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Destination Weddings

By Kirsten Hawkins

No matter where you and your future groom are wed, your wedding will have the same meaning

and give you the same new start to a beautiful beginning together, however destination weddings can add a little extra touch to the wedding of your dreams.

When planning a destination wedding talk about different places where you would like to be united. An advantage to having a destination wedding is being able to have your ceremony and honeymoon in the same location. One way to get some ideas about where to hold your destination wedding is to check out some of the different resort locations on the internet. Most resorts offer wedding packages that have everything included, even a wedding planner. All you need to do is provide the bride and groom! If you want more control over your big day use these tips and ideas for planning one of the biggest days in your life.

As with every wedding, prepare a wedding planner or organizer. This will keep tasks organized and remind you of dates that certain tasks need to be accomplished by. Remember that by having a destination wedding, you will be planning your event long distance, so it will be important to have a list of things that need to be done before you arrive.

When inviting guests to your destination wedding, send out announcements early, letting them know which hotel to call to reserve rooms, as well as dates and times for plane tickets so they can be purchased in advance. You may also think about having a large reception when you return home for those who cannot attend your wedding. Send out separate announcements for this and let them know they will have a chance to congratulate you at a later date.

For destination weddings it is important to check on regulations and laws. If you are being married outside of the United States, be sure to have passports, blood tests, a U.S. marriage license, if needed, and any other paperwork that will need to be completed. Stay ahead of the game so when you arrive at your destination everything is in order.

Also consider how you will get your attire to your destination wedding. Rather than trying to check everything in at the airport on the day you fly out, ship everything separately two weeks in advance.

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Call the destination and confirm that everything arrived in a peaceful state. This will also give you two weeks extra time in the event that something is damaged in travel.

Do not forget to hire a photographer, clergy, wedding planner and bakery to complete your wedding. For information on different services offered, you can contact the destination's Visitor Bureau.

A few of the more popular destination wedding spots include Jamaica in the Caribbean, the Florida Keys, the blue waters of Hawaii, and Las Vegas, with its hundreds of wedding chapels.

As long as you plan ahead and expect a few challenges, your destination wedding is sure to be day to remember.

Kirsten Hawkins is an event planner from Nashville, TN. Visit

<http://www.wedding411.net/>

for more

event planning tips, strategies, and resources.

Booming Wedding Market

By George Meszaros

According to a recent survey entitled "American Wedding Study 2006," conducted by The Conde Nast Bridal Group, concludes that the average amount spent on weddings has increased to almost \$28,000.

It is predicted that 2.3 million Americans will get married this year, and there will be more than 44,000 weddings each weekend with 380 million wedding guests attending.

With an average age of 27, brides are becoming more mature than ever. About 70 percent are paying, at least partially, for their own weddings. Unexpected costs are common as over one third of couples are spending more than planned.

"This authoritative survey shows that the wedding industry is not only vital but is in fact thriving," says Daniel Lagani, vice president and publisher of The Conde Nast Bridal Group. "Couples are entering this 'Wedding Lifecycle' from the engagement to the reception right up to the honeymoon in ever growing numbers flush with happiness and optimism," Lagani says.

Approximately 16 of all weddings are destination-weddings. Destination-weddings are still expensive, but, on average, cost a couple of thousand dollars less than traditional weddings.

Destination-weddings are expected to have an average of 63 guests while traditional weddings are estimated to have 165 guests.

The most popular time for engagements are still the winter holidays with December being the busiest month of engagement. The time frame between engagement and marriage is 14 months.

In light of significant cost increases and a considerable delay in getting married, expect "The Echo Boom," children of the Baby Boomer generation who make up 71 million men and women to emerge. "They are the next big generation to move into the 'engagement zone,' as the oldest in the group will reach the marriage age of 27 in 2006," Lagani says.

The top three growth categories in wedding spending are wedding photography, attendants' gifts, and wedding rings.

Author: George Meszaros

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