



Soak up the sun and private time at Little Palm Island, Florida.

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193

warm-weather getaways

Grab your bathing suits, slather on that sunscreen and head to one of these hot (literally!) beach destinations. BY SHERRI EISENBERG

Let's face it: No matter how adventurous you are, after the wedding, you probably just want to mellow out with some sunshine, sand and piña colodas (sound about right?). We hear you—so we went ahead and found the top beach destinations for some postwedding R&R. Here are our top picks, including where to stay, which beaches to plant your towel on and what to do with all that free time (although we bet you have a few ideas of your own too!). >>



let's make a deal

Six tips for getting the best airfare online

1

factor airfare from the start

Don't set your heart on a destination before pricing airfare first. If you're torn between Nevis and St. Lucia, and Nevis requires two flights and St. Lucia requires one, the difference could be big.

2

book early

Since you're probably planning your honeymoon for right after the wedding, there isn't much flexibility on dates, right? Book tickets as early as possible—especially for peak season, when reduced fares are rare.

3

be flexible

Most newlyweds want to fly out the day after the wedding to maximize vacation time, but remember: Tuesday and Wednesday are often the cheapest days of the week to travel, so be flexible if you can.

4

price out packages

There's something to be said for a combo deal, so don't rule out those airfare and hotel packages advertised online.

5

get on everyone's lists

Figure out which airlines fly your route, and then sign up for one of their frequent-flyer programs and email newsletters so that you'll be alerted when they offer specials.

6

do your research

If you don't like the fares, try again later. There are often unadvertised reductions, and fares can change every few hours. Consider this: The first flight of the day is often the cheapest and it will likely be on time.

Special thanks to Jeanenne Tornatore, Orbitz.com; Tracey Weber, Travelocity.com; George Hobica, Airfarewatchdog.com

Mexico

The allure of heading south of the border is simple: Who doesn't love a good margarita and a slower pace of life in the sun?

BEST BEACHES Heading to Cancun? The Ritz-Carlton has a beachside restaurant with curtained-off tables so you can eat with a view. One caveat: Don't go without a reservation. In Cabo, most beaches aren't swimmable, but there are a few worth seeking. Check out Playa Bledito, between the Meliá Cabo Real and the Hilton Los Cabos Beach & Golf Resort.

WHERE TO STAY There are newer resorts on the Riviera Maya—but none have the beach that Maroma Resort & Spa does (doubles from around \$395). There's also hot-spot Dreams Cancun Resort & Spa. This all-inclusive has palapas and plenty of margaritas (doubles from \$234). It's a hard choice—where to stay in Cabo, home to resorts that lure celebs—but Esperanza is a safe bet (doubles from \$475).

WHAT TO DO Skip the bus tours and instead, rent a car and head to Chichen Itza for a day of exploring. If you're visiting Cabo between December and March, whale watching is an absolute must.

Florida

For East Coasters, there are no easier-to-reach beaches than these, especially since they stay warmer longer than those further north.

BEST BEACHES On Miami's South Beach, you can admire the sea on one side and the Art Deco architecture on the other. Palm Beach's shore is worth visiting for people-watching. Also hop a boat in the Keys for Bahia Honda Key, a remote island that's just 45 minutes from Key West.

WHERE TO STAY The W South Beach is brand new, but it feels very much a part of the scene with a lounge-style lobby, sexy rooms and two pools surrounded by cabanas (doubles from \$395). Also try The Omphoy Ocean Resort, which brought sizzle to Palm Beach when it opened last year (doubles from \$239). Want adventure? Little Palm Island is just a short drive and boat ride from Miami (doubles from \$795).

WHAT TO DO Hang out on the rooftop deck at Miami's Agua Spa at the Delano; or get your massage at The Setai. In Palm Beach, stroll down Worth Avenue for great shopping. In the Keys, it's all about the sunset.



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