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Great Locations Around the World for Destination Weddings

by Emily on [December 15, 2010](#) · [8 comments](#)



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This is the third post in a three-part series about destination weddings. Read the other posts to learn about [the pros and cons of destination weddings](#) and [tips for planning a destination wedding](#).

For couples who want an especially unique wedding or whose families don't have a home base, a destination wedding may be the perfect way to tie the knot. Whether you get married 100 miles or 10,000 miles away, getting hitched abroad is the perfect excuse to travel. More often than not, your guests will make a vacation out of it and stay a while, too.

You can pick your favorite vacation spot, or a place where you would want to stay for a honeymoon. While you may want to pick a spot at random, Molly Ann, the photographer behind [Luminaire Images](#), has seen an increase in weddings of the ancestral homeland of the bride or the groom. For example, she is in talks with a couple who lives in Texas but are looking to get married in Peru because the groom was born there.

Here are a mix of resorts, hotels, and areas across the world that host gorgeous destination weddings. Most of these venues have on-site wedding coordinators. Disclaimer: Some of these are affiliate links.

United States venues:



Alyeska Resort

[Alyeska Resort](#): Girdwood, Alaska

This year-round luxury destination is located outside of Anchorage. They operate a ski area and 304-room hotel, and are located in the heart of the Chugach range. According to Sandy Chio, Director of Marketing, Alaska is a huge draw for brides and grooms because it is so spectacular and different. The resort is 40 miles from a major airport and on a scenic byway easily accessible via train, shuttle, limo, or rental car. “Although you’re in ‘remote’ Alaska, you are also based in a full-service hotel with the level of luxury amenities that you’d expect at home,” says Chio. This includes an on-site wedding coordinator and full catering.

Westward Look Resort: Tucson, Arizona

This venue claims to be Tucson’s first resort. Tucson is not only scenic but also has beautiful weather for winter weddings. The resort offer Sweet Surprise Elopement Package for those who want a more intimate private wedding. Starting at \$850 a night, couples can enjoy a private ceremony site, a five-course dinner with wine pairings prepared by a personal chef and served to the couple’s private patio, a Stargazer Suite with private hot tub, couple’s massage in-room or at the Sonoran Spa, champagne and chocolate-covered strawberries, breakfast in bed, and discounted rates for additional guest rooms. They also offer more traditional wedding packages.

Calaveras County, California

This part of California has everything from rolling golf greens to rugged snow filled mountains. It’s located in foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains and is the home of the California Gold Rush. You can have an elegant wedding at a winery or you can have an adventurous wedding at the entrance of a cave, such as Black Chasm Cavern, California Cavern, and Moaning Cavern. The area is loaded with outdoor activities for your guests.



Newport Dunes Resort

Newport Dunes Resort: Newport Beach, California

This resort sits on 100 waterfront acres featuring a 406-site RV park, 450-slip marina, and a private waveless beach and playground. Wedding guests enjoy the warm Southern California weather, and the resort has multiple waterfront and beachfront ceremony spots. They offer personal wedding planners and accommodation packages. They can host rehearsal dinners, and they can accommodate ceremonies or parties of any size, from 30 to 1,000.

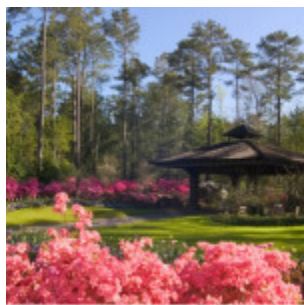
Fess Parker’s Doubletree Resort: Santa Barbara, California

Situated in a mission-style (and pet-friendly!) hotel on 24 beach-front acres, this resort is a popular place for gorgeous destination weddings. Santa Barbara is called America’s Riviera; the resort offers mountain, garden, and ocean views of the surrounding area. Best of all, it’s only half a mile from downtown Santa Barbara. The resort has many flexible options for either indoor or outdoor weddings, including an intimate beach wedding. There are four on-site restaurants, a spa, tennis courts, and more. Guests can visit the nearby zoo, go whale watching, go biking, visit nearby wineries, and so much more.

Breckenridge Resort: Breckenridge, Colorado

Breckenridge has many different wedding options. Get married in a charming historic church, in a cozy mountain lodge, or even on skis atop a snow-covered peak. The 151-year-old historic town features 300 days

of sunshine and fresh alpine air, and it's a great spot for weddings at any season. At 9,600 feet elevation with sweeping views of the Tenmile range, you will feel on top of the world. Breckenridge offers mountain lodges, ski condos, hotel rooms, and more.



