

Jet-setting for 'I do'

Planning the perfect destination wedding

By Jennifer Cox
The Suburban

Many brides and grooms decide to plan a wedding on home turf, however a number of couples are deciding to pack their bags and host destination weddings in a myriad of sun-drenched hotspots down south. A destination wedding offers an idyllic place to exchange vows while adding the element of vacation fun to the mix, allowing couples to spend a few days celebrating with family and friends rather than just one day.

Daniela Caputo of Montreal Event Planner has helped arrange a number of getaways for couples who want to get out of Dodge and say "I do" in an exotic place. One of the main reasons brides and grooms opt for this type of wedding is because such affairs are often smaller and more intimate than larger home-based events. "It's become very trendy to have a destination wedding," Caputo explained.

Today's brides and grooms turn to tried-and-true all-inclusive resorts for their long-distance nuptials, such as Mexico, however Caputo said that Jamaica and places in the Dominican Republic are popular as well. "It's really a question of budget and how much both the couple as well as the guests are willing to spend."

Destination weddings usually feature the



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same elements that a home-based 'do would have, however they're often more relaxed (brides will wear less traditional gowns, invitees can don comfortable shorts and flip-flops to the ceremony, etc.). While working with a local wedding specialist is a great way to iron out all the details, many of the reliable resorts in these countries also have on-site planners who can put a number of things into place, such as special menus, flowers, decor, photographers, wed-

ding cakes, and more.

"In the end you just want to make sure it's a reputable venue," Caputo advised. "Ask around and see what other people have done. Even websites like TripAdvisor have reviews by guests where you can get a good feel for everything. Also, speak with wedding planners and travel agents to find the place that's right for you and your invitees."

However, it should be noted that getting married in a foreign country comes with its

own set of rules, namely the legality of the wedding and the paperwork that comes along with it. "Depending on where they're going couples need to know what is required for the marriage license," Caputo said.

There are a few additional aspects to putting together a destination wedding that a wedding planner can assist with too, such as booking flights and hotel rooms, coordinating meals for before and after the wedding day, and setting up group activities, like sightseeing tours or fun interactive classes. Payment options are also important and must be met in a timely fashion (quite often a down payment is required by a certain date to hold the flights and hotel bookings, and the remainder is then paid at a later time), so working with a professional planner can help you stay on track so that nothing falls through the cracks.

More often than not, couples will also add on some one-on-one time at another nearby location for their honeymoon, making it an extended romantic all-in-one escape. In the end, most brides and grooms who venture to have a destination wedding look back on their vacation wedding week and are thrilled with the quality time that they not only got to spend with their closest friends and family, but with each other as well.

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