

## A-Z Guide to Planning A Beach Wedding

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Here is an A-Z guide to planning your Beach Theme Wedding!

**A** is for groom's wedding attire Contrary to traditional weddings, beach wedding attire for the groom can be as formal or informal as you like! Due to the heat, popular choices for grooms are cream, white, or off-white trousers, with a loose shirt and no tie. Shirts are usually white, though blue, purple, orange, or pink ones work to add a splash of color to break up the white, and can look very stylish. Jackets tend to be worn for the ceremony but removed shortly afterwards.

**B** is for accommodation See "hotel". **B** is for books/magazines It's almost impossible for an upscale bride not to purchase at least one glossy magazine filled with pictures, ideas, and suggestions. However, unfortunately most do not concentrate on organizing weddings abroad. Online content in the form of e-books or websites such as [beachbrideweddingguide.com](http://beachbrideweddingguide.com) are your best bet to getting information specifically geared towards organizing a beach wedding. From your glossies, cut out and save the pictures you like. That way, if you need to explain what you want when you are in a foreign country, you will have the pictures to help you.

**C** is for bouquet It's rare to take a bouquet with you to hold at your beach wedding venue, so usually it is organized at your destination. Nevertheless, it's a good idea to take a photograph of your preferred design to use as a guide (from your glossy magazines!).

**D** is for bridal party, Bridal parties tend to be a little bit smaller with beach weddings. Though you are not obligated to pay for the transport, board and lodging of your best man and maid-of-honor, many bridal couples do. However, since the remainder of the bridal party have to pay their own way, some are unable to afford the additional expense (particularly if your wedding is to be held far away) and others are unable to get time off work on your chosen date. Generally speaking, usually one groomsmen and one bridesmaid in addition to the best man and maid-of-honor is the norm, although some bridal couples do have two of each, especially when the members of the bridal party are actually related, such as sisters.

**E** is for bridal shower, Since this takes place much earlier than the wedding itself, remind your Maid-of-Honor to let the guests know that smaller, lighter gifts will be easier to transport, if they are intended for use during the honeymoon, as there will be a lot of other luggage to transport for the wedding itself.

**F** is for budgeting (see also "saving"). This is the most important aspect of your beach wedding. Getting married is an expensive business and requires immediate payments, so it's vital that you have the finances covered prior to doing it, whether with money you possess or money you've borrowed. Firstly, work out how much money overall you have to work with, then prioritise all the aspects you want to include in the wedding. If there are ones you don't want to compromise on, deduct those first from your total amount. For the rest of the items, allocate yourself a budget and stick to it - regardless. There are many ways to save money and still have a wonderful wedding.

**G** is for cake Most destination weddings include a cake - either traditional or local - usually decorated with a plastic figurine, (such as a bridal couple), or fresh flowers, as both are relatively easy to arrange. Should you want something different atop your cake, then it's worthwhile taking a picture of what you want (if it's a specific flower arrangement) or actually purchasing the item beforehand and bringing it with you. There are some beautiful rhinestone arrangements available online that are both small and light, so easy to transport. Although the hotel will provide a cake knife, you may have a special one that you wish to use, in which case pack it with you beforehand; in your cargo luggage; unfortunately, even a blunt knife such as that will be misunderstood if you put it in your hand luggage!

**H** is for candles A beach wedding is not a wedding without candles. Whether you choose to decorate the area with an arrangement of tealights, put a couple on each table, or devote one to each guest as a gift or favor, candles are a must! Small votive candles in holders with a beach wedding theme work the best here, which you could personalize for a more unique touch.

**I** is for celebrant Usually destination weddings are civil services, so use a celebrant such as a government official, however if you would like a religious celebrant such as a priest, pastor, minister, or rabbi to hold the ceremony, then you have two options: one is to try to arrange it prior with the hotel and/or wedding planner, and the other (and slightly more expensive option) is to bring your own along!

