

*“10 STEPS TO PLANNING
THE PERFECT
HONEYMOON”*



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10 steps to planning the perfect Honeymoon!

So you're planning your honeymoon? Congratulations! The honeymoon is an important part of the wedding experience, and a much-needed escape after months of exciting, yet exhausting, wedding planning. With the invention of [wedding registries](#), it's now easier than ever to pay for the trip. See if these tips help you plan well, so that you can enjoy yourselves.

1. Decide together

Traditionalists might be tempted to let the husband to be plan the whole vacation by himself. Big mistake! Both people really need to agree on these details in order to avoid disappointments and unmet expectations. Problems can happen when both spouses have a different idea of the "ideal honeymoon".

Communication and compromise are needed, with the goal to make your honeymoon romantic, memorable and stress-free. Consider these questions as soon as honeymoon talks begin:

- What is most important? Laying on the beach, or the adventure of a Parisian cafe?
- Do you want a large resort with a lot of amenities, or a boutique resort without many people around?
- All-inclusive? Is room service important to you?
- Looking for a Jacuzzi in the room? Want a balcony?
- Are you looking to experience new cultures in distant lands or do you just want to get away from it all?
- How far do you want to travel, 500 miles or 5,000?
- What sounds better: a cruise, a package vacation or an all-inclusive resort?
- Does one of you want beach and one of you want an African Safari? Consider bringing in an expert. She may help you match in ways you did not know existed. Or, bring up alternatives like chartering a yacht that appeals to both of you. Experts are worth their weight in gold when you aren't sure where you want to go, or need to make sure you are getting the best value.

2. Decide when to go

First, figure out how many vacation days you have, and how many of them you'll need before the wedding for last minute planning. Then decide when you want to go. Do you want to leave the morning after your wedding? Or, do you want to have some time after the wedding to unwind and pack when you'll be more focused on it, and take your honeymoon a few days later?

How much time you have to travel and your budget will help narrow down your choices. For instance, 5 nights is super in the Caribbean or Mexico, but a trip to Europe requires about ten days.

3. Set a tentative budget

Talk about your expectations and priorities so you can agree before you go about what you'll splurge on and where you'll skimp. This way, you'll avoid money hassles en route. Suggestion: Splurge on your accommodations, because...

4. Your room can add extra romance to your stay

I smile to myself when an excited couple sits down with me to plan their perfect Honeymoon trip of their dreams and says "We won't be in the room very much, so the room category doesn't really matter." I am not at all laughing at their opinions, I have just learned from experience how very important the room really is to honeymooners. When I check in with my clients after their trip, the very first thing they want to tell me about is the room. It's also the very first thing someone will complain about on a honeymoon.

The room matters! Why choose to spend time in a boring room when there are so many affordable and fantastic options that offer a jacuzzi, swim-up lazy rivers, in-room bar and dining, hammocks on the terrace, private balconies, direct access to the beach, or something as simple as a couch and satellite TV. One of my favorite resorts to book honeymooners at has a private outdoor shower- in the bathroom! Talk about creating memories! This is one time you will be sorry if you don't book a special room. It's ok to make other trips ordinary, but this trip should be special.

If going on a cruise, book the best cabin your budget will allow. Try not to book an interior cabin, as the experience is not near as enjoyable as other cabins. Having your own private balcony translates into better memories. Your own personal space on the ship where you can go to watch the waves and be alone. Order room service, drink your coffee, read the morning paper and relish the freedom. You won't regret it!

Tip: The cheapest room in the house often has a street view, even if the description is "garden-view".

We just got back from our honeymoon yesterday, and are so excited to write you. Our trip was fantastic! We loved the resort. You really took care of the little details. We didn't have to worry about anything... Thanks so much! ~ Annette and Steve

5. Travel Agent or booking online?

Online travel bookings are very commonplace, but be careful that all the special touches you want are reserved correctly. Experienced Honeymoon agents will double-check your reservations and make sure that everything you ask want is there.

