

Planning Your Beach Wedding



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Select Your Wedding Date and Time Based on Beach Weather

Beach weddings can be romantic certainly, but disastrous when nature drops a cold, grey, cloudy, rain shower on your special moment.

Depending upon the beach at which your ceremony is held, the weather predictions should dictate what month has the most predictable sunny days and early evenings. Monitor the weather reports from past years and then more closely as your selected date draws dear. This is significant because you should always have an alternate plan in mind to avoid being a wedding “victim of nature”.

I have heard that a wonderful location for a beach wedding is Destin, Florida located on the Gulf of Mexico. The beach in this area has fine bleached white sand and the weather is full of balmy warm breezes. The sunsets are equal to those in Hawaii or “Gone with the Wind”. The wind is not known to be terrible bad, but mainly calm with wafting breezes.

This website www.AccuWeather.com is great for looking ahead at weather forecasts; they have daily, weekly and monthly prediction for the Destin, Florida area. It’s fantastic because they have satellite views, winter and global weather, tornado and severe weather forecasts. You can’t get any better help at your fingertips than this. Keep in mind that Destin, Florida can also have severely blistering sun at times, but that should not be a problem if you take care to plan using weather forecasts, and plan for a later afternoon wedding.

I think almost anyone who dreams up their beach wedding wants the perfect sunset as well as no rain, excessive heat, sand storms or tornados.

You can use weather forecasts to help plan the timing of your ceremony

so that you capture the sunset after you exchange vows. Coming from Hawaii myself, we always said that your wish/dream will come true if you see the tiny green flash of light when the sun sets.

This moment occurs for split second as the moment that large, fluorescent orange ball disappears into the ocean's horizon. Imagine seeing that shortly after you have both said, "I do". I mention this for a very important reason; this added touch can be arranged because weather forecasts today even tell us when the sun will set for the evening.

So by beginning your plans with this very important step, your beach wedding plan should please yourselves and guests. It will be like a movie scene, but tangible and real with the calming ocean waves and sea salt smell wafting about in the breezy, balmy air. Moments like this should last a lifetime in our hearts, minds and in pictures, but it is just that, you tend to feel what your mind or camera captured.

There is a specific property located in Destin, Florida called the Edgewater Beach Condominium that is known for being the dream spot of the gulf for such a perfect beach wedding. You can view their property and other information at www.edgewaterbeach.com if you want an idea and sense of what I have shared. There is even a page dedicated to beach weddings.



Search Together for Your Ideal Location for Your Wedding Ceremony

Clarifying what a beach wedding really means to both of you is a great communicative starting point before heading out on your hunt for the ideal spot for your beach wedding. The point I am making is that individuals have different dreams and that is perfectly fine. You can also agree to disagree to anything in life.

The clarification and individualism I refer to is having your toes wet on the edge of the waterline, standing on a cliff overlooking the ocean or being in a nice hotel's outdoor veranda with the waves in the near distance, without sand between your toes.

Communicating to your future spouse exactly what you envision will make you both focused without being disgruntled about parts of an entire plan when it comes together.

The beach location, pointedly the spot, where your ceremony will be held and guests will sit or stand at should be selected by both of you. It's natural for both to have their own ideas about the perfect spot so it's best to decide together.

Consider the path to get your ideal spot, while this can affect guests who maybe elderly or handicapped. The view is also important, as that is what also adds to the ambiance of a beach wedding. It's best to actually walk to the designated area to check out if there's litter or dangerous things in the sand and feel if it sits in a wind pocket or water crashes loudly on rocks or shore there.

If so, make a mental note about safety or cleaning the area up prior, possible sweaters or jackets and that guests may not even hear you both say, "I do". Perhaps too many cons make it easier for both of you to

move onto selecting another ideal spot.

Some beaches, like in Japan, are loaded with jelly fish. It would not make for a nice ceremony if anyone got stung by a jelly fish, or stepped on turtle eggs. This is another major factor when scouting your location.

Then again, if your idea is to see the ocean in the background but not stick your toes in the shoreline, this wouldn't matter.

Not much can top a beach wedding. The care you take in planning it can make the greatest difference, like anything else in life really. Too much information and asking questions has never hurt anyone, so ask, read, plan and re-plan. You don't want to end up sticking your head, rather than toes, in the sand on your beautiful beach wedding!

Invitations to Your Beach Wedding

First impressions speak a thousand words.

