

Honeymoons 101

Questions every couple should ask before sailing off into the sunset. *By* **KELLEY WILLIS**



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ESCAPE ARTIST ANN PETRONIO OF ANNIE'S Escapes tells us what every couple should know to plan the ideal honeymoon.

Q *How far in advance should the honeymoon be booked?*

A Although there is no perfect time frame, to get the most for your money you should book six months to a year in advance. I have worked with couples who planned honeymoons four to six weeks in advance, but waiting that long limits your options.

Q *What are the pros and cons of using a travel agent?*

A There are no cons! It is free, stress-free and will ensure you get a trip perfectly suited to you. Even if you're savvy and self-sufficient, travel agents can tell you what questions to ask while you're booking and help you avoid scams.

Q *Should honeymoon activities be planned in advance?*

A If the activities you are planning are weather-dependent it is probably best to wait until you arrive to make an itinerary. But if you are vacationing during a peak time, it is recommended you book some activities prior to your vacation.

Q *Is getting travel insurance really necessary?*

A Definitely. Although the price of a honeymoon can seem overwhelming at first and the additional cost of insurance may seem unnecessary, there are too many potential downfalls to risk going without it. From lost baggage to a hurricane or death in the family, it is always better to be safe than sorry. In retrospect, the insurance is not very expensive, and it definitely outweighs the possibility of a lost honeymoon.

Q *Are group vacation packages appropriate?*

A A honeymoon is meant to be alone time for you and your partner so group vacation packages aren't ideal. I could see it in the right situation — maybe a culinary tour or an adventurous trip to Alaska.

Q *What are the best mediums for travel information, bargains and inspiration?*

A *Conde Nast Traveler* and *National Geographic Traveler*.

Q *How can you get the most out of your honeymoon while sticking to a budget?*

A A honeymoon should be planned the same way as the rest of your wedding. Figure out what is most important to you, and treat yourselves to luxury in those areas while maybe settling for a little less in other areas. Maybe stay in a more basic hotel if you want to splurge on tours and activities. Or splurge on a fancy suite if all you want to do is lie on the beach.

Q *How can couples avoid getting slammed with random fees?*

A Always read the fine print, and work with a travel professional who will disclose and explain all costs upfront. Make sure to ask questions, and compare prices to make sure you are getting the best value.

Q *What is the best way to go about receiving necessary vaccinations and other medical precautionary measures?*

A Make sure you contact your doctor or a travel medicine specialist



10 QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS BEFORE YOU PLAN YOUR HONEYMOON

Your honeymoon should be enjoyable for both of you. The best way to ensure that happens is to speak with your partner about his/her expectations and desires for your honeymoon – not only in terms of where you want to go, but what you want to do. Here are some things to hash out in advance:

1. What would your ideal honeymoon location be?
2. What type of vacation would you like to take (a cruise, backpacking, luxury, all-inclusive getaway, etc.)?
3. What types of activities (if any) would you like to do?
4. Do you want to plan your itinerary beforehand or wing it?
5. What type of foods do you like to eat and are those foods available in the places you are considering? Would you cook your own meals, dine out or stay in a resort that provides meals for you?
6. What time of the year would you like to honeymoon (right after the wedding or during an off-season)?
7. Do you want to be completely alone or with other couples/groups?
8. How much time and money can we dedicate to the honeymoon?
9. What do we need to prepare for the honeymoon?



10 WAYS TO SAVE ON YOUR HONEYMOON

Everyone wants to save. Here are a few ways to do it.

1. **Travel during the off-season.** If this isn't an option, try to avoid traveling around holidays.
2. **Create a honeymoon registry.** A honeymoon registry allows guests to contribute toward the expense of your honeymoon or purchase activities for you at your destination.
3. **Make a budget before you leave.** The cheapest and easiest way to travel is to take advantage of bundle packages with airfare and hotel. Factor in extra costs as well for tips, food, transportation and activities.
4. **Mention it's your honeymoon!** Take every opportunity to mention it is a honeymoon and enjoy any freebies and perks you may get!
5. **Do your research.** See where you will get the most out of every dollar if you are planning to travel outside of the country.
6. **Search smaller airlines.** Check out websites like cheapflights.com and kayak.com. Oftentimes, smaller airlines like JetBlue, Southwest and Virgin America offer flights at lower costs.
7. **Sign up for trip and airfare deals.** Sign up for websites like group.com and airfarewatchdog.com for deals on flights and trips.
8. **Consider staying local.** Research the nearby hidden gems. You can save on airfare and splurge a little more on other luxuries during your vacation.
9. **Cook for each other.** If you're not staying at an all-inclusive resort, make a grocery list and meal plan before you travel.
10. **'Gift' miles.** Ask friends and family to 'gift' you their frequent flier miles, especially if they are unsure of what to get you for a wedding gift. ●



as soon as you book your trip to ensure that you can schedule any vaccinations before you leave. Physicians are busier during certain seasons, and you don't want to be stuck trying to finagle an appointment last minute.

Q *What should you do if the wedding gets cancelled?*

A It is important to notify your travel agent immediately. Although the trip may be refundable, it may also be possible to reschedule by changing the names on the reservations.