

# 20 tips for marrying abroad

Do you dream of tying the knot on a beach in paradise? Getting married abroad has never been easier...

WORDS: NAFISA FROM NAFISA WEDDINGS, WWW.NAFISAWEDDINGS.COM

WWW.NAFISAWEDDINGS.COM

Your wedding is probably the biggest event you'll ever plan in your life and it takes time and dedication to get every detail just right. The average bride spends around 250 hours organising her wedding, whether it's here in the UK or in a far away destination. A large part of getting married abroad is taken up with trying to find the desired country, the perfect venue, arranging the flights, and sourcing local suppliers, not to mention sorting out the legalities linked with getting married in a foreign country.

Here at Nafisa Weddings, we've spent a large amount of our time building up relationships with international suppliers and tour operators in countries such as South Africa, Thailand, Canada and more so we can offer brides a good source of local knowledge. We have also negotiated wedding package discounts

with luxury hotels and are able to pass these savings directly to the bride and groom.

Getting married abroad doesn't have to mean hours of stressful planning – we've come up with 20 top tips for planning the perfect wedding in paradise.

## 1 Choose your destination

First things first – grab some brochures and decide on which country you and your partner want to get married in. Your wedding coordinator or tour operator can present you with lots of ideas of paradise wedding settings.

## 2 Time of year

Think about the time of year you want to get married as this may affect your choice of destination. For summer weddings try Europe and the Seychelles and for winter go for a

Caribbean resort or Thailand where you're almost guaranteed sunshine.

## 3 Set your budget

Once you have decided on your wedding destination, work out your budget including air fare, accommodation and wedding package fees. These costs are payable in the UK prior to departure, so you don't need to worry about going over your budget.

## 4 Get booking

Plan and book as early as possible. Weddings overseas are becoming increasingly popular and just like in the UK the best venues and dates get booked early. Certain destinations such as Malaysia and Bali require a minimum of 12 weeks notice.

## 5 Establish a contact

Once the booking has been

made ask the venue who your contact will be and establish email communication with them to start planning your desired wedding package and booking all your chosen suppliers. A basic wedding package usually includes marriage licence, fees and certificates.

### 6 Take a break

If you're planning your wedding well in advance, you may want to visit your chosen wedding destination and hotel beforehand to ensure that it's what you're looking for. Think of it as a well-earned break from the wedding planning!

### 7 Visit the doctor!

If you need to take any medical certificates or have any vaccinations, visit your GP. Many countries require you to be vaccinated against diseases such as yellow fever and typhoid.

### 8 Age issues

The legal requirements for marrying abroad vary from country to country. In general you must be over 21 years of age. You must also ensure your British passports have at least six months left before they expire.

### 9 Contact embassies

Investigate all the legalities for getting married in your chosen destination. Contact the relevant embassies to find out the exact requirements and that your wedding will be valid when you get back to Britain.

### 10 Gather your documents

Put together a folder that contains all your original required documents, such as birth certificates, decree absolute and death certificate of former spouse if relevant. You will not be able to get married without them in most, if not all, destinations. Many tour operators will require photocopies of these documents up to ten weeks before you go.

### 11 How many days?

Check the number of days you legally need to be in the country of your choice before your wedding can take place. For example, Weddings in Malaysia and Grenada can only be conducted after 5 working days of arrival.

### 12 Insurance

Book your wedding insurance to ensure peace of mind as it will cover any damaged wedding photographs, attire and if wedding rings or gifts are lost.

### 13 Send out invitations

Send invitations to your guests at least six months before. This sounds early but they will need to organise flights, accommodation and holiday from work.

### 14 Group discounts

If you are travelling with a large wedding party, many tour operators will also find you the best group

discounts available. Ask when making your booking.

### 15 Dress to impress

Start shopping for your wedding dress! Keep in mind the climate at your destination when you're trying on outfits. In most cases it will be warm, therefore you should consider dresses in a cool, natural fabric, like chiffon or silk and a light linen suit for the groom.

### 16 Think about luggage

Make sure you have a suitable luggage carrier for your wedding clothes, remember they will be travelling in the aircraft hold. Hang your wedding garments in a steamy bathroom as soon as you arrive at your hotel to help minimise any creases.

### 17 Get some help!

Get yourself a wedding co-ordinator. They will take you through every aspect of the ceremony and





WWW.LUCYKASONSOPHOTOGRAPHY.CO.UK

# TOP FIVE

## Wedding locations and properties abroad

### 1. Mauritius

Brides to be can indulge at The Givenchy Spa at One&Only Le Touessrok

### 2. Thailand

Receive a blessing from the Monks at the Banyan Tree, Phuket

### 3. Seychelles

Get married in the Creole Bungalow located in the grounds of The Plantation Club

### 4. Barbados

The Fairmont Royal Pavilion – simply the finest hotel in Barbados

### 5. USA

Do a 'Britney Spears' and get married at the Little White Wedding Chapel, Las Vegas

with their local knowledge will offer all the expertise to make your special day go smoothly. You can discuss the finer points of your special day such as decorations, photographs, videos, music, cake and flowers with them too.

### 18 Wedding hair

If you want a certain hairstyle, take pictures from hair magazines so the local hairdresser can re-create the style. Pre-book any beauty treatments before the big day and furthermore sunbathe sensibly; you want to look suntanned rather sunburnt in your photographs.

### 19 Choose your readings

In many cases the wedding ceremony will be quick and informal. If you want to have a specific reading most registrars are happy to include them. You could also combine an

exotic wedding location with local cultures and traditions.

### 20 Have a video!

We always recommend you have a wedding video. It will be the best way to show friends and family when you return home. Some locations can also offer live internet-linked weddings so your friends and family can actually see you getting married via their home PCs.

### And last but not least...

In most cases, you'll receive your marriage certificate at the hotel after the ceremony. It is important that you check every detail of this carefully. Where your certificate is not ready prior to departure, your tour operator will send it to your home address. In many countries this could take up to four months.

## Find out more...

### Nafisa Weddings

Nafisa Weddings provides a complete professional wedding co-ordination service for clients all over the world. Whether it's to present you with destination ideas or to arrange the entire event from start to finish, they can create and manage your wedding exactly the way you want. Contact them to arrange your complimentary initial planning meeting on 0787 6615091, visit [www.nafisaweddings.com](http://www.nafisaweddings.com) or email [nafisa@nafisaweddings.com](mailto:nafisa@nafisaweddings.com)

### UK foreign office and British Embassy details

[www.fco.gov.uk/travel/countryadvice.asp](http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel/countryadvice.asp)

### World Weather

[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)