Clearly a wedding invitation is the beginning moment when a guest gets a feeling or impression of what your wedding will be like. I align it to seeing a menu and then a picture of the food you are about to eat, exciting, awful, curious, romantic or something to look forward to. My point is that choosing and designing your wedding invitations should be another joint effort to agree between future bride and spouse.

Cost, exclusive printing with gold or silver embossing, hand written, sport or lifestyle theme, picture insert, correctly spelled names and mailing addresses, or to hand deliver are all a part of this decision process.

Openly discuss what your invitation budget is first and foremost. Then focus on incorporating the main theme or style of your lives together.

A few more details are needed in a beach wedding invitation because of

these factors. Forecasted weather for appropriate shoes and clothing, parking location and even a tiny map insert for safe access if your location is remote.

Request a seating time in order for your ceremony to go as planned, especially if the green flash of the sunset is included in the finale. Whether there will be transportation or assistance to and from the beach is another consideration in case you have guests that may not drive or could have a hard time getting up or down a sand dune.

You may even accent the fact that it is a “sunset wedding” which nicely indicates that punctuality is important for this moment.

Indicate what parts of the wedding will take place on the beach so guests are fully prepared. If drinks will be served or dining by the seashore will follow, be sure and include where the actual party celebration will take place after vows are exchanged.

Some invitations go so far as to specifically mention that children or animals are not welcome and that should be considered.

Properly addressing guests by names is very important because no one wants to feel you don't know who they are. Verify that the mailing addresses are right, so no one is slighted if they never receive their invitation and you possibly fail to follow up on their RSVP. Some people even send their invitations electronically through email, but even that requires a correct email address. However, email could prove to be easier to organize and track.

If you are having your celebration in an exclusive club and you want to avoid wedding crashers, you may consider having a scanned bar code used for access on the invitation.

Your guests will use your invitation to plan their attendance so make it as easy as possible for them. With that in mind, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail.



Who Will Bless Your Marriage

Every couple that gets married is faced with a major decision as to who will bless the marriage.

This is a personal choice of course and not mandatory. It's purely based on personal faith or beliefs.

It could be a tougher issue if the bride and groom have different beliefs or faiths, then "compromise" enters the picture again. Some have decided to have two separate blessings: they get blessed by a catholic priest in church, or by a Jewish Rabbi, or by Justice of the Peace from a courthouse, or a Notary Public licensed in the state you will marry in. And it's no one else's decision except what the bride and groom decide.

Keep in mind that before any blessing of a marriage can take place you must first attain a marriage license in the state you will marry in.

They cost about \$94.00 in Destin, Florida and are valid for about 60 days. You also have a waiting period once you attain your license. So be careful in making arrangements that you have not set them too early.

Every state varies in price, period of validity and waiting time.

Since your choice at this point has been to hold a beach wedding ceremony, you have less to worry about as far the availability of the church and priest, or Jewish worship center and Rabbi.

The beach wedding gives you flexibility to incorporate more of your own wording with the standard wording... “I, (Bride/Groom), take you (Groom/Bride), to be my (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do us part”.

Even if a Notary Public solemnizes your marriage you have the same marriage license requirements to abide by. If you are having a Jewish Rabbi, the challenge will be that the beach marriage cannot take place until after “Shabbat” or the sun goes down. That may change the entire beach wedding plan altogether.

The Justice of the Peace charges \$30.00 and a Notary Public \$20.00. The fees for a Priest or Rabbi are not public knowledge and a personal inquiry is needed.

There are only three states that authorize notary publics to solemnize your marriage ceremony; Maine, South Carolina and Florida. So, ideally, if you chose a beach wedding in Destin, Florida you can certainly use a notary public.

NOTE: Whatever arrangements that you make for blessing your marriage based on belief or religion, you must always follow through by having the appropriate legal documents filed. Once the ceremony is over, a marriage record should be signed by bride and groom and witnesses are optional. This then needs to be filed with the marriage license at the Clerk’s Office within 10 days of the act. Once recorded by the Clerk’s Office an official marriage certificate is issued for legality. A legal marriage is required in the event either party wants a divorce in the future.



Cautious Wedding Costs

Grooms - a word of caution: your bride might have champagne taste and a beer budget, like me!

No worries, all wedding dreams usually find a way to come true. By being frugal, open, communicative and focused you can have a memorable beach wedding within your budget. Both bride and groom need to remain cost conscious, be willing to work hard at compromising and remain realistic. Easier said than done, but the point is that it can be done!