Callaway Gardens

Callaway Gardens: Pine Mountain, Georgia

Centrally located in the Southeast and only one hour from Atlanta's airport, this mature woodland garden is a beautiful place to get married. Callaway Gardens is also a resort with great golf and fishing. Depending on size and your interests, there are many places to have your ceremony: have a beach wedding at Robin Lake Beach (an inland beach), at the boat dock overlooking the lake and golf course, inside a chapel, a garden ceremony, on a bridge overlooking Mountain Creek Lake, and more.



Grand Hyatt Kauai
Resort

Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa: Koloa, Hawaii

This quiet and romantic island hosts 250 destination weddings a year. They have wedding planners and a spa where you can unwind. The area also has tons of outdoor activities. Publicist Diann Hartman says there is a solution for guests who can't make it out to Hawaii. "There is a company here, Hawaii Stream, that will live-feed your wedding on the Internet so your friends and family can watch," she says. They archive it online for a while, and then edit it and send you a short version on DVD. You can get a private URL, which you give to those who might want to watch. "I've heard of some people's entire workplace stopping to watch the wedding of a co-worker!" says Hartman.

Halekulani: Waikiki Beach, Hawaii

This luxurious 453-room hotel sits on the oceanfront of Waikiki Beach. It has won numerous awards and recognition for its amenities and service. Halekulani houses three-award winning restaurants, SpaHalekulani, which is the first to fully explore the healing cultures of the Pacific Islands. The Vera Wang suite is designed by Vera Wang herself, and is the ultimate in honeymoon suites.



Wailea Beach Marriott
Resort

[Wailea Beach Marriott Resort & Spa: Wailea, Maui, Hawaii](#)

This Maui resort is great for a Hawaiian destination wedding. The 544-room oceanfront resort offers a variety of tropical locations featuring amazing Pacific Ocean, sunset and garden views. The resort has a designated Romance Center led by wedding expert Tracy Flanagan, who has 22 years of experience in the Maui wedding industry. The bridal party can also take advantage of the hotel's Mandara Spa.

[The Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel, Florida](#)

"Balmy breezes, endless Gulf beaches and year-round sunshine make southwest Florida's Beaches of Fort Myers & Sanibel one of the world's most romantic wedding destinations," says Wrenda Goodwyn, who works on behalf of the area. It gives you a tropical island feel without having to leave the country. Many of the resorts here offer very affordable packages.

[WaterColor Inn & Resort: Santa Rosa Beach, Florida](#)

This resort on the warm northwest Florida coast overlooks green gulf water, making it ideal for those who want a romantic beach wedding with mild weather. They have a team of wedding service professionals to help you plan all the details and pick a reception site. Guests will be entertained with swimming, fishing, kayaking, tennis, and more. There is also a camp for kids.



Wedding at
SouthWood Golf Club
in Tallahassee, FL

[SouthWood Golf Club in Tallahassee, Florida](#)

According to publicist Jonathan Williamson, this venue features antebellum setup, giant oak trees, and old plantation clubhouse. It's very popular with guests from the South, such as Atlanta, Jacksonville, Birmingham. They have on-site cottages where the bridal parties can stay. There is also plenty of on-site entertainment, including a well-ranked golf course.

[The Wauwinet: Nantucket, Massachusetts](#)

Wedding season at The Wauwinet is in May or October, and the inn can accommodate up to 150 guests. Located nine



The Wauwinet

miles outside of town on the peacefully secluded northeast tip of the island, guests can relax in one of the 28 guest rooms or in one of the four garden cottages. Have an elegant ceremony with a backdrop of Nantucket Bay at sunset. The Wauwinet offers highly-lauded catering in a tent on the lawn overlooking the bay. Get a couples' massage at the spa to relax before the big day.

[Big Cedar Lodge](#): Ridgedale, Missouri

Located in the hills of the Ozarks, this venue feels hidden away even though it's only 15 minutes south of Branson. It is close to three airports, making it easy for guests to get there. It's primarily a destination wedding venue, so it's equipped with certified wedding planners who know how to handle all the details. The lodge is close to outlet shopping, go carts and mini golf, entertaining shows like the Dixie Stampede and Branson Showboat Belle, and the Ozark pioneer-inspired theme park, Silver Dollar City.

Finger Lakes Region, New York

"Finger Lakes Wine Country is a beautiful and natural location for your wedding, done your way," says Emily Hubbell, Director of Communications for [Holiday Inn Express Horseheads](#) and [Holiday Inn Elmira Riverview](#) in Finger Lakes. "The Finger Lakes offers every backdrop you could imagine; rolling hills, vineyards, wineries, one of the many lakes, waterfalls, gorges, small town churches and even your fairytale castles. The region also boasts several facilities that can host your bridal parties, rehearsal dinners and plenty of rooms for your family and guests to stay."

