

Honeymoons



Honeymoons too often take a backseat to the arrangements and plans of the actual wedding, but you owe it to yourself to give honeymoon planning greater and more careful attention. After all, while the wedding is mainly for your family and friends, the once-in-a-lifetime honeymoon that follows is a private getaway for you and your new spouse to celebrate your marriage. Though you may spend a portion of your vacation relaxing and reflecting on this major life change, the honeymoon is most of all an opportunity to enjoy being a newlywed, spending quality

time with your new spouse, and experiencing a romantic and exciting getaway.

Honeymooners have endless options. Following months of wedding planning, couples often retreat to a luxurious resort that caters to their every need, while others trek to an adventurous escape from their day-to-day lives. Whether a beach vacation, a safari, or a ski trip, the honeymoon should reflect your joint personality and wishes.

Keep in mind that perfect honeymoons don't just happen, and planning requires thoughtfulness, patience, careful attention to details, and a lot of decision-making along the way. The more homework you do before leaving for your honeymoon, the more you will enjoy your special vacation.

Top Honeymoon Hotspots

Your honeymoon can be the most romantic trip you'll ever take, and it can also be a lot of fun. Look for a destination that offers everything you want. Remember that there is no "ideal" destination - the personality of you and your partner will determine where on the planet your honeymoon should be. However, the following locations traditionally are considered the greatest spots to honeymoon and top many newlyweds' travel wish-lists.

Hawaii - Hawaii remains the number one destination for honeymoons year after year because of its romantic sunsets, magnificent beaches, and luxurious hotels. Visitors to Hawaii can also conveniently hop from island to island to experience



just about any climate and adventure under the sun, including kayaking, mountain climbing, surfing, scuba, and even hiking in a rainforest.



Mexico - From the Yucatan peninsula to the Pacific Coast, Mexico is all at once romantic, adventurous, and laidback. A collection of spectacular land- and seascapes larger than almost anywhere else in the world, reasonably priced attractions and an easy-to-reach location make a Mexico vacation hard to beat. Honeymooners can enjoy a wide variety of activities, including eco-tourism, water sports, horseback riding, diving, and touring ancient Mexican ruins.

The Caribbean - The islands of the Caribbean have long been favorites for honeymooners. While we mention a few below by name, your travel consultant can assist you with destination materials that provide a wealth of information for helping you choose the perfect spot.

Bahamas - With over 700 separate islands, you'll find numerous resorts with all the water sports, pampering, night clubs, fine dining, casinos, and beaches you could possibly want. Many amazing islands in the Bahamas can also be visited easily in one trip by booking a cruise. If you're seeking a truly romantic paradise for your upcoming honeymoon, look closely at the Bahamas.

Jamaica - If you're eager to just get away and relax after hectic wedding planning, Jamaica is the place to be. From the famous reggae music festivals to the beautiful shorelines, it's easy to get into the Jamaican state of mind. Whether you stay on the island in a luxurious resort or simply visit for a couple of hours on a cruise ship stop, Jamaica's culture of fun, sun, and romance will make you feel welcome.

Bermuda - Bermuda is a truly sightseer's delight, and couples are encouraged to rent a moped or take public transportation to see all the sights. Offering an array of ocean activities and charming historic towns, Bermuda provides a romantic and mysterious escape to an era of class and grace.

U.S. Virgin Islands - Replete with sailing, snorkeling, sports fishing, and tons of shopping, honeymooners have long been attracted to the Virgin Islands for an active escape.

Tahiti and the South Pacific - These islands are becoming an increasingly popular destination for couples (including celebrities) seeking an exclusive honeymoon experience and are the closest most ever get to a private island retreat. The sheer beauty and history of the land and the people allows couples to participate in awe-inspiring eco-tourism and cultural activities. Many also opt to stay in traditional style burés, some of which are directly over the water, to take advantage of the unparalleled views.

Continental U.S. - Many couples are drawn to distinctive locations throughout the United States. California, one of the most

popular, offers marvels ranging from San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge to the glamour of Hollywood. Las Vegas, Nevada, always draws a lively crowd. Its incredible range of world-class hotels, casinos, entertainment, and shopping venues gives honeymooners an exciting vacation from home. New York, Florida, and Colorado are also very popular destinations for honeymooners, as they offer fun and romantic tourist attractions that welcome visitors year-round. Traveling within the U.S. is an excellent opportunity to experience the unique diversity for which America is world-renowned.

Europe - Europe has always been high on honeymooners' lists, in part because of the distinctiveness of each country and the many destinations couples can visit during their trip. From the majestic views of the snow-covered Alps to the Eiffel tower in Paris, Europe is filled with unforgettable history and romance.

Australia and New Zealand - If you're looking for outdoor adventure both above and below the ocean bed, you'll love the exceptional beauty of these lands. From snorkeling and scuba diving to bush treks and mountain climbing, honeymooners won't find any more high-energy activities than these locations offer.

Planning a Hassle-Free Honeymoon

If you and your fiancé are just beginning to think about your honeymoon plans, a good place to start is agreeing on a specific destination. A recommended way to do this is to sit down together and compile a list of your top dream vacations. Choosing a destination and an itinerary that really works for your personality is also key. It's easy to get overwhelmed at this stage, since you have so many possibilities, but you can narrow down the options by deciding if you'd prefer a tropical beach, big city, or a place known for adventure travel. Also consider if you want



warm or cool weather, a distant land or someplace closer to home, a vibrant location with people to meet, or seclusion, where it will just be the two of you. Speak with your travel consultant about all of your honeymoon ideas, and consider including adventurous and unusual travel themes along with more popular options like mass market cruises and all-inclusive resorts.

Also remember that you may need to psychologically accommodate to your new status as a partner and a spouse, and with proper planning and smart travel choices, you can enhance your opportunity to bond without undue stress over logistics or other complications. Your travel consultant can always develop a customized honeymoon that provides not just a vacation experience, but a real journey for the two of you set in a locale that reflects your personalities and values.

Once you've decided where you want to go, your next step is to make a budget. Find out if you have any frequent flier miles or hotel discounts you can use towards your trip. Also think about putting all the wedding expenses on a single credit card that accumulates frequent flier miles for the honeymoon. The costs of your honeymoon will, of course, be the sum total of the accommodations, activities, transportation, meals, tips, souvenirs and other travel costs. Be candid with your travel consultant to make your honeymoon economically comfortable.

When considering your budget, know that all-inclusive resorts take care of most of your meals, athletic equipment, and tips. Some also include liquor and bar costs as well as resort-specific activities. These arrangements vary widely, however, with some including roundtrip airfare, so find out exactly what is and is not included in the price.

Also note that honeymoon packages offered by hotels, airlines, and wholesalers typically include special perks for newlyweds that you can't get with standard packages. Your travel consultant will know to ask your hotel if special honeymoon packages are available.

Once you have a budget, decide when to go and for how long. Figure out how many vacation days you have and how many you'll need before the wedding to take care of odds and ends at the last minute. Decide whether you want to leave immediately after your wedding, or wait a few days or weeks to give yourself more time to focus on the trip. If you don't have very many vacation days, you may want to take a "mini-moon" the weekend of the wedding and then a longer, second honeymoon on your first anniversary. It's usually a good idea to give yourself at least a day or two to continue the honeymoon after returning home, before you head back to work and settle into your everyday life.



Don't forget to research the travel documents you might need for your honeymoon as well. U.S. citizens need valid passports for all air and sea travel to and from Europe, Asia, and Australia. As of January 8, 2007, passports are also required for travel to or from Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean. Your travel consultant will assist with all of the necessary documentation, including documentation of your recent name change!

Be diligent about keeping copies of all correspondence, confirmation numbers, and invoices given to you by your travel consultant. Double- and triple-check all the plans to be sure that your departure and return dates are correct. Inform everyone along the way that you're traveling on your honeymoon, so you don't miss out on complimentary perks. Stay organized by creating a folder or notebook where you can keep all this information.

One last bit of advice: Have realistic expectations throughout the course of planning and taking your honeymoon trip. While it's only natural for you to want your honeymoon to be perfect, bear in mind that travel is inherently an adventure. Approach your honeymoon with an open mind, and prepare to have plenty of laughs along the way.

There really are endless possibilities for honeymooners. Whether you decide to go on an exotic foreign expedition or visit a nearby luxurious resort, start planning early to make sure you're right where you want to be... and then *Bon Voyage!*