A budget for your entire beach wedding is very important because it really makes bad sense to start a marriage in debt. Once you both have come to a budget that is sensible, take a look at how you can trim it.

Something that usually works with women is the “trade off”. If you save X amount of money, it can be used for a future weekend getaway or a nicer honeymoon. I personally make internal trade off with myself constantly.

Basically your expenses come from bridal apparel, invitations, food,

drink, priest or person blessing marriage, decoration, food and celebration hall, out-of-towner invites and transportation.

My biggest suggestion if you have to reduce costs, look to family and friends and your network and “trade off” wedding gifts can be wedding presents.

Many wedding presents are duplicate, frivolous or end up being dust-collectors in your closet over time. If you have friends who may have a location that can host the party celebration, that may save you about \$500 on the average for a room or hall and you just consider it a wedding gift.

If several friends want to pay for your invitations as a gift, welcome it! You should be able to get what you both really want. Ask for volunteers from family, who are usually more than willing to use their time and creative ideas to decorate your beach area and celebration location. Both future mother-in-laws are usually more than overjoyed to do this.

Many people don't realize that any normal notary public can marry a couple.

I myself am a notary public for the state of Florida. To perform a wedding ceremony it costs \$20.00, and there may be a considerable difference when hiring a priest, rabbi or other. That of course needs to be one of those personal decisions made by the bride and groom.

The civil marriage done by a courthouse is legal. A marriage in a church by a priest is just performing the legal action plus the action of blessing a marriage in the eyes of God. A notary can perform a legally binding act, but in the romantic setting you prefer rather than in a courthouse setting.

What is fantastic about this, is they are doing it with ambiance for no extra cost and you are able to personalize your vows weaved in with legal wording. That is just another example of a “trade off” bargain.

The next trend and logical, smart thing to do, is to rent the brides

wedding dress.

You grooms may not win this one, but do your best to talk sense into your future wife. Use the “trade off” method I mentioned earlier. Your common sense says that she will wear this gown for 2-4 hours maximum, dry clean it after and it will remain in a box with the other “dust-collectors” in the closets for 50 years or more.

Ask bridesmaids if they will purchase, rent or sew their own dresses in the same theme or color. Have all the men rent their suits, including the groom. It will help convince the bride.

Lastly, can you really afford the lobster for all guests?

You can have a lot of family and friends make a buffet table long of food. And everyone knows a good “Betty Crocker” wannabe! Give her shot at stardom. That would save you about \$600.00-\$1000.00 for a sweet piece of nothing.

The list goes on about creating your dream beach wedding you just need to both work at it to have champagne dreams come true if you are on a beer budget.



Safety at the Selected Location

A serious subject in your planning phase is the safety at the chosen location for your wedding.

Remember: beaches are public property in almost all cases.

There are private beach designations for condominiums built on ocean front property - like the Edgewater Beach Condominium.

Most military areas are clearly marked, privately owned areas are usually marked with signage and commercial properties usually have both fencing and signs.

The areas to be cautious of are the known public areas. I suggest taking a drive at various hours or the estimated time frame you planned for your wedding ceremony to get a feel of who hangs out at that location.

It wouldn't hurt to check out the lighting once the sun has set, bathroom facilities in case they are needed, the actual sand areas, if they have needles, glass, rocks, red ants, jelly fish, or protected areas.

This does not require a rocket scientist. You should just be aware about overall safety for everyone sharing in your wedding day at the beach. No natural weather disasters welcome, right? Then it's best to try and cover these other unknowns, too.

An easy solution is to book your beach wedding at Edgewater Beach Condominium in Destin. The beach is private, they have restrooms right at the beach's edge, and they even have a private reception room. This room can also double as a backup wedding venue in case of inclement weather.

Going to the location several times after you decide on the location as your date draws near is wise. Wise I say because all beach areas, like major cities, host a variety of normals and abnormal.

There will be locals, vacationers, timeshare owners, one-timers and other unknowns who visit the beach. Very unpredictable for outsiders, but locals know what normal pulse beats are in their neighborhoods. Observing local police beats at areas like this can be indicative of good or bad activity.

For example; in Marbella, Spain, I have spent over 3 years during various seasons learning that it is a good example for safety alertness. Marbella, Spain is known for its incredibly rich lifestyle on the most attractive southern tip of Spain.