If you are overwhelmed, not sure what destination to choose (for example, just wanting to be on the “beach” gives you hundreds of options alone), or find yourself busy with other things (like planning the wedding!), a good travel agent can be priceless in eliminating your stress. Not only will he or she have ideas about places you might not have thought of, but they’ll be familiar with those details like “do you need a visa?” and when the rainy season is. They might also have special packages or extra amenities you would not get on your own. Do not be frightened away if they charge a fee or require a retainer up front. These costs usually go towards your trip deposit. Ask how they will be able to help get you the best value for your money. If you are looking for the best trip, don’t you want to work with the best? Good travel agents know their worth and are usually too busy to work with couples who aren’t ready to put down a deposit.

If you book online, call the resort directly after the reservation is made and right before you debark, to verify ALL aspects of your stay (room view, in-room amenities, excursions...). It is not uncommon for hotels to have incorrect reservation details when I am calling to check on things the week before my client is to arrive. I am often on the phone for hours with hotels in foreign countries. Calling the hotel ahead of your arrival to double check can sometimes alleviate problems at check-in.

6. Looking to save money? Consider off season travel

Regardless of the month you plan to take your honeymoon, it’s always low season (a cheaper time to visit) somewhere. For instance, instead of paying top dollar at a ski resort after a December wedding, you can get bargain rates — and find plenty to do on the slopes — in July. If you’re beach lovers, don’t let the words “hurricane season” completely scare you off of visiting Florida or the Caribbean between June and November. Plenty of people live in those places year-round, and more often than not showers are brief and the sun soon emerges.

Tip: Do remember to add on a good “cancel for any reason” travel insurance policy, just in case of weather- related issues.

**Hurricane Season in the Caribbean:
Mid May thru November**

7. Get your passport in order

Brides will most likely be traveling with a passport in their maiden name. Make sure the airline tickets are booked in that same name.

Passports can take up to 3 months to receive. If you already have a passport, check the expiration. To leave the country, your passport must be valid for 6 months after your return. Passports can be expedited for a fee. You'll need to apply in person if this is the first time you are getting one. Otherwise, you can renew online.

See this site for passport information http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html

8. When to book

6-9 months in advance if you want to take advantage of “early bird” savings, and package deals. The days of waiting until the last minute so that air prices can drop are long gone. Many destinations, like Hawaii, have limited flights and seats. Regardless of the destination, the law of supply and demand exists- meaning the longer you wait to book your flights, the more money you could be spending. Plus, booking early allows you to book with a smaller deposit if using a [travel agent](#). Online bookings will want the entire package price at the time of booking.

9. Packing List

Leave plenty of time to pack so nothing is forgotten. Leaving off essentials like sunscreen can cost you a bundle! Other things to add to the list: a beach bag, camera, medicines (Not just Tylenol, bring stuff for stomach, diarrhea, bandaids, etc...) bath-salts, teal-light candles to set the mood, matches, snacks, reading material for the beach, bug spray, beach coverup, flip-flops and aloe for sunburns. See this blog for more ideas : <http://travelswithflair.com/2011/09/24/honeymoon-packing-list/>

10. Tell the world it's your honeymoon!

The best [travel agents](#) will make sure to suggest resorts with fantastic honeymoon packages. There are free massages, bottles of champagne, and upgrades to be had just by speaking up! Don't hesitate to tell restaurants, tour operators and the hotel bar that you are celebrating. It will make the trip more memorable with free desert, gifts and drinks!

There's no better start to a marriage than the perfect honeymoon that's romantic, stress free and unforgettable.

Angee Shields has caused a stir in Central Illinois since opening Vacations With Flair in 2007. An early experience in backpacking through Europe solidified her love of travel. She's earned awards from resorts (2010 and 2011 Karisma Diamond awards, El Dorado Wedding Expert award) and has been featured in several publications as Central Illinois' Premier Luxury Travel Expert.



Angee understands that everyone has a different idea of the perfect honeymoon, so she tailors *your* trip to *your* dreams, whether it's a walking tour of Provence, a driving tour of Ireland or Australia, or cooking lessons in Vienna, or just laying on the beach. She goes beyond the usual level of service, and relishes setting up details like dinner reservations in Johannesburg, tee-times in Scotland and special event surprises. She's a wizard at finding good hotels all over the globe, and at providing out-of-the-ordinary concierge-style service.

Contact Angee today 1-800-517-1123 to discuss your honeymoon or Destination wedding plans. Or, visit her on the web: www.vacationswithflair.com. Mention this report and receive a Free Deluxe beach bag full of vacation essentials when you book your trip!