



You sat down as a couple, made the decision, and now you know you want a destination wedding. So now what?

Written By Jaime Valdes-Riench, owner of Travel & Events with Style

Ads and billboards are everywhere and, suddenly, everyone is a destination professional and every family member and friend is more than willing to share their experiences and opinions. This can be over-whelming, especially when the true essence of most destination weddings is to be able to leave all the stress (and possibly winter!) behind.

So what do you do? As a couple, take some time to find out what you are hoping for while you are away. Adventure, relaxation, culture, luxury, or all of the above? Often the first thing a couple says is, "We imagined something different than everyone else's wedding." And the hardest challenge is: What do you define as "different"? What would make your day truly distinctive? Write a list of the most important items you would hope for and get ready to explore your options.



A LOT OF COUPLES DESIRE "off the beaten path" destinations. When exploring these options, it is important to make note of a few key points:

- 1 If the location is not a regular vacation spot for your gateway (Winnipeg), there is a chance you may not get direct flights. Is this important to you? Are you willing to stay over-night for a connection, in order to reach your destination?
- 2 The more the location is "off the beaten path," the more costly it may be, because of lack of volume for airlines and vacation companies to bring people from your gateway to the location. Are you willing to pay a little more? Are your guests willing to pay a little more?
- 3 Depending on the location, the area may not be prepared for weddings, or costs may be much higher because weddings there are simply more exclusive. A lot of the Caribbean islands can have a higher prices tag versus the more typical spots like Mexico.

Once your research has been completed and priced by a travel professional, you may come to a crossroad: your options may not be to your liking, or within your budget. Don't allow this to be a road block, but rather a stepping stone. Go back to why you chose the area and what drew you to it in the beginning.

The next suggestion is to sit down with your destination wedding professional and map out your best options, so you can find the most viable locations and resorts to fit your criteria. Hiring a professional who is both a licensed travel

agent and wedding planner is simply invaluable. A seasoned travel agent has the experience to direct you towards alternative travel options, so you are able to choose a destination that fits your budget and offers better flight plans. A destination wedding planner is able to guide you as a couple to what you can do in order to make your wedding distinctive and unforgettable, on budget. An experienced destination wedding planner has accumulated the knowledge of different wedding packages abroad and how to change them to fit you and your desired look. They also can suggest which resorts to choose, so they can offer you the best options that suit your wedding vision. Both areas of knowledge are necessary when choosing the best location for your special day. Compromising one of these services may not be a corner you wish to cut in order to receive the guidance you desire.

A destination wedding requires more than just travel arrangements, and a wedding deserves attention and dedication. Having professionals helping you in every area will ensure your wedding will be nothing less than what you always hoped for.

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