However, if you have been there as often as I have, you realize that the Spanish Policia only patrol from the main road leading from the Malaga Airport into Marbella and it's 2 streets that lead to the ocean front. Once you cross the street and head up to the local areas of living, you are at serious risks by local Spanish gangs and other corruptive people that prey on non-Spaniards in particular.

The point being, safety should not be a low priority on your list just because it's not on your budget list. No matter what city or state you decide to have your beach wedding in, safety is always a consideration.



Transportation and Accessibility to Beach Location

No matter what beach or what city you decide to join in matrimony, it's wise to check on acquiring the right permit or permission from proper authorities.

Like many other places, Destin, Florida has its shares of residents that have been protesting weddings and other events on or near their beach front areas. Of course commercial businesses welcome wedding parties as it brings business into such naturally beautiful areas like Destin, Florida. In particular, military installations can be great trouble. Just check with proper authorities so that you are sure you have the right to access property and don't get charged with trespassing.

If you plan to provide a small bus or van to transport wedding guests to your selected beach area, be sure to secure the right parking areas. It is wise get an idea of how much of an area you will need during the ceremony as well.

Good planning can help your guests avoid circling around

neighborhoods looking for parking spots. The point is to avoid parking tickets for illegal parking, blocking fire lanes, boat launch ramps or public beach walkway access.

Your plan should include a meeting or starting point to travel to/from the beach location. This will also help ensure your planned ceremonial times are met.

This is another reason that Edgewater Beach Condominium makes terrific sense. They have plenty of covered parking on-site and can easily accommodate hundreds of wedding guests.

If the location you chose looks as though it is very close to personal beach front residences, it wouldn't hurt to ask the residents for personal permission to avoid possible altercations or disagreements. Courtesy and respect is essential when concerning other people's private space.

Realistically, your big day will be planned during the summer months, which is peak tourism season. With that in mind locals and tourists may be upset if you infringe on their vacation time if they are unaware of your sudden appearance in front of their rental with 100 or more family and friends in tow.

If the entire wedding entourage will be occupying a nearby hotel, perhaps the concierge may be able to assist you with coordinating the use of the hotels shuttle vans to/from the beach and celebration location. If you will be staying at a nearby rental then other transportation arrangements should be made to ensure everyone has a ride to/from the beach and celebration location after.

Many people don't go so far as to worry about transportation coordination; however, most of your wedding party will be flying in to an unknown area without their personal cars. So make a little extra effort to make it a smooth experience for everyone.



Who Will Bridal Participants Be

Selecting your bridesmaids and best men is a very personal choice, but since you are planning a beach wedding some extra thought should be given. I say this only because some people cannot really stand to go barefoot or want to risk the elements because of their health. It is just courteous to assure them that you would not be upset if they said no for personal reasons.

In general bridesmaids tend to be easy for some and a nightmare for others.

First clarification should be made that along with being selected there are certain implied duties to be expected from them. Beginning with the Maid of Honor; this should be a person that you know will lend you emotional, physical and morale support leading up to the “I do” moment.

Her tasks include oversight of your wedding plans and shouldering the bulk of your stress.

The best man is just as hard for the groom to choose. It's more common for the groom to choose a brother, but it should really be someone who is close to you as a friend. Your best man must be supportive and

shoulder what the groom can't.

Remember that the maid of honor and best man practice and appear in the wedding together, so it's best they get along well. The fine line is that each party's spouses or mates could get jealous and that could turn into a disaster itself. Just be careful when making your choices.

The bridesmaids should be those that support you months before the wedding. They help plan and network from the start to the end. They assist in bridal gown selection, planning of all phases, the bachelorette party and all aspects of the event.

The groomsmen are usually close male family friends that have supported the groom in growing up. They assist him in renting his tuxedo, the bachelor party and physical help needed through the entire wedding planning and event.

A word of caution for the bride: in your selection of bridesmaids, remember that females in general tend to be "eye scratchers" if their emotions are not in check. Bridesmaids should be focused on making it the bride's special moment. This has to be regardless of their personal feelings or trauma in the own life, they should control their own behavior as best as possible.

The most difficult challenge is selecting the parent's participation in the wedding and their roles and invitation. In today's society, it is more common to have patchwork families that all get along, but there are still those divorced adults that just can't and won't get along.

This can be a major stress point for bride or groom, but it can be solved. Maturely inform both parents that you certainly want their presence or don't want their presence and the valid reasons that you feel. Explain that it's your moment, like they had their moment in the past, and you only want well-wishers at your wedding.