**J** is for champagne A complimentary bottle of champagne is usually included for the bridal couple by the hotel. Some couples like to celebrate with champagne as soon as they've said their vows, in which case get your maid-of-honor or best man to arrange a set of champagne flutes and a bottle on ice to be available at the site of the marriage.

**K** is for confetti The majority of sites for wedding ceremonies prefer eco-friendly confetti such as rice or rose petals. Rose petals can be arranged beforehand by a local florist and packaged for you, since roses may not be in season or available at your chosen destination. As many guests tend to bring their own confetti, in order to avoid any embarrassment or problems with your chosen venue, provide each guest with a small sachet of confetti yourself (handed out by the bridesmaids).

**L** is for decorations The decoration at destination weddings tends to be relatively low-key so it's important to check exactly what is included as some items you might expect to be included such as a floral centrepiece or balloons may be an extra charge or simply not available, in which case if you truly want them, you'll have to bring them yourself.

**M** is for wedding dress Never send your wedding dress packed in a case through the cargo section of an aeroplane - if you lose it, there is no way to replace it at such short notice. Instead, keep it on a hanger along with all the little accessories in a suit bag and take it on the plane with you. It may be a little inconvenient and bulky, but it beats losing it! When you arrive at the hotel or accommodation, arrange (or have your maid-of-honor arrange) to have your dress pressed immediately. If anything is not quite right or doesn't turn out the way you want, this will give you a few days to work with. Also, it's easy to forget that warmer places have cooler nights. Don't forget to pack a shawl, scarf, or even jacket of some kind, to keep you warm should the evening have a bit of a chill to it.

**N** is for dancing & dance floor Dancing on the sand is romantic, but not so practical. In this case, most places will have some semblance of a dance floor, though you may have to request it beforehand. It's also a good idea to ask where the dance floor will be in relation to the tables; sometimes it's possible to choose where you want it, other times it is fixed. In the cases when the hotel does not have a dance floor, you will need to

