

Start your life together with at a tropical location!

Check out these fabulous destinations for your

HONEYMOON

by Anne Burke

Now that the invitations are printed, the dress of your dreams is hanging in your closet, and the venue is booked, it's time to start thinking about the honeymoon. Traditionally, a time of seclusion for the happy couple, honeymoons can be one of the most exciting, and stressful, parts of your wedding. While dreaming of romantic sunsets on snow capped mountains or white sand beaches sounds wonderful, there is a lot of work that goes into the perfect honeymoon. You have to gather your passport, find the best price, and choose a destination you both love. It can be exhausting. With that

in mind, we compiled a list of some of the most popular locations for honeymoons. Use our suggestions to help decide where you want to go; after all, just like your wedding, the honeymoon should be a reflection of who you are as a couple. To enlist help in booking my honeymoon last March, I turned to Renee Hozdic, a travel agent who works out of her home in Atlanta, Texas, for Travel Dreams based in Greenville, Texas. "Be true to you and your spouses' personality when deciding on a location," Renee says. "If you love to relax and be romantic, pick a place that caters to that. If you are adventurous and would never be happy sitting on a beach all day, then find a place where you can have fun and try new things together."

So, start dreaming about your perfect honeymoon. Decide how many days you want to be gone, how much money you can spend, and remember that you really

can't go wrong. Many of the locations below offer something for everyone. Plus, all that really matters is the fact that you are making memories and spending time with the one you love the most.



Ocho Rios Jamaica

looking out on crystal clear turquoise waters couples choose Jamaica. The

Sandals resorts are couples only resort with six locations in Jamaica, each with its own personality. **Sandals Negril** is set on the longest stretch of Jamaica's famous Seven Mile Beach and offers swim-up crystal lagoon suites. **Sandals Whitehouse** resort is an all beachfront resort set on a 500 acre nature preserve. Three of the resorts, **Sandals Montego Bay, Sandals Royal Caribbean, Sandals Carlyle Inn**, are set near Montego Bay, Jamaica's second largest city. Couples looking for an adventure will want to sign up for an excursion to Dunn's River Falls close to the two resorts in the Ocho Rio area of the

- 1. Jamaica**
If you are looking for a honeymoon spent lounging on white beaches



Cancun, Mexico

island: **Sandals Grande Ocho Rios** and **Sandals Royal Plantation**. For a boutique-hotel experience that still offers all inclusive luxury, look into the four **Couples** resorts on the island. Couples resorts offer shopping tours, excursions, nightly entertainment and romantic accommodations. For more information about all the Jamaica has to offer see VisitJamaica.com.

- 2. St. Lucia**

St. Lucia is nominated as the World's Leading Honeymoon Destination and World's Leading Island Destination by the World Travel Awards. St. Lucia offers something for every couple whether their goal is to relax on stunning beaches or experience nature through zip lining, mountain biking, hiking or diving. The **Ladera** resort in St. Lucia overlooks both the Pitons and Caribbean Sea and offers six villas and 19 suites each with an "open wall," inviting in one of the world's most breathtaking views. Every room has its very own plunge pool or swimming pool. Guests are also within 15 minutes of Sulphur Springs -- the world's only "drive-in" volcano, as well as the Diamond Waterfall Botanical Gardens and The King Louis XVI Mineral Baths. For honeymooners looking to truly escape, book an open-air room at Jade Mountain. The **Jade Mountain** sanctuaries are deliberately techno-free; there are no telephones, radio or television. Internet access is available at reception, but guests should turn off their phones and enjoy the organic architecture and clear infinity pools.

Seas Lagoon. One of the most popular honeymoon destinations is the **Disney Grand Floridian Resort and Spa**, a Victorian luxury hotel on the white sand beaches of the Seven Seas Lagoon, or the **Disney's Yacht Club Resort**, a New England seaside themed resort with a three-acre aquatic playground. For the more adventurous couple, stay in the **Animal Kingdom Lodge** settled in the midst of a 33 acre wildlife preserve. Plus can register for your honeymoon at Disney World and let guests contribute to the cost. For more information about a place dedicated to making your dreams come true, visit Disneyweddings.disney.go.

This list is truly only the tip of the iceberg. Other popular locations are Aspen, Colorado; Las Vegas, Nevada; or one of many cruises trips to tropical destinations, Europe or Alaska. For more information from Renee Hozdic, a travel agent at Travel Dreams call (903) 244-8121 or email her at Hozdictx@aol.com.

Don't have money for a destination honeymoon? Don't have enough days off from work or school? You don't have to spend thousands of dollars or take a week off to celebrate your marriage. All you need is your spouse and some insight into the amazing locations in our backyard. Find a local romantic spot and enjoy being together. Here are some of our ideas.

1. **Eureka Springs, Arkansas**
Enjoy a large selection of bed and breakfasts, secluded cabins, one of a kind shopping and wonderful local eateries.
2. **Broken Bow, Oklahoma**
Book a romantic cabin with a hot tub, rent a boat for skiing, go canoeing or hiking, and try the favorites at Girls Gone Wine.
3. **Jefferson, Texas**
Spoil yourself at one of the many bed and breakfasts, go antique shopping, take a riverboat ride and book a table for two at the romantic Lamanche's Italian Restaurant or Stillwater Inn.
4. **Hot Springs, Arkansas**
Enjoy water sports, go to the horse races, visit the charming shops and schedule some relaxation at one of the many famous spas.

Honeymoon Advice

1. "Take into account how much time you have for your honeymoon when researching a location," Renee says. "Locations like St. Lucia or Antigua require almost two whole days of travel time."
2. "Don't forget about the option of a destination wedding," Renee says. "So many resorts offer wedding packages now where you can get married in your dream location."
3. "Tell the hotel or resort that it's your honeymoon when you make the reservation," Renee says. "Many places offer

complimentary champagne, discounts on spa services or other romantic deals for honeymooners."

4. "Seriously consider the plane ride if you will be flying," Miranda says. "Our flight was straight from DFW to Honolulu and it took about 7.5 hours. Best advice: dress comfortably and WARMLY! The plane was freezing the whole way."
5. "If you are going to a location with a mild climate... pack light! We took only bags we could carry-on and we loved not having to fool with checked baggage," Miranda says.
6. "Do research before you go," Sara says. "Sometimes it is difficult to get all of the information about a place once you are already there. Before we went to Turks and Caicos I researched things like popular restaurants, fun activities to do, and transportation. In some cases, I went ahead and booked activities, like the sunset cruise, because the website said the spaces filled up pretty quick."
7. "The second piece of advice I would offer is don't overbook your honeymoon," Sara says. "While I went ahead and booked a few activities I didn't plan us something to do everyday. Nathan and I didn't realize how worn out we would be once we got to Turks and Caicos. With the rehearsal dinner, luncheons, family in town, and not to mention the wedding, you are most likely going to want at least a few days to just relax."
8. "While we were on our honeymoon we met a couple who registered for activities for their honeymoon," Sara says. "I thought that this was such a fantastic idea. This way you can pick out exactly what you want to do, whether it be a nice dinner, snorkeling, scuba diving, etc. and your wedding guests can purchase it for you. This is a great addition to a traditional registry. Here is one website I found, but I am sure there are others. www.thehoneymoon.com



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