Compromising, planning, respect and courtesy from all adults is what is essential in these decisions.



Weather Sturdy Theme and Decoration

Your theme and the forecasted weather at the location selected for your wedding ceremony will sway what your final decision will be, if you are smart.

As romantic as chiffon flying in the breeze is, it will do just that with a gust of wind. I personally like the feminine, soft look to it, but you need to secure it right.

The other factor is: will you use a mobile gazebo or large bamboo poles in the sand, or do you have concrete foundation to deal with or grass.

Once again, nature is in charge. These are little technical difficulties in planning such an outdoor event that should have ambience in harmony with the beach. It's very possible to attain with solid, realistic planning.

If you have a cemented walkway leading to the ceremonial spot you could jazz it up with a red carpet roll. This also makes its nicer for everyone to have on normal foot wear. You can still have red carpet in the sand, but you might need to reinforce it with plywood underneath. Long sheets cost about \$7.00-\$10.00. The red carpets can usually be rented.

Chairs can be rented but are not smart if they will be unsteady and sink unpredictably in the sand. It could even be unsafe for guests.

If guests will be standing, select an area with a foundation for them or inform them that it's a "no shoe" ceremony requiring "toes in the sand".

Some guest may opt out of attending this phase but may well attend the indoor, formal wedding dinner celebration that follows. You should not be upset; you should consider their age and health and respect that.

If you have a gazebo and decorate it with chiffon, be aware it could whip the bride or groom in their eye during the ceremony, so perhaps loosely wrapping it around the poles gives you the look without the pain.

Flowers are always nice at weddings, but have them tied to chairs or in heavy planters so they don't fly away. Very tender, frilly flowers should be avoided as most of the petals will blow away in the wind. If you do have tables with candles or candelabras its best to have very heavy ones so they don't tip over and set everything on fire.

A sort of new trend is to have new disposable cameras on every 4th or so guest seat for them to use throughout the wedding day.

A small handwritten note attached to each requesting they be returned prior to the end of the party would be appreciated to capture all the moments that can be missed on such a full day.

This does not mean you should not have an officially designated camera person or videographer if you can afford it; it's just nice to see all the other spontaneous and emotional reactions of your special day.

If you will have music during the ceremony it's best to select the music that you both agree on. The task of setting up the equipment can always be arranged by groomsmen, family or friends, or leave that to the dinner phase indoors. Hearing the "I do" is the most important. The rest is just historical tradition. Be free to create your own tradition!

Get the Right Photographer/Videographer

As mentioned earlier, if you can afford a good photographer or videographer you will be very pleased with the results.

You should take the time to see some of their work to ensure they capture moments and looks that you feel is right for your wedding. It may even be a good idea to find someone with experience in capturing beach weddings in particular. I say this because of the difference from indoor to natural light is great.

An experienced person should know how to capture your moments without having to stop your ceremony often which ruins the joy and romanticism of the event. They would also more than likely have the right attachments, film type and camera for shooting outdoors.

The same experience should apply to a videographer to a certain extent because that is known to capture real moving life and whatever happens the film rolls. The difference would be the angle or where they need to stand to work with how it looks once it's in the camera.

If you really don't have money, a friend can video for you and you should be thankful for them capturing your special day. The idea I mentioned earlier about providing guests new disposable cameras and returning them to you to get developed is not so bad either to capture other activities and guests.

Young kids can video and snap pretty good pictures. You should also be able to have close family members pay for their own copies of specific wedding poses they want to have, namely both parents and grandparents, to help you both with wedding costs.

Aside from the person who makes a video or pictures with the disposable cameras, you should have a photographer solely to capture the bride and groom. These pictures are usually all the traditional poses that people hang on walls or put in their wedding album; the "I do"

moment, the rings on their hand, the kiss, the flower girls, putting the rings on each other, the cutting of the cake and the first dance.

You should plan early enough on the professional photographer/videographer if you are hiring for these services. The added logistics of having a beach wedding in a city that you don't call home requires more planning.

For example, if you are flying into your destination city, you may not want to spend the first few days scrambling for a local hire. The internet can be of great help and provides easy access to their work experience and photo samples.

Keep in mind that you are more than likely not the only couple who is getting married at the beach and needs a photographer. This means having a firm appointment to meet your wedding date and time. **BIG TIP:** This should be coordinated before you print your wedding invitations.

