

Destination Wedding Blueprint



Congratulations! You're engaged and ready to start planning your big day.

To help you from being overwhelmed by the choices, costs and countless possibilities, we've put together this amazing blueprint for planning a destination wedding.

Remember: destination weddings are naturally longer celebrations and a wonderful way to spend quality time with family and friends.

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- 1. Find your perfect location.** Many venues book up far in advance. Narrow down a short list try to visit your preferred destination to tour 3 or 4 resorts. What you see online isn't always the same as what you see in person.

TIP: Some resorts offer a discounted stay to preview their property and may deduct the cost if you book with them.

- 2. Onsite Coordinator.** Many All Inclusive resorts in Mexico and the Caribbean have onsite wedding coordinators to handle most of the details for you. This may help reduce some of the stress and allow you to relax and enjoy your big day.
- 3. Complimentary Weddings.** Some All Inclusive resorts also offer complimentary wedding packages with a qualifying number of rooms booked.
- 4. Travel Time.** Consider travel distance between departure cities and the wedding location. Too much time traveling means less time celebrating.
- 5. Set the date!** Make sure you leave plenty of time for planning. 18 months is the typical amount of time to plan a destination wedding. Send your Save the Date cards as early as possible.

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- 6. Weather.** Consider seasonal weather at your preferred location. Off-season at some locations can mean lower costs and less crowding at the resort. Airfare may also be lower.
- 7. Outline a budget.** Set the budget so you know what you're working with from the start.
- 8. Passports.** Remind everyone to get, or renew, their passport. Most destinations require the passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond your *return* date.
- 9. Create a wedding website.** Include local maps, airport information, and travel details, as well as expected weather so your guests will know what to expect.

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- 10. Guests booking on their own.** If you think some guests will prefer to book on their own, outside of the wedding group, be sure *you and your guests* understand what impacts this may have. Ask your resort.
- 11. Wristbands.** Are wristbands required at your selected resort? Consider this when it comes to your pictures and the wedding ceremony.
- 12. Visiting Privileges.** Some resorts offer a Stay at One, Play at All option. This is a great way to offer different price ranges for your guests.

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13. Kids or no kids. You have a few options when it comes to children at the ceremony.

If children are welcome, book a family friendly resort.

If your resort choice is for adults only, be sure to get approval from the resort manager for children to attend the ceremony and understand there may be an additional cost involved.

Select sister resorts where the adults only and family friendly properties are next door to each other. That way everyone can be together but still have their own space.

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- 14. Civil Ceremony or Traditional Ceremony.** Marriage requirements vary from country to country. They range from blood tests and waiting periods to extra fees. Find out what your chosen destination requires in order to make it official. See the country's tourism website for details. You also have the option to have a civil ceremony at home before you leave and a symbolic ceremony at the destination.
- 15. Selecting a dress.** When selecting your wedding day attire, keep your destination in mind! Try on many options and make sure you factor in comfort and climate.
- 16. Hair.** If you are getting married at the beach, consider the warm ocean breeze and having your hair up.
- 17. Married at one, Honeymoon at another.** Get married at one resort and honeymoon at a different resort at the same location or go to completely different location.

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- 18. Welcome basket.** Welcome traveling guests at the resort with gift bags filled with a few simple items and some information about the location where they are visiting. Sunscreen, light snacks, bottled water, aloe vera, etc.
- 19. Extra Activities.** Consider hosting additional events such as a welcome party or post-wedding brunch. Off-property excursions are a great way to explore the destination and spend quality time with family and friends.
- 20. Bring your gown with you on the plane.** Do not put it in your checked luggage. If your luggage is lost, so is your gown. Let the airline know ahead of time that you will be bringing your gown on the flight.
- 21. Reconsider those DIY ideas.** Shipping items abroad can be a big hassle. Research the logistics early on and be aware it can take up to one month for your package to arrive in the mail. If you decide to send items to the resort, make sure to include the name of the onsite coordinator on the package.

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- 22. Compromise.** Accept that you'll probably have to compromise and know that with a destination wedding you may have to give up some things. You also have to be okay with some people not attending because it's a destination.
- 23. Use your legal name.** Don't make any reservations in your new married name unless your identification documents (passport, visa, etc.) already reflect your new name; especially your airline tickets. If the name on your boarding pass does not match the name on your passport, it will be a huge hassle to board the plane and you may miss your flight.

The logo for Sharyn Kaye features a stylized teal wave above the name "Sharyn Kaye" in a teal serif font. The name is underlined with a thin teal line.

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