

# Destination Weddings: Important Tips

Planning is the Key to Success

written by Christine Giordano



1. Plan your destination wedding by visiting the destination at least seven months prior to your date. See if you can schedule a planning session to meet the wedding planner, chef, band, photographers, florist, etc. Visit during the season you'd like to have your wedding to prepare for the proper climate.
2. Find out how to get a marriage license from the Ministry of Justice. (Tel: 1 876 906 4923 -31 Email: customerservice@moj.gov.jm.) Couples can be married 24 hours after arriving in Jamaica, but only if prior applications have been made for a marriage license.
3. Check passport requirements and availability of direct flights and accommodations for your guests.
4. Choose your months wisely: the winter months are cooler, but more expensive. During the summer and fall, keep guests cool by offering them water, and perhaps a fan, at the door.
5. In Jamaica, weddings must be performed before sunset so do not intend on having a full moon witness your "I do".
6. If your reception is going to be on the beach, be considerate of guests who are wearing high heels and dress shoes, and offer a basket of different sized flip-flops at the entrance.
7. Secure a photographer that you're confident will do a good job. Some photographers in the United States do island weddings. A male-

Photo Courtesy of: Yemi Rose

- female photography team offers the opportunity for pre-wedding photos in the bride and groom's dressing rooms.
8. If your wedding is outside, or during hurricane season (July through November), plan for unexpected showers.
9. Keep in mind the pros and cons of resorts. Many can do much of the planning and organizing for you, but may have a chain of weddings scheduled for the same day.
10. Decide whether you'd like a buffet or eating stations. Classic Jamaican Island foods are jerk chicken and pork, ackee & saltfish (codfish), rice and beans, curried goat, yams, plantains and bananas, fresh juice and sour sop, a fruit delicacy.



Photo Courtesy of: Yemi Rose

11. Book a church or chapel in advance, or see if your resort will do it for you. If you don't belong to a parish, consider asking for advice from a non-denominational church on the island.
12. Check with the tourism department to see if they offer wedding discounts, or suggestions regarding florists, caterers, jewelers, etc.
13. If it is important for you to have a wedding administrator or planner at and during your wedding, get the agreement in writing.
14. Determine if payment will be made in advance. Find out what kind of currency you will need for all of your vendors.
15. Appoint a friend or family member to direct the schedule of details.
16. If you intend to have an on site wedding planner, meet them in advance and make sure they are aware of your full vision.
17. On your special day, leave your cares and worries behind, relax into the island culture, and gather your memories for a lifetime.

*"On your special day, leave your cares and worries behind, relax into the island culture, and gather your memories for a lifetime."*