Out-of-Towner Accommodations

It's very important to have a solid plan in place for your out-of-town wedding guests. If you live in the city of your wedding, perhaps other family members can accommodate other siblings in their homes. If not, it would be a great extension of your courtesy to offer arrangements for them nearby for a price they can afford.

This takes care of the added worry of guests arriving and trying to find a place to stay in proximity to the event. Especially if you have a large amount of guests needing accommodations, it's nicer when they are all in the same hotel/motel/bed and breakfast inn/condominium rental or timeshare.

Every attendee may have a different budget for accommodations or

particulars they want. Don't get upset if they prefer to stay in a more expensive accommodation. The only thing you can do is offer to find something for them and if they chose to make their own arrangements, respect that.

Many people use attending an out-of-town wedding attendance as a mini-vacation for them. Encourage it!

The incredible Edgewater Beach Condominium in Destin, Florida on the Gulf of Mexico offers a beautiful location that may hold the answers to your dream beach wedding.

The property offers individually owned rentals as luxurious and private as being at home. They offer ocean and tropical garden views, large pools and even a heated Jacuzzi.

Each unit has floor to ceiling sliding glass doors to balconies with the view of the ocean. There are fully equipped kitchens, washer and dryers, all electronic convenience hookups and free internet in each rental.

Some units have walk out patios to the shore.

The most spectacular feature is their experts available to coordinate your beach wedding on the ocean front of their property. They have discount rates for wedding parties who use their accommodations.

Their experience with the weather, flexibility in accommodating your beach wedding theme, celebration dinner, experienced photographers, the authority to allow beach weddings on their ocean front makes Edgewater the perfect beach front wedding location.

The Edgewater Beach Condominium in Destin, Florida can reduce your wedding planning stress by about 90% so you can focus on getting to the beach on time to say "I do" before the sun sets. To top it off, their special rates can keep all your guests in the same place. The accommodations vary from luxury one bedroom condominiums, two bedroom vacation rentals and three bedroom beach condos.

Your solution for the transportation issue to/from a location you may have searched for will also be found!

Besides, your entire plan is based on being in a beach setting and it's good to know it's conveniently located and safe as well. Edgewater Beach Condominium is centrally located right off highway 98 with various restaurants, nightlife, gas stations, fishing, water park, ocean activity rentals and golf in the surrounding area. Most are within walking distance. A better location for the area can't be found. The property is well maintained with clean pristine white shoreline and superb hospitality.

Extra Special Actions to

Make the Moment Personal and Memorable

There are many ways to add personal things into your beach wedding ceremony, making it more memorable.

I am sure you've heard of couples who bungee jumped; scuba dived, rode horses or jumped out of planes while exchanging their vows.

Anything can be added into your plan... it's your plan. In Hawaii hula is danced, in Germany the couple saws a huge wooden log together, in Japan it's very elegant and the couples light the candles to start the party, so it's all up to you both.

Since you have decided to have a beach wedding, you can have the wedding participants spring in the ocean after saying "I do", you can ride up to the guests on horses, you can have hula dancers, you can have the groom carry you to the place you will say your vows. There are a trillion ideas but it needs to be something that has meaning to you. You could arrive by speed boat or parachute; it really depends on your choice and your budget.

You can have rose petals, candles, red carpet, music, love- bird releases,

butterfly releases or anything your heart desires.

I attended a wedding in Germany and they had a real falcon perform hunting for the guests. This was obviously the groom's choice.

The village choir and band performed songs like you hear in parades, the bride's wishes. Later on they went around the guests and tried to take donations for a printed book with pictures of their relationship for fun. They also asked guests to be a part of them acting out the moment they met and fell in love.

You could be Cinderella and arrive in a horse drawn carriage and run towards the ceremonial spot to have your prince (your groom) to symbolically fit your foot with a glass slipper. You could possibly take off after saying "I do" in a hot air weather balloon and meet up with your guests at the reception after a short ride.

Some customs incorporate religious beliefs as a part of the ceremony. A close friend married a Thai lander in Bangkok and explained that a Buddhist monk draped a string forming a circle to their heads to join them and bless them. After the Monk's string blessing ceremony, it's followed by a water ceremony, where the guests poured holy water over their hands for good luck. After the water ceremony, they signed their marriage certificate and then ended it with the planting of a Love tree.

If you need specific uncommon objects that may be from a faraway land, always ask your family members first, as they may have some of the items representing your culture.