[The Swag Country Inn](#): Waynesville, North Carolina

Located 30 miles from Asheville in the the Smokies of North Carolina, this inn sits on 250 acres and borders the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. It feels more like the Swiss Alps than the North Carolina mountains, and you can exchange vows in front of a breathtaking vista. The Swag is offering three wedding packages designed to make your wedding stress-free. It has 14 luxurious accommodations on-site. They can host weddings of up to 100 people.



The Fairfax Hotel

Black Hills, South Dakota

Joe Rainboth, the blogger behind [Black Hills Travel Blog](#), had a destination wedding with his wife in the Black Hills of South Dakota (the area is now their home). Through his research, he found that you could have everything from a traditional church wedding to a rustic cabin wedding, but they opted to have a beautiful lakefront wedding at Sylvan Lake. He thought that the local wedding professionals he found in the area were top-notch, and there were many affordable lodging options in the area. There was also so much to enjoy there that many guests stayed later to tour Mount Rushmore and relax.

[Fairfax Hotel at Embassy Row: Washington, D.C.](#)

In spring—prime time for wedding season—D.C. blooms with cherry blossoms. It's also a great place to tie the knot. This regal hotel has been around since 1927, and General Manager Robert Schofield says, “A gleaming black and white marble foyer opens up to a stately 2,600 square foot banquet room adorned with chandeliers and a small stage risen a few steps above the main room on which the couple can say their ‘I Do’s.’ An alcove with a piano lies adjacent to the main room, which can accommodate up to 250 guests.”



The Lodge & Spa at
Brush Creek Ranch

[The Lodge & Spa at Brush Creek Ranch: Saratoga, Wyoming](#)

Dana Parks, publicist for the venue, says it opens in spring 2011 and “is a exclusive, independent guest ranch” perfect for a unique destination wedding “set amid a century-old working cattle ranch outside of Saratoga in south central Wyoming’s North Platte River Valley.” Situated on 13,000 private acres, the property features a chapel and dance hall, wedding gardens with built-in stone seating, an overlook deck with great views and an indoor event space, and a flavor of the West. There is also a spa, on-site wedding planning services, and many outdoor activities.

International venues:

[The Authentic Seacoast: Nova Scotia, Canada](#)

The Authentic Seacoast Resorts are located at the head of Chedabucto Bay, the largest bay on the Nova Scotia Atlantic coast. Their properties include DesBarres Manor Inn, a luxury bed & breakfast inn that has received numerous culinary awards, and Osprey Shores Golf Resort, a motel-style lodge on a 60 acre peninsula between Mussel and Cutler coves. It's great for couples who picture their marriage ceremony in a scenic seaside location off the beaten track, but still have the luxuries of award-winning cuisine and wine, comfortable guest rooms, and warm maritime hospitality.

[Niagara Falls: Ontario, Canada](#)

Remember the episode of “The Office” where Pam and Jim wed on a boat at Niagara Falls? This gorgeous natural setting is a unique place to get married. “The Niagara Parks Commission has many great venues for weddings,” says Sandra Aaron, destination wedding planner with [Mindless Sophistication Events](#). “Last season they had a wedding over the Gorge on their Sky tram, and another where the bride arrived on horseback.”

The Lanesborough: London, England

Located in London's Hyde Park, this luxury hotel is known for its resemblance of an 18th century residence. With just 95 guest rooms, 43 being suites, each room is decorated to the highest standard and includes a personal butler. As a wedding destination, The Lanesborough offers six venues ranging from small intimate rooms to others that hold up to 120 guests and display open views of Hyde Park. The Lanesborough is the home of Apsleys, which holds the record for the fastest London restaurant to be awarded a Michelin Star, less than five months after opening.



Yasawa Island Resort

Yasawa Island Resort & Spa: Fiji

Recommended by Sandra Aaron, this resort is a fantastic wedding location for those who want to get away from busy city life or want a gorgeous beach wedding. The resort has 18 luxurious bungalows, all which have no televisions (though WiFi is available in the main area of the resort). It's located on one of Fiji's most remote islands, which features activities such as swimming, diving, and visiting local villages. The resort also has a spa.