choose an area of the room/ space to allocate to it. **E** is for engraving Engraving on gifts is a lovely way of saying what you want, and showing that you cared enough to take the time to organize it beforehand. However, many destinations may not offer this service, so if you are planning to get something engraved, it would be wise to do so before you leave. **E** is for eco-friendly weddings Several places are more eco-friendly than others. If you want a truly eco-friendly wedding, then you will have to choose one that very few people have to travel to, since flying is considered a high contributor to the carbon footprint. Though it is possible to use recyclable paper and give the flowers away to be used elsewhere, it is difficult to expect a destination to be eco-friendly if it is not originally set up that way. On that note, there are several places that are specifically set up to be green, so if that's your choice, it would be better to have your wedding there rather than having a beach wedding. **F** is for flowers Since you will most likely get your bouquet at the site of your wedding, in order to convey exactly what you want, it's best to take a picture with you. An exception to this would be if you wish to have a dried flower arrangement for your bouquet, in which case it should be prepared ahead of time and carefully wrapped to be taken with you. Many people choose to dry their bouquets, however this needs to be done on your return. To help with the drying process, hang your bouquet upside down in a dark area until you return home and can find someone to frame it for you. Bridesmaids bouquets will be arranged similarly to the bridal bouquet unless otherwise specified. Do not forget to arrange button hole flowers or boutonnieres for the parents of the bride and groom. It is an item frequently overlooked in destination weddings. **F** is for wedding favors Finding items that are easy to transport, yet look stylish, are practical, and convey your heartfelt gratitude at your guests attendance is a difficult task at best. Trawl websites for best deals and ideas, such as [beachthemeweddingshop.com](http://beachthemeweddingshop.com), Hanson Ellis, or Cheers Favor Company. **G** is for garter A pale blue garter is traditionally worn by the bride, removed by the groom &ndash; with his teeth no less after the throwing of the bouquet. These are available online and in wedding shops, however, if you have a crafty relative, then a handmade one, is always that bit more special. **G** is for gifts Traditionally, gifts are given from the bride to the groom, groom to the bride, bridal couple to the best man and groomsmen, bridal couple to the bridesmaids, bridal couple to the attendants, and bridal couple to the guests. Carting gifts for all these people can use up valuable travel allowance, in which case there are three options: a) to buy something very small therefore easy to travel with it; b) to buy something larger, but to give it upon the return; or c) send the items ahead to the hotel for distribution when you get there. **H** is for hair Humidity wreaks havoc with hair. As a result, many hairstyles tend to lose their body or staying power. Opt more for swept back or low-maintenance ones which won't fall apart during the evening. **H** is for hotel Since your guests will be footing their own bill at their hotel, try to consider this when booking your original wedding, and provide information about other establishments in the same area with different price ranges. Should you manage to obtain a special price for a group booking, make sure your guests are aware of this so that they do not inadvertently pay the higher rate. **I** is for invitations Issued by the host of the wedding (the ones paying for the bulk of it), invitations need to be sent out shortly after the save the date cards, around 6 months prior to the wedding. They just confirm that it is going ahead, and remind guests to &ldquo;get organized&rdquo;. **J** is for jewelry Not only worn by brides and bridesmaids, jewelry is making a comeback with men too, particularly on clothes, such as the lapel. For brides, the phrase &ldquo;less is more&rdquo; is always true &ndash; don't overdo it with the jewelry as it will take away from your overall look. A subtle pair of earrings, a pendant, and maybe a bracelet or anklet is a nice touch for a bride, however if you start to jingle as you walk (or run) then you definitely have too much on. **K** is for kissing protocol Although it may be all you want to do, aside from a few loving kisses throughout the evening, try not to become all-engulfed with your loved one during the reception as extended periods of kissing will alienate your guests (which are not so many) and some may feel a little uncomfortable. You will have all the time in the world after the reception is finished, so despite it being &ldquo;your&rdquo; day, in this instance, you do have to consider the guests a little. **L** is for legalities/ paperwork It's better to be over-prepared when it comes to paperwork and legalities, as any item missing could result in you not getting married! To be on the safe side, take with you (in addition to your passport), a certified copy of your birth certificate and a declaration that you are single. If you are divorced, you will need a decree of divorce, and if you are widowed, a death certificate. Do also make sure that the certificate of marriage/ license is valid in your home country by contacting the local embassy or consulate. **L** is for location/destination When choosing your destination, don't just be taken in by the pretty pictures. Make sure the resort offers you more than just a nice beach, even if that is your primary reason for going. Consider your preferences, whether you are a good long-distance traveller, whether you have reactions to insect bites, whether you like windy destinations, your interests (sports, history etc&hellip;) and use those to help you decide. The language of the country may also play a part. **M** is for make up In order for photos to look clearer, make up needs to be applied slightly heavier than usual. Unfortunately, in warmer or more humid conditions, it's easy to sweat it all off. Use facial powder to remove moisture, wear waterproof mascara, and cover your lipstick with lip-fix. It's also a good idea to keep a tissue or two in your bag to dab at your face if it gets too hot. Oh, and red lipstick on a bride ALWAYS looks good &ndash; do consider it as an option, even if you don't normally wear it. **M** is for music Usually, music for destination weddings is on a CD. If you want a special song played, then take it with you. There is no point risking that it won't be there. In some places, the wedding march is not what's played, so if you want that, make sure you take it with you. Similarly, if you want a specific song to dance to, for the bridal dance, then again, have it ready before you go. To be extra-safe, it doesn't hurt to take a spare copy. **N** is for nails Although many places do have nail technicians on site, your maid-of-honor should have a little kit with her comprising needle and thread, button, spare fake replacement nail, toothpick etc&hellip; to be prepared in the even that something needs repairing or rescuing. **O** is for wedding organizers/planners Usually included in the price, the inhouse wedding planner is supposed to be your &ldquo;local connection&rdquo;, so if you have a problem or don't like what he/she is doing, make it known earlier rather than later. Ideally, they would present you with local options on items such as the cake, flowers, hors d'oeuvres, placement of the dancefloor, menu, and entertainment, to name a few. **P** is for photographs You can't go back and &ldquo;do it again&rdquo; so it is wise to have a good photographer on hand. Many of the