What fabulous hospitality! Absolutely gorgeous condo! The most beautiful sunsets on the white, pristine shores of Destin! The lapis and turgoise waters! We had a wonderful time. Thank you for inviting us to share this very special destination.

To Cocktail or Not Cocktail on the Beach

Depending on how much of your beach wedding ceremony you intend to have at the beach, you should decide to have cocktails at the beach or not.

Whether you decide to or not, inform your guest on the invitations. It also depends if you have a table or small set up for glasses and alcohol, as well as someone who is willing to serve drinks.

If you decide to serve cocktails at the beach, you may want to keep it simple with one glass of champagne served to each guest for a toast after the “I do” is said. Any more than that requires more coordinating and setting up. If you plan your reception elsewhere, consider that your guests will have to drive and you certainly don’t want anyone driving drunk, over the limit, or getting stopped by the police.

If your entire ceremony will be held there at the beach location then it really doesn’t matter because most guests will have decided amongst themselves about getting home. Most will have a designated driver, get a taxi, or sleep at the condominium where your ceremony will be.

Someone always drinks too much at weddings, so ideally you will have your beach wedding where you have arranged sleeping accommodations. As I mentioned earlier, Edgewater Beach Condominiums in Destin, Florida is the ultimate solution to host your beach wedding.

Another safety precaution about serving drinks on the beach is plastic champagne flutes. You want to avoid any breakage and prevent someone from stepping on glass pieces that may have buried in the sand. I suggest this if your family or friends are serving and you have no bar or set up area.

Of course if it hosted by professional staff, you won't have to worry about it being glass or plastic. In fact you may need a special permit if you are on a public beach or it may be strictly forbidden compared to a private beachfront property.

There are really fancy plastic champagne flutes these days and they come in different colors too. The only clean up would be the empty bottles and guest can toss their glass in the trash as they leave the beach for the reception. I find this perfectly acceptable if you are having your reception at another location. Guests will understand why they didn't toast your moment with a crystal champagne flute.

It's very nice if you offer non-alcoholic beer and champagne at the reception so guests have more options. Your guests can still celebrate without the risk. Note: the price of a non-alcoholic beverage appears to be slightly more expensive.

"We had a great time & really enjoyed your Condo. We plan on coming back next year. What a wonderful relaxing time!"

We really enjoyed the condo. We especially liked the kitchen, and all the gadgets and tools in it. We truly felt at home. Thank you for sharing your amazing condo with us.

Dining on the Beach or Elsewhere

The second major part of your wedding plan is the reception. As seen often on television, dining on the beach sounds and looks so romantic.

Is it really?

I am quite sure that if sand blows in my meal, I don't think I'd be happy. Food tends to get colder faster when near the breezy ocean. Beach dining is possible but requires warming equipment and set up, serving help, cleaning and packing up. You may need the help of caterers which

This was our first visit to Destin and by all the comments in this book, we are sure we came to a great place. Your Condo was beautiful, clean and very well equipped - well above our expectations. We would definitely come back

can be costly. Having a pavilion with a cement foundation to work with and a lot of sterno warmers makes it easier too.

The alternative is having your reception indoors. But watch out for the rental fees. Edgewater Beach Condominium has a large reception room on site. If your wedding party is under 15 or so you may ask someone if they host the reception at their home. This could all change if your entire wedding party has flown into a selected beach wedding city. Then you may have some slim options, such as renting a ballroom in a hotel or an outdoor veranda or potluck at the beach pavilion

Whatever you decide to do, make the best of it and plan your menu according to how the beach elements may affect your menu.

It's easier to have a fancy menu when your reception is held indoors because there is the appropriate cooking equipment and serving staff.

It's more difficult to have exquisite food items kept in sterno warmers at the beach. You could still have a nice menu but change the theme to fine finger foods or a cold menu.

If your decision is to have the reception in a rental ballroom of a hotel, price is certainly a factor. This is a reason that some people cut people from guest lists.

It's perfectly acceptable to ask closest friends and family if they are willing or purchase their dinner or take up donations to have a better menu or invite more guests.

My sister, in Hawaii, got married at the hotel they both worked at, on the beach of Waikiki. They couldn't afford a fancy reception. With the urging and support of family and friends, they themselves suggested those who attend the reception pay for their own meals, and they did. It was beautiful, like a dream, and affordable.

