

# How to Plan a DESTINATION WEDDING

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Having a destination wedding can be stressful for some; however, if planned and booked correctly, it can be a stress-free process.

First things first, make sure to contact a reputable destination wedding specialist (a licensed travel agency that

specializes in destination weddings). Once you find one you like, you will be asked a series of questions to tailor your dream wedding to your vision.

Here is a step-by-step method we've created for you to take the guesswork out of planning your perfect destination wedding.

## 1 Budget

You need to know how much it will cost your guests to attend your wedding. This price will include seven-nights accommodation at an all-inclusive resort, return flights, and round-trip airport transfers. The aver-

age price for group bookings are \$1,500 per person based on double occupancy at a five-star resort in the Mayan Riviera, travelling in low season from within Canada. Other locations, like the Caribbean, can vary from \$900 - \$3,000 per person.

## 2 Choosing a Resort

There are hundreds of resorts available for your dream wedding. They may look great; however, you need to decide based on budget. At Pose, we figure out the target cost each guest should pay for their travel and then recommend resorts that are within the group's price range.

Make a list for all of your must haves, such as beachfront resort, disco/sports bar, affordable wedding packages, private reception wedding packages, etc. We suggest narrowing your resort selection down to three or four, so you are not overwhelmed.



Remember, no matter where you choose to have your wedding - it's going to be perfect. The experience is the people you share it with and what you make of it. The key point is to stick to your budget!

## 3 Travel Dates

Discuss if there are any particular dates that are preferred or not preferred. Choosing your travel dates relate directly to your budget. If you can avoid high season/ high price travel dates like statutory

and school holidays, you are more likely to book a resort that suits your needs.

Most importantly, choose your wedding date. You need to ensure the resorts you select are available to host a wedding during the period you and your guests will be there.

## 4 Save the Dates

Often destination wedding couples opt for an email as opposed to the more traditional paper version of *save the date*. This gives your guests a heads up that you've decided to have a destination wedding.

Once you've narrowed down your resort choices and travel dates, we recommend you email a link to your wedding website (if you have one) to let everyone on your guest list know the plans.

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### Things to Include in the Save the Date Template

- The destination chosen for your wedding.
- The month in which you plan to have your destination wedding.
- The approximate cost each person can expect to attend your wedding.
- An introduction to your destination wedding agent. Remember to inform your agent of the guest list. Once you have everything ready to go, they can contact your guests with regards to deposit info.
- Ask your guests if they can attend or if they would like to be removed from the guest email list. You also need to ask which Canadian city they will be traveling from if they were to attend.

### 5 Group Quote

You are now ready for a group quote. For this, you will need to advise your agent of approximately how many guests will be attending your wedding and from which cities. Most tour operators will require a minimum amount

Approximately 45 days prior to your departure date you and your guests will be sent their e-docs and itinerary for the big trip. 🍷

of room numbers to book in order to prepare a group quote (e.g. WestJet Vacations requires 10 rooms while Transat requires five).

You should receive the quote within three to five business days. There will usually be an expiry of 30 days from the date received (this is when the group deposit will be due). Once the resort has been confirmed and the wedding date has been booked, the resort will require a deposit from the bride and groom in order to confirm the wedding date.

The guests' email addresses are then forwarded to your Pose wedding specialist and information documents are emailed out to all prospective guests. From there, Pose handles all questions relating to travel and takes care of RSVP management.

### 6 Wedding Planning

From this point on, the bride and groom work directly with their on-site resort wedding coordinator. You will be sent a wedding kit that includes your planning forms and several wedding packages to choose from. A location guide is usually included, so you can see the potential venue locations for your ceremony, cocktail party and reception.

Your wedding package will include menu options (so you can customize your reception dinner and cocktail party), a bridal bouquet, the groom's boutonniere, and the wedding cake. There will be several wedding themes to choose from. Most resorts are great at customizing if your exact item isn't shown in the kit. Your planning should be completed and sent back to the resort 45 days prior to your arrival.

Arrange a meeting time with your wedding coordinator prior to your wedding date so you can finalize everything in person. During this meeting, you will be taken to your chosen locations and a walk-through of the day will be discussed.

### 7 Notes to Guests

Make sure you advise your guests to have up-to-date passports for their upcoming trip.

Make sure everyone is aware of any and all travel vaccines required for your destination. Contact your local travel clinic, as they will know the most recent vaccines required.

### 8 Wedding Tips

Since a destination wedding is not considered traditional, you don't have to abide by traditional wedding rules such as:

**Paper Invitations** - These are not necessary for a destination wedding as the procedure is a little different. Your Save the Date acts as an invitation by informing your guests they are invited to attend your wedding. When a guest confirms by paying their deposit, that is their RSVP.

**Wedding Gift Registry** - Unlike a traditional wedding, guests need to pay to attend your wedding abroad. So, typically, you do not request gifts or set up a registry out of respect for your guests.

**Wedding Favours** - Since you are flying to your wedding and there are minimal luggage allowances, you can choose to leave out the favours for your guests. However, imaginative decor ideas can make up for this opt-out option. Consider paper fans attached to ceremony chairs so guests can cool themselves, a candy bar at your reception with purchases from local surrounding stores, or small bottles of local alcohols such as tequila to put in their rooms upon their arrival.

**Music** - When deciding on your music for your wedding, consider bringing an iPod with personalized playlists that you've created for each event. You can include music to walk up the aisle, as well as music for your first dance and the father and bride dance. Ask your guests for their favourite songs, and add them to the appropriate playlist.

**Thank You Cards** - No matter how non-traditional you make your wedding, a definite MUST is to send out Thank You cards after you return home from your trip.

Enjoy every moment and have the time of your life! 🍷

### 9 Final Payments & Travel Documents

Your group's remaining balance will be due approximately 60 days prior to departure (unless otherwise specified). Your Pose destination wedding specialist will take care of this and make sure everyone pays by the due date. Once everyone has paid, you will have your confirmed guest list, so if you have a seating arrangement in mind you can start preparing it at this stage.

Approximately 45 days prior to your departure date, you and your guests will be sent their e-docs and itinerary for the big trip. Be sure to check-in your flight at least 24 hours prior to your departure in case of any schedule changes. Print off all documents as a reminder, as we all know what island time and a couple of tequilas can do to us!

### 10 Arrival at Your Resort

Step into your tropical paradise luxury resort, have a drink, and relax! Get familiar with the resort and check out

areas that would be ideal locations for your wedding photos. Your wedding coordinator will take you, and your wedding party, on a walk-through of your wedding day; show you your exact locations; and inform you where the guests should all meet prior to being escorted to the ceremony.

If you choose to have a wedding rehearsal dinner with your wedding party, this can be arranged as a private event with your wedding coordinator, or you can meet at a restaurant and hopefully be seated together or close to each other. **(Pose Tip:** If you have your rehearsal at a buffet restaurant, there is a greater chance that you can all sit together, plus reservations are not usually required.)

### 11 Your Wedding Day

The big day has arrived, everything has been arranged, and everything is going to be perfect! Designate a close family member or friend to be your "go to" person on the day so you won't be disturbed with any questions on behind-the-scenes details. Be sure to wear your sunblock, and remember to drink lots of water - your make up will look ten times better with hydrated skin! Enjoy every moment and have the time of your life!