more expensive hotels will have someone they "work with", but you should insist on meeting with them beforehand to see a sample of their work. Arrange prices beforehand too – copies of originals (the negatives always stay with the photographer) tend to be very overpriced. Try to negotiate a lower price than that which is first given. In all the rush, sometimes the photographer forgets to take certain photos such as one with all the women of the four generations etc; therefore you should write a list of the photos you wish to have and give it to the photographer before the wedding commences.

**Q** is for quenching thirst in the heat Dehydration occurs easily in hot countries, so make sure you and your guests have easy access to lots of liquids (alcoholic ones don't count, sorry!) particularly water. Arrange for jugs of water to be placed on the tables, if this is not the custom, and have staff on hand with glasses of water, should there be none during the ceremony. The last thing you need or want is a fainting guest!

**R** is for reception In hotter climates, food deterioration is much more rapid, therefore unless properly displayed (i.e. in fridges or protective basins), it's better to steer clear of some foods such as shellfish, mayonnaise/ eggs, and other foods which react badly to being left out in the heat. Make the most of the wonderful array of tropical fruits available, delicious local dishes, and delectable desserts!

**S** is for rings Remember that fingers swell in the heat, so your rings that fit perfectly in normal conditions, may not slide on quite so easily when the temperature rises and the humidity kicks in. Not something to be anxious about, however, if you are worried, then rubbing a little soap along the inside of your fourth finger will provide a little lubrication, albeit feel a little strange! Not being used to wearing a ring on your left hand (or right if custom dictates), you should also watch out that it doesn't "slip off" when you're swimming in the sea!

**S** is for save the date cards These should be sent out at least 9-12 months prior to your actual wedding date in order to allow your guests ample time to make arrangements and budget accordingly. Usually the "save the date" cards follow the same theme as the invitations.

**S** is for saving By making group bookings for flights/transport and accommodation, you can get generous discounts and sometimes an upgrade for the organizer/s. Travelling off-peak will also provide discounted rates and a resort that is not as busy as usual. If you are not offered a discount, don't forget to ask if one is available – you never know. See article "Saving For Your Wedding Is Easier Than You Think".

**S** is for shoes Remember that 3-inch heels are a lot harder to walk on when it's sand! Either you can arrange for a carpet to be placed along your "aisle" or you can go for a stylish pair of sandals, wide-heeled mules, or flats. Closed toe shoes have the advantage of looking neat, however can be hot, sweaty, and uncomfortable in higher temperatures. Paint your toenails a bright red and don a pair of shimmering sandals. However, although it's perfectly acceptable for brides to wear sandals, it's just not for grooms. Opt for white or cream loafers or other soft leather slip on style shoes instead.

**T** is for table plan If you have invited a more than about 40-50 people, then you will need a table plan, which you should prepare prior to arriving at your chosen destination as it does take quite a lot of time. However, most destination wedding parties tend to consist of numbers under this, in which case, aside from the bridal table with the bride, groom, best man, maid-of-honor, bridesmaids and groomsmen, everyone else tends to sit wherever they like. You may like to enquire as to whether they will be providing round, square, large, or small tables, and provide numbers of tables. Don't forget to put one for the cake, another for the presents/gifts if you are having them, and another for any wedding favors, small gifts, or thank you items for your guests, to be distributed by the bridesmaids.

