

Avoid Trouble In Paradise:



Photo Credit: Robert Evans

9 Ways To Prepare For The Destination Wedding of Your Dreams

By Angela Proffitt

Where you choose to say, "I Do," sets the tone for your entire wedding, and a destination wedding gives you the perfect opportunity to create an ideal paradise you'll remember for the rest of your life.

Planning such an event presents a separate set of challenges that are unique to the local and wedding experience, but that doesn't mean you can't pull off your dream day. Here are my tips to help put your mind at ease:

- 1. Buy travel insurance.** I cannot stress enough how important this is. While your planner, your coordinator and your mother-in-law may want to control certain elements of your big day, you can't always predict the weather or what may get lost. Heaven forbid it be your wedding dress, and speaking of wedding dresses...
- 2. Do NOT ship your dress.** I've taken it upon myself to carry my brides' dresses with me on airplanes. It's worth it. Sure, it may open up personal and awkward conversations with other passengers, but it will save you the stress of worrying about whether or not it gets lost. I'd rather humor a stranger for a couple of minutes to have that peace of mind.
- 3. Keep passports up-to-date.** If you're traveling out of the country, everyone will need a passport. That includes children, including infants. Although you may not buy an airline ticket for a small child, they will still be required to have a passport. Also, you want to ensure that your passport meets a foreign country's requirements for travel. I knew a bride whose mother almost missed her daughter's wedding because of this. While the groom didn't mind not having his mother-in-law in attendance, the bride was nearly heartbroken. Go online to the United States Postal Service website (www.usps.com) and find a location that can ensure your passport and all other documentation is up-to-date.



- 4. Plan for your mobile data usage.** You don't want to incur outrageous charges because you posted a few selfies on Facebook. Pick a resort that offers WiFi to you and your guests. I also recommend downloading WhatsApp before you leave. It's a convenient service that allows you to exchange text messages over WiFi networks.
- 5. Tell your bank that you're traveling.** With the rise of security breaches and identity thefts, banks and credit card issuers are doing everything they can to protect their account holders. If your bank sees charges at a resort overseas, they will likely suspect fraud and freeze your card. Most major banks ask that you let them know when you're traveling and have even set up ways for you to notify them online. After that, you can spend freely.
- 6. Carry on all medications, and prepare for allergies.** I strongly suggest not putting medications in luggage you'll have to check. (Refer to #1.) Also, bring extra over-the-counter medications, even if you don't think you'll need them. I had a bride whose allergies were hardly an issue at home, but after a few days of being at a resort, she developed a slight reaction to the vegetation in the area.
- 7. Be mindful of your guests' travel needs.** Take a look at where your guests are traveling from, and how they will get to their destination. Will they have to change planes or travel overnight? How will guests travel on and off the resort? What handicap accessible options are provided? There are several variables to consider, but a good planner will facilitate everyone's needs.



- 8. Prepare for bugs and wildlife.** Islands are known for animals and insects we don't typically see in the U.S. You may need to check your shoes, clothing and hotel suite, especially the sink and bathtub, for any unexpected and unwanted multi-legged visitors. Also, while it may not smell so great, apply bug spray (or wear the bands) as often as necessary. A mosquito on a tropical island isn't the same mosquito that's in your backyard.
- 9. Ask about the water.** You've heard the saying, "Don't drink the water," when you're traveling to some areas of the world, but what you may not consider is how food is prepared. I had a health-conscious bride who loved snacking on fruit, and she fell ill because she wasn't aware that the fruit had been washed with local water resources.

Your special event shouldn't be spent stressing over the "what ifs" of what could go wrong. By taking a few precautions, you can prevent your dream day from becoming trouble in paradise.

Angela Proffitt is a celebrity wedding planner, entrepreneur, and productivity coach with more than 10 years of experience in the wedding and event industry. As the owner and lead designer for Vivid Experiences, a full-service event and wedding planning company, Angela's work has been featured in more than 100 publications, including People magazine, Us Weekly, Grace Ormonde Wedding Style Magazine, and Style Me Pretty. Learn more about Angela and Vivid Experiences at www.angelaoproffitt.com.