

DESTINATION VS. LOCAL WEDDINGS

BY LISA HANSLIP | THE WEDDING PLANNER

Destination weddings are an increasingly popular choice for engaged couples. Last year destination weddings accounted for 17% of first marriages and 61% of second marriages.

Before you make the decision of destination vs. local there are definitely some critical issues that you should consider:

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS can be an issue. Certain countries have residency requirements and there can be various issues with your marriage license (for example, blood tests). It can be a common problem for couples to come back from their destination wedding only to find out that they are not legally married in Canada. Make sure to speak directly to the consulate for your chosen location – don't rely on information provided on resort websites.

BRING YOUR GOWN Make sure to bring your wedding gown on the plane with you (unless you're in a large princess-style gown and they won't let you through security!). A lost suitcase could be totally heartbreaking, especially for the bride.

WEATHER Be aware of potential weather woes. Not only could an untimely hurricane mean missed flights and stressful travel conditions, in the worst case scenario it could mean your venue got washed out to sea!

RESORTS Some resorts have been known to charge a bride hundreds of dollars for a bouquet of carnations – so make sure you get specifics in writing.

PHOTOGRAPHER Consider bringing a photographer with you. Not only will that give you the opportunity to build rapport prior to the wedding day, but the follow up after the wedding is much easier. It is not uncommon for resort photographers to have no experience over and above owning a camera, and we've heard horror stories encompassing everything from the photographers arriving totally inebriated to not showing up at all.

DECOR Depending upon the resort you choose, your décor and colour options might be fairly limited. You also might be one of 10 couples getting married on site that day.

COST A lot of couples find the notion of destination weddings appealing because it can be cheaper. But, while it might be cheaper for the couple, it is MUCH more expensive for your guests. If you're expecting your guests to allocate their vacation time and their hard-earned dollars to come to your wedding, make sure they know you don't expect a gift.

If you've considered all the options and a destination wedding is the right fit for you – ensure you give your guests lot of notice and pack lots of sunscreen.

BON VOYAGE!

AND DON'T FORGET TO BRING
YOUR TOOTHBRUSH