Her friends and family loved her so much that they did what it took for her to have a reception as well as her ceremony. So dreams can come true. You simply have to chase them and plan for them to come true.

Colors, Flowers, Chiffon, Fireworks, Rice, Music, Bon-Fires or Doves

There are so many decisions you have to make that your head is probably spinning by now. Tackle one thing at time. Whatever the result, it'll be exactly what you planned, if planned well.

Your plans should have included what color theme will be worn by wedding bridesmaids and groomsmen, and will that be duplicated in the reception decoration and the cake.

What kind of flowers will be used at the beach ceremony and what kind will be in the reception room? What material will the wedding parties clothing be, chiffon, linen, satin, cotton, or denim based on

appropriateness of weather and elements.

Will your reception room have crystal glasses and plastic at the beach?

Will your groom carry you across the red carpet or will you stride arm in arm with a parent?

Will there be real fireworks on the beach after your vows and as the sun sets into the ocean, or will you have a casual bon-fire and bbq grill reception on the shore?

Will you have heavy metal, classic or romantic music played throughout your ceremony?

Will your guests throw rice on you or flowers after your "I do" or toast you with champagne?

Will there be 2 white dove lovebirds released in the air, or are you going to saw a wooden log in half with your new husband to symbolize working in unity?

There will always a million beach wedding ideas, but you will only have one wedding. The main point is to have everyone share in the joy of decision to commit, a very big step and very big commitment.

So as they say party till the cows come home! Doing it in your style will just make you both happier and festive for everyone, after all it's not a gloomy affair.

The fact that you want to have your wedding at the beach really gives you a lot of different options that you wouldn't have if you held your ceremony indoors. You could even have a church *and* beach wedding.

There's no rule when it comes to blessing your marriage in the eyes of God, friends and family or whatever your faith may be.

I have gotten to the point in my life where I see other couples who easily got married, and now the hardest part is for them to really stay married. Up until the time you should give all your best efforts, love and energy

on planning to get married and stay married. Don't cheat either of you out of the most wonderful memories that you may ever have. Plan with joy and love for your wonderful beach wedding.

Plan B for Your Beach Wedding

At this point all your plans are made and your head has stopped spinning, until someone asks you if you have a "Plan B". I know it sounds like shock treatment when I indicate more planning required. The planning I am now discussing is not as in-depth as the entire original plan but still a very good idea.

The most horrible thing that could happen is that the bride or groom backs out at the last minute.

That would mean a broken heart and lost money. You will recover your heart but money deposits you may not.

Be sure to track who paid what and how much was paid and what still needs to be paid. This is just a fact; my intention is not to sound negative or discouraging. It's to prepare you to have a good solid "Plan B". In retrospect, perhaps you should divide up who pays for what in the planning process so that if either of you back out, the cost involved or lost is somewhat fair to parents and or yourselves.

The most common reasons to have a "Plan B" is really not just for abnormal reasons I mentioned above, but in case of weather, or musicians not showing up, or rental ballrooms double-booked, or a lack of permit for the beach location.

Murphy's Law says "Anything and everything that can go wrong will go wrong". It's actually a good warning to keep you on your toes in life to be prepared, not to wish you bad luck.

So back to the grind of "Plan B" and "what if" it unexpectedly pours down raining and lightning bolts dart down at you?

Set up the reception room with a little extra time in case you need to move ceremony there earlier.

If your beach location is on a hotel's beach front, work out the use of an outdoor veranda with ocean view or covered garden area with a view of the beach as an alternate, ahead of your big day. Imagine having a large gazebo like part tent set up for the outdoor look would still be nice. You can arrange for your photos to be taken the next day or when the weather is better. Be sure to discuss it with the photographer in case they are booked out back to back.

Having your ceremony under a covering poolside with the ocean view is just as nice if necessary. If you take a look at Edgewater Beach Condominium website in Destin, Florida you will see what I am just tried to describe as a nice alternate in an emergency.

So this should be the last strenuous phase of your planning before your special beach wedding, but one that can be well worth it in case you have a "What if" what's my "Plan B".

Don't exclude all the other things, such as flight insurance for plane tickets, room rental flexibility and even a back-up homemade cake if necessary. You know cake is always welcome and not just at weddings. It has never hurt anyone to plan for their future and to make dreams come true, especially for a beach wedding.

Good Luck and God Bless. I hope this guide helps you have the best beach wedding ever!

Sincerely,

Lindsey Love