**T** is for telegrams As you will undoubtedly invite more guests than will actually be able to attend your wedding, make sure you include all the relevant details of the hotel so that if some of them wish to send a good luck telegram, they are able to do so easily. The best man is responsible for checking the reception, collecting them, and reading them out at the reception during speeches.

**T** is for toasts and speeches These tend to be less formal than at traditional ceremonies, however they still do take place. If the reception is being held outside, although speaking without a microphone may seem friendlier, if you are at a location which is a bit windier, such as some of the Greek islands or the Caribbean island Aruba, then it's worthwhile preparing to have a microphone on hand just in case.

**T** is for transport Transport to and from your hotel to the site of the wedding can sometimes be a short distance, in which case the method must be decided upon. Many places will offer limos, horse and carriage, or taxis with white ribbons, however these will also be at an additional charge. If however, the wedding ceremony takes place at the site of hotel, then investing in good walking shoes (to walk from the main building to the wedding pagoda) is not a bad idea either.

**U** is for underwear Traditionally brides wear sexy underwear on their wedding night. Though you won't be wearing it for very long, be prepared that anything with synthetic "lace" may itch due to the heat.

**V** is for video Should you want the ceremony and/or reception videoed, it may be done by the photographer or his/her assistant, however as this is not guaranteed, it's advisable to ask about it beforehand. If there isn't a facility for video, you might like to assign this duty to a guest, using your own camera.

**V** is for vows Getting married abroad doesn't always mean that the vows said will be traditional ones. Many civil weddings have more modern ways of saying "I do", so if you want the "Dearly Beloved" then you will have to speak to the organizer beforehand. Some people like to see what they will say to practise it a little so as not to make a mistake. This can be arranged on request. Alternatively you might wish to write your own vows – again, this needs to be mentioned to the organizer, or at least the celebrant!

**W** is for who to invite No-one can tell you who to invite to your wedding, however it stands to reason that if you are travelling abroad or a fair distance, then only your closest friends and family would be happy to pay the additional costs on transport, accommodation, and expenses. A good guideline is, if you were invited to their beach wedding elsewhere, would you go? Generally speaking, around 20 people will attend a beach wedding including the bridal party: the bride, groom, best man, maid-of-honor, one/two groomsmen, one/two bridesmaids, parents of the bride, parents of the groom, two couples close to the parents, two couples/friends close to the bridal couple.

**W** is for wellness It is important for you to look and feel your best when getting married. Any stress you feel will show in your face (and your photos!) so if there is a spa or relaxation facility at your hotel, take advantage of it! However if there is not, then a nice bubble bath, calming face mask, maybe even a glass of wine, candles and soft music should do the trick. You could also settle for a quick massage from

your loved one the day before. Regarding your skin, drink lots of water over the week before you marry to give your skin a natural glow, though in small quantities in order not to become bloated. is for wedding websites For all the information you need to know for your wedding, make sure you bookmark [beachbrideweddingguide.com](http://beachbrideweddingguide.com) and its related sites: <http://www.busybrideweddingguide.com> and [beachthemeweddingshop.com](http://beachthemeweddingshop.com) X is for "x" kisses Being the bride, prepare to kiss and be kissed a lot by more than just your new husband. In order to maintain your glossy, colored lips, invest in a cheap lip-fix, which will stop everyone wearing your lipstick on their cheeks and save you from having to reapply it every hour! Y is for younger participants Many hotels are set up very well for adults, but tend to be a little boring for kids. To avoid the kids at your beach wedding get bored, arrange beforehand for someone to mind or play with them on a rotation basis. Alternatively, the hotel may have a "babysitting" facility or "kids club" of which you can take advantage. A special "kiddie" gift such as a game or toy that will engage their attention also works well, as does bringing along a selection of appealing DVDs, videos, and CDs for them to enjoy – and hopefully, keep out of trouble. Z is for zero-stress! Now that you've got all the basics to get you started you can begin organizing your wedding stress free and with confidence! Go to it, girl!