

# The Boston Globe

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## REAL DEALS

### Marry adventurously, at seaside or on safari

By Richard P. Carpenter, Globe Correspondent | June 1, 2008

The glow that surrounds bride and groom will be there whether they marry in their hometown or halfway across the world. But destination weddings can be memorable, with their sometimes dramatically different ceremonies, and an exotic honeymoon can prolong the bliss. Here is a sampling of wedding and honeymoon packages that could save both money and stress:

The Shangri-la Caribe Resort, in Playa del Carmen on Mexico's Riviera Maya, conducts weddings on the beach with turquoise waters as a background. A podium of native woods is surrounded by coconut and palm greenery, and tiki torches help light sunset ceremonies. Cocktails are served around the pool, and then festivities move to the main restaurant. A basic wedding package starts at \$3,999.

Visit [shangrilacaribe.net](http://shangrilacaribe.net) or call 888-896-0690. For information on the area, go to [rivieramaya.com](http://rivieramaya.com).

You need not travel thousands of miles for a dream wedding. The Charleston, S.C., Convention and Visitors Bureau's sixth annual Wedding Guide is filled with planning information.

For a free copy, visit [charlestonweddingguide.com](http://charlestonweddingguide.com) or call 800-868-8118.

Speaking of the Charleston area, the Wild Dunes Resort in Isle of Palms is popular for weddings and honeymoons. Its Bliss by the Beach honeymoon package begins at \$295 per night for three nights and includes accommodations at the Boardwalk Inn, champagne on arrival, a dinner for two, breakfast in bed one morning, and one 50-minute massage per person.

Visit [wilddunes.com](http://wilddunes.com), where you will also find answers to questions about weddings and receptions, or call 888-778-1876.

**In Palm Springs, Calif., the Horizon Hotel's Honeymoon in the Desert offer costs \$995 for what the hotel puts at a \$1,425 value. Couples stay three nights in a King Deluxe room and receive a bottle of champagne, a \$100 voucher for dinner for two, two spa treatments, and two tickets for the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway, providing a romantic tram ride 8,500 feet high with spectacular views of the Coachella Valley. The package is valid through October.**

**Visit [thehorizonhotel.com](http://thehorizonhotel.com) or call 800-377-7855.**

For the even more adventurous, there is a wedding in the wild at Kenya's Cottars 1920s Camp, through Uncharted Outposts. Couples wed under a clear blue sky surrounded by chanting Masai warriors. If the wedding is in July or August, the soulmates will behold the great wildebeest migration, but any time of year they will see hippos, impalas, buffalo, zebras, and cheetahs. A four-night stay, including all the arrangements, starts at \$3,250 per person.

Visit [unchartedoutposts.com](http://unchartedoutposts.com) or call 888-995-0909.

All-inclusive resorts attract many altar-bound couples. At Sandals, with locations in Jamaica, St. Lucia, Antigua, and the Bahamas, the wedding can even be free if couples stay six nights or longer in concierge category accommodations or better. A six-night stay begins at \$2,610 per person. The WeddingMoon package includes a personal consultant, a picturesque knot-tying location, document preparation, a certified copy of the marriage license, one 5x7 photograph, "Just Married" T-shirts, a Caribbean wedding cake, the marriage officiant, a reception for the couple and two guests featuring hors d'oeuvres and sparkling wine, and a honeymoon dinner for bride and groom, Continental breakfast in bed, bouquet and boutonniere, and government and administrative fees.

Visit [sandals.com/general/wedding-basic.cfm](http://sandals.com/general/wedding-basic.cfm) or call 877-SANDALS (726-3257) and ask for the Bridal Hot Line.

Oasis Hotels is offering free weddings at five of its Mexican locations. The package includes a civil ceremony with judge and choice of an oceanfront terrace or beach service, a wedding cake for 10, glasses of sparkling wine for 10, and a host of amenities, as well as a complimentary one-night stay on the first anniversary with a minimum five-night stay. The catch is that couples must book five double rooms or more with a minimum four-night stay.

Call 800-44-OASIS. For resort details, visit [oasishotels.com](http://oasishotels.com).

And then there is Hawaii, where weddings and honeymoons are so popular I found 140 offers on the state's tourism site. Having once attended a wedding there, I fully understand the attraction.

Visit [gohawaii.com](http://gohawaii.com) and select Weddings & Honeymoons from the drop-down category menu on the right-hand side of the page.

See the USA

This appears to be the ultimate motorcoach tour: a 31-day jaunt across the country. Paragon Tours' new America the Beautiful trip costs \$3,999 and departs Aug. 10, taking in sights from Niagara Falls to Mount Rushmore to the Golden Gate Bridge to Bourbon Street.

Visit [paragontours.com](http://paragontours.com) or call 800-999-5050.

See the Sox?

These days, Red Sox games always sell out, so one way to see the Sox is to make an event of it and book a hotel package.

Boston's Hotel Commonwealth has one for June 6 and/or 7 only. Baseball in Boston includes overnight deluxe accommodations for two and two tickets in Fenway Park's Coca-Cola Corner. The price starts at \$459.

Call 866-784-4000. For hotel details, visit [hotelcommonwealth.com](http://hotelcommonwealth.com).

The Liberty Hotel has a Fenway Fan package in which guests get two Pavilion Club tickets, one or two nights in a king/double room, and breakfast for two the next morning. Prices begin at \$699.

Visit [libertyhotel.com](http://libertyhotel.com) and click on Packages or call 866-507-5245.

Monster lunch

Old Town Trolley has come up with an offer that combines a tour of Fenway Park with lunch atop the fabled Green Monster left-field wall. The 90-minute trip, which costs \$50, departs at 11:30 a.m. on non-game days from the Red Sox Team Store at 19 Yawkey Way for a behind-the-scenes look at what some call America's most beloved ballpark. Then it's on to the Monster for a Baseball Box Lunch that includes a Fenway Frank, Cracker Jack, fresh fruit, dessert, and a bottle of water. A vegetarian lunch is available upon request. Tickets must be bought a day in advance.

Call 617-269-7010. The website is [trolleytours.com](http://trolleytours.com).

Still talking food

From June 13-22, the second annual Vermont Culinary Classic at Stowe will spotlight the state's culinary heritage with a variety of events and tastings. Lodging packages are available beginning at \$63 per room per night and include a Culinary Bounty basket.

Visit [gostowe.com](http://gostowe.com) and click on Specials or call 800-GO-STOWE (467-8693).

Hey, big spender

If your travels take you to the Dallas/Fort Worth area and you want to make a Texas-size impression, DFW Elite has a car for you. The exotic car rental company has added a 2008 Dodge Viper convertible to its fleet. For a limited time, the weekday rate is \$700.

Visit [dfweliteautorental.com](http://dfweliteautorental.com) or call 817-838-RENT (7368).

Summer bargains

[SmarterTravel.com](http://SmarterTravel.com) notes that not every destination raises its prices in summer. Five off-peak bargain spots are New Orleans, Phoenix, Belize, St. Martin, and Antigua. Yes, they

are warm-weather destinations but all boast ample places to cool off, be they resort pools or the sea.

#### Orbitz sale

Orbitz has launched its Summer Sale, saving travelers an additional 10 percent off existing discounts. Travelers can save up to half off