hotels and resorts that offer on-site help to plan your wedding, from details like the wedding license to extras such as music and photos. Whether the special day involves just the two of you or whether you'll be inviting friends and relatives to join in the occasion, getaway weddings can be a way to create wonderful memories.

For some couples, destination weddings are a way to avoid the over US\$26,000 presently spent on an average wedding while at the same time enjoying all the fun and excitement of a honeymoon in one easy package. For other couples, it's a way to avoid all the fuss of a traditional wedding with its countless details while still planning an event you'll always remember. For other brides and grooms, a destination wedding is a chance to throw an extravagant event with all the bells and whistles of a ceremony at home but in a destination where friends and family can come from around the world and enjoy both your ceremony and time together in a spectacular location.

Whatever type of destination wedding appeals to the two of you, we hope that you'll find plenty of ideas in this workbook. We have compiled this book following hundreds of interviews with wedding planners, hotel managers, food and beverage managers, travel agents, and brides just like you.

Work through this book together and, like the life that lies ahead of you, tackle the questions one by one to create a day that you'll always remember.

On the following pages, you'll find worksheets, timelines, lists, and questions for the two of you to ask each other and the professionals who will help make your wedding dreams come true. These worksheets will provide a handy way to keep your information organized. When it comes time to travel to your destination wedding, this guide will provide a central source for all your important information—from airline confirmation numbers to the phone number of your wedding coordinator. Toss this book in your suitcase and you'll have all the information you need to get your wedding plans in high gear.

All-Inclusive Resort Weddings

All-inclusive resorts mean that one price pays all. You'll pay in advance for not only your room but your meals, drinks, taxes, watersports, entertainment, airport transfers, and more. All-inclusive resorts also offer wedding packages; a few are free and most are very reasonable. Most of these properties have wedding planners on staff to help you with all the details.

Are we OK about the idea of a wedding on the resort property? yes no

Most all-inclusives arrange for weddings on the property grounds. If you would like to get married elsewhere, you may have to hire a local wedding coordinator. Check with your potential resort to see if they can help you arrange weddings off property if that's your interest.

What does the all-inclusive package include?

- officiant's fee marriage license services of wedding coordinator bride's bouquet champagne
 witnesses, if needed transportation to government offices, if needed groom's boutonniere
 recorded music small wedding cake photos: _____

Do we want more than what is offered in the wedding package? yes no

What is the minimum stay for the wedding package? _____ nights

How many weddings are performed at this resort every year? _____

How many weddings are typically performed in a day at this resort during the month of our wedding? _____

If individuality is important or if your ceremony and reception will require special attention, check with the property on the number of weddings they host. Will you be one of five weddings at the resort that day or will yours be the only one?

What venues are available for receptions? What are the minimum and maximum guest sizes for each venue?

Reception site 1: Minimum # guests _____ Maximum # guests _____

Reception site 2: Minimum # guests _____ Maximum # guests _____

Reception site 3: Minimum # guests _____ Maximum # guests _____

How long can we have this reception site? _____

Make sure you'll be able to keep the reception site as long as you need it; hotels that have booked many functions may only be able to allow you to keep the facility for a few hours.

How are these venues typically decorated?

What are our options for champagne and other drinks at the reception? _____

What is the per person reception cost? _____

Is there a curfew on property? yes no

Some properties have a curfew for outdoor functions so other guests can sleep. If you're planning a late-night party, consider an outdoor cocktail function and an indoor reception or an outdoor reception and an indoor meal and music.

Guests at All-Inclusive Weddings

At one time, destination weddings were primarily a ceremony for the couple themselves, occasionally accompanied by a pair of close friends to serve as witnesses. Today, however, with families spread out across great distances, more and more destination weddings are including a number of guests. Wedding parties often find it just as easy (and sometimes simpler) to meet at a vacation destination for a wedding than to travel to the couple's hometown.

What are the resort's guest restrictions? _____

Some all-inclusive resorts are for couples only so this rule will apply to day guests as well. Some all-inclusives are adults-only, permitting only guests age 18 and over (or age 16 in a few cases).

Would we like our guests to stay in other nearby resorts? yes no

You may not want to bump into your guests throughout your honeymoon. Sometimes the bride and groom stay at one property and the guests at a sister resort. You'll have the option to get together for a meal or a drink but you won't feel like you've got your guests looking over your shoulder throughout your honeymoon.

What is the fee for non-guests? _____

Guests who are not staying at the resort typically purchase a "day pass" or a "night pass," depending on the time of your wedding and reception. This pass typically allows the visitor to enjoy the same privileges as a guest, from drinks to meals.

What hours does this guest pass cover? _____

Resort Comparison Worksheet

	Resort #1	Resort #2	Resort #3
Name			
Location			
Per night cost			
Adults only?			
Couples only?			
Distance from airport			
On site wedding planner?			
Cost of wedding package			
Min. stay for wedding package			
# weddings performed daily			
Weddings site options			
Reception included in package?			
Beach?			
Nightclub?			
Favorite sports in all-inclusive package?			
What we like about this resort			

Hotel Weddings

Aside from resorts, traditional hotels also offer wedding packages. These come in all shapes and sizes, from two-person ceremonies to grand affairs with many guests. Many of the same questions that apply to all-inclusives will apply to hotels as well.

How many weddings are performed at this property every year? _____

This question is a trade-off. On the one hand, you want the property to be skilled in planning a wedding, no matter how complex. (Although hotels may have plenty of facilities, some may typically use those facilities for meetings, not for weddings.)

On the other hand, you don't want your wedding to feel like part of an assembly line.

Is there an on-site wedding coordinator? yes no

While most all-inclusive resorts have on-site wedding coordinators, many hotels rely on local wedding coordinators, which can be a separate cost for the couple. Or properties may have a person on staff who handles weddings but that person's responsibilities may also include groups or conventions. Check to see if the hotel staff person is a dedicated wedding planner; if not, you may be better off hiring a local wedding planner if your wedding will involve many arrangements.

How many weddings are typically performed in a day at this property during the month of our wedding? _____

Resort Wedding Coordinators

Many resorts have staff members who handle all the in-house wedding arrangements, from paperwork to photography. These in-house coordinators work for the resort and are usually limited to wedding sites at the resort itself. Usually the services of the resort wedding coordinator are part of the wedding package itself, a savings over hiring an independent wedding coordinator.

Will you be on site the day of our wedding? yes no

Will you be attending the ceremony? yes no

How many other weddings will be held the day of our ceremony? _____

Some resorts run weddings on an assembly line basis, especially during June. If you don't want to be one of four or five weddings on property that day, check before booking.

Can we set up a rehearsal? yes no

Are we limited to particular sites on the property for our ceremony or may we have the ceremony anywhere on the resort grounds? yes no

Will we meet the wedding officiant before the ceremony? yes no

Can you help us arrange a religious ceremony? yes no

May children attend the wedding? yes no

Many adults-only resorts do not permit children on property.

Is there a minimum age for children allowed on property at this facility or resort? yes Age _____ no

Some properties that do allow children require a minimum age of 16 or 18.

What individual items should we add to the wedding package?

imported flowers flowers for guests local band soloist seating for guests aisle runner
 flowers for showering cake champagne photo package reception

Is there a per guest fee for non-resort guests? yes no

What hours does this fee cover? _____

For guests who would like to remain on property and party through the evening, what is the cost of a night pass?

How late do night activities continue? _____

Can you show us photos of the floral arrangements used at the site and at receptions? yes no

Are there photos online or can you email us photos? yes no