Ireland

With a well-developed tourism infrastructure, international airports, glorious scenery, renowned golf courses, legendary hospitality, and Celtic romance, Ireland makes a great spot for a destination wedding. The Emerald Isle is dotted with castles and estates now re-purposed as hotels, resorts and inns perfect for weddings. "You could be married in a real Irish castle," said Tim Grant of [Irish Aisle](#), a U.S.- based, Irish-themed wedding resource website. "These are authentic castles built centuries ago and classic old estates set in beautifully landscaped grounds. Add to it Ireland's unforgettable scenery, and you just couldn't find more romantic and elegant wedding destinations." This includes Ashford Castle in County Mayo and Barberstown Castle, County Kildare, both built in the 13th century; and the 18th century estates of Adare Manor in County Limerick and Mount Falcon Estate in County Mayo.

Italy

Everything about the country screams "amore." According to Lisa Fantino of [Wanderlust Women](#), a travel planning company that specializes in Italy, "It is perfect because your theme is set and the natural beauty limits the amount of 'extras' you must add for decor, as you set the scene with the blues of the Amalfi Coast or the golden tones of the Tuscan Hills." You can also get married in a major city, such as Rome, Venice, or Florence, which is sure to keep your guests busy. Once the party is over, it's the perfect place to stay for your honeymoon.



GEEJAM

GEEJAM: Port Antonio, Jamaica

Jamaica is very close to the U.S. and features a tropical climate year-round, so you can save by going here off-season. Set in the lush rainforested area just outside the town of Portland on Jamaica's northeast coast, the luxury property was originally a residential recording studio where the likes of No Doubt, Amy Winehouse, and India.Arie have written and recorded music. It has since expanded to become a six-acre private hotel, placed part-way up one of the coastal foothills of the Blue Mountains, looking out over the pristine shoreline of the San San Estate. For weddings, the resort will coordinate and execute every event detail. Geejam's private beach is available only to guests and is lined with red cabana beds and red and gold tables.

Strawberry Hill: St. Andrew, Jamaica

The mountain resort of Strawberry Hill offers an alternative to the classic Jamaican vacation. The 50-acre former coffee estate is perched 3,100 feet above sea level in the Blue Mountains, offering a picturesque backdrop for a wedding. The resort offers a variety of garden and villa venues that can accommodate 10-250 guests. The ceremonies can be on the beautiful mountain view lawn or on a balcony in a private room overlooking the city of Kingston. Smaller nuptials can also be held at the Jade Arbor or yoga gazebo. The resort offers a number of wedding packages. Full property bookings are available with three night minimum stays.

Las Ventanas al Paraiso: Los Cabos, Mexico

The desert beach resort actually has a Director of Romance, whose job is to make your experience as lovey-dovey as possible. Las Ventanas also introduced something special for brides and their bridesmaids: the New Beginning Ritual, a holistic spa ceremony. While here, the bridal party and guests can go golfing, horseback riding, surfing, snorkeling, scuba diving, deep-sea fishing, sailing, whale-watching, and more.



CasaMagna Marriott

CasaMagna Marriott: Puerto Vallarta, Mexico

Situated between the Sierra Madre Mountains and the Bay of Banderas, this resort has 433 newly renovated rooms and the largest resort spa in Puerto Vallarta. There is also an infinity oceanfront pool, tennis courts, multiple restaurants, and a kids program. Weddings here are very affordable and have many options. Get married on a beachfront patio, flowering garden, sand or on a grass-covered jetty with the ocean as a backdrop. Expert wedding planners help customize the event and accommodate any request. Other perks

include room rates, upgrades, and a hosted website, among other amenities.

[Rosewood Mayakoba: Riviera Maya, Mexico](#)

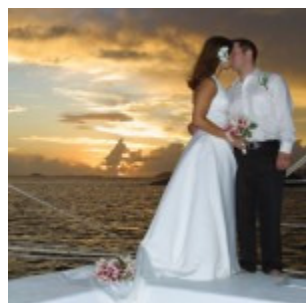
Weddings at Rosewood Mayakoba allow you to choose stunning outdoor venues like the white sand beach or the plaza with views of the resort, lagoon, and tropical jungle. Three different restaurants are available to cater. Retreat to the privacy of a private plunge pool after the ceremony, or come down a day early with the wedding party and receive treatments at the resort's spa, Sense, which is its own private island.

[Anantara Phuket Villas: Phuket, Thailand](#)

While you can opt to have a totally traditional Western wedding here, you can also have a Thai wedding with ancient customs, such as Thai long drum processions, traditional music and dance, and the releasing of fish for good luck. Have a wedding on the tropical beach that ends with a feast of local seafood. You can also opt to get married on to the villa grounds while barefoot in the infinity pool.

[Maho Bay Camps and Estate Concordia Preserve: St. John, U.S. Virgin Islands](#)

The U.S. Virgin Islands don't require a passport for Americans and are safe and affordable, yet you feel like you're visiting a world away. Plus, these resorts are eco-friendly! According to Marketing Director Melody Smith, "Many of our guests tell us they love staying in a Swiss family Robinson type treehouse and escaping the high-tech world for a week or two. From their screened-in tent cottage, visitors can see iguanas climbing through the trees, bananaquits feeding from the flowering trees, and with a walk down to the beach for a snorkel they can see all kinds of fish, coral, and a few turtles."



Bolongo Bay

[Bolongo Bay Beach Resort: St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands](#)

Bolongo Bay Beach Resort is a small family-owned Caribbean resort with 62 beachfront rooms and an abundance of activities. This includes live nightly entertainment, complimentary non-motorized water sports, scuba diving, catamaran sailing, and more. Bolongo Bay has two popular on-site open-air beachfront restaurants. Lorena Leonard, Bolongo Bay's Romance Director, guides couples through every step of wedding planning. Couples can wed right on the resort's 1,000-foot palm-lined beach or on the Caribbean Sea on a private sail on Bolongo Bay's own 53' catamaran, Heavenly Days. After the ceremony, celebrate in one of the restaurants or in a private tent set up on the beach.

[Peter Island Resort and Spa: British Virgin Islands](#)

With coconuts, colorful flowers, and beaches abound, this resort sits on a private island that makes a wonderful spot for a tropical wedding. It features a variety of accommodations, including furnished villas. You can even buy out the whole island (and even its airspace) for a large wedding. While there, guests can go sailing, diving, hiking, biking, sunbathing on the beaches, relaxing in the spa, and more.

[Wyndam Sugar Bay Resort: St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands](#)

This mountainside resort with incredible views hosts over 300 destination weddings a year. Couples choose from a number of picturesque outdoor venues such as St. John Terrace, a rooftop gazebo overlooking St. John and the British Virgin Islands. Couples can say "I do" on the resort's secluded stretch of beach, or if they have

a large group, they can use the spacious ballrooms. Passports are not required for U.S. citizens, and obtaining a marriage license is simple. Guests enjoy a secluded beach with an array of water sports including snorkeling, scuba diving and kayaking; three interconnecting freshwater pools with a waterfall and grotto; mini-golf, tennis complex; onsite spa; modern fitness center; several restaurants, and more.

Parrot Cay: Turks & Caicos

Tie the knot in a tiki hut on the white sand or in the private spa cottage overlooking the island's wetlands. All weddings here have a dedicated planner who assists with all preparations, including reserving the dates, food and beverage details, music and entertainment, photography, and any other service requested. Parrot Cay can accommodate small, intimate weddings, or can be bought out for larger weddings (up to 120 guests).

Are there any destinations I left off that you think make great wedding venues?

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December 16, 2010 at 9:41 am

{ 7 comments... read them below or [add one](#) }



[Sarah Wu December 15, 2010 at 11:42 pm](#)

Love this post so much! I'm recently looking at some place in Jamaica or Mexico. Thanks for putting list together.



[Andi December 16, 2010 at 4:12 pm](#)

Great picks!

[Claire from Limo Thousand Oaks December 16, 2010 at 7:01 pm](#)

Wow! Awesome list! Now this is what you call the ultimate dream wedding!



[Zablon Mukuba](#) [December 17, 2010 at 12:55 am](#)

Nice locations,

[nj wedding photographer](#) [January 26, 2011 at 6:28 am](#)

While we are discussing about topics relevant to Great Locations Around the World for Destination Weddings | Maiden Voyage, One beneficial aspect of the wedding photography is that many photographers don't require as much time in order to get a high number of quality shots. Technology and advanced digital cameras allow photographers to get hundreds of shots in just a few minutes. This cuts down on time invested in taking pictures and the cost of having the photographer present, so even if you're looking for a high number of shots, you may not be paying as much as you expect for the photographer's time.

Liza Foley [February 5, 2011 at 8:10 pm](#)

Hi... i am having trouble online finding all the options i need. I live in Allentown, Pa. originally, i just wanted to have a destination wedding, but it is not convenient for many family members, so my other choice is Kueka lake, or Finger lakes, NY. So beautiful and not a far drive. Also, my friends and i just loooove wine. I want to get married so the water is in the background, whether it be at a Vineyard, or a park. Can you help with a list of places like this?



[Emily Gerson](#) [February 6, 2011 at 11:34 am](#)

Hi Liza! Thanks for your comment. I'm actually not very familiar with that part of the country, but I recommend you contact the visitor's bureaus in those areas—they will know some great spots!

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