



Tips when choosing a honeymoon destination



As couples cope with the stress and struggles of planning a wedding, many begin to see their honeymoons as a time when they can finally unwind and relax without having to worry about seating arrangements, vendor negotiations or the host of other responsibilities that come with planning a wedding. But securing the perfect honeymoon can be nearly as difficult as planning the wedding.

The biggest dilemma couples face when planning a honeymoon is where to spend that first week or so as a married couple. The right locale for a honeymoon varies depending on the couple. Some might prefer a Hawaiian island while others might find a week spent camping in a national park is more their style. Whatever you and your future spouse's style may be, the following are a few tips to ensure you both have the time of your lives.

* Decide what you can afford. The days when the bride's father takes care of the bill for the wedding are largely a thing of the past. Many of today's couples finance their own weddings, which can leave little money leftover for the honeymoon. When shopping for a honeymoon destination, know what you can and can't afford. Your honeymoon budget may narrow your

options considerably, but it will help you ensure you aren't spending your first trip as a married couple pinching pennies.

* Play around with the length of your trip. Many couples aim to spend at least one week on their honeymoons. But one way to save money on the honeymoon or make a more expensive locale more affordable is to reduce the length of your stay. An extra two days in paradise might break your honeymoon budget, but what about a shorter stay? You will likely want to spend at least five days at your chosen destination, but a five-day trip can prove considerably less expensive than a full week, especially if you arrive and depart on a weekday.

* Travel in the offseason. While many couples deserve an immediate getaway after planning and financing their weddings, you might get a better deal if you delay your honeymoon until the offseason, when resorts tend to offer more attractive packages after the tourist season has peaked. A honeymoon in the offseason is likely to offer more privacy than one taken during the peak of the season, so you might find such a honeymoon is more romantic. If you do decide to delay your honeymoon, you might still want to plan a short getaway to a nearby locale for a few days after you tie the knot. Even a short trip

can help you unwind after all that planning and coordinating.

* Establish a honeymoon registry. In addition to who's paying for the wedding, one of the ways in which today's couples are different from those of yesteryear is the fact that many couples now live together before tying the knot. That reality has made the traditional registry somewhat obsolete, as many of today's couples already own their own furniture and already have a fully stocked kitchen. But couples can still have a honeymoon registry, which allows their guests to donate money they would otherwise be spending on a wedding gift to a fund that will be used specifically to fund the couple's honeymoon and any adventures they choose to enjoy on their trip. Guests may even prefer such a registry, as it saves them the trouble of wrapping a gift and carrying it to the wedding while ensuring the happy couple will truly enjoy their gift.

A couple's honeymoon is a great opportunity to unwind and enjoy some rest and relaxation on their first trip together as man and wife. And by putting a few savvy suggestions to good use, couples can ensure their honeymoon is all they hoped it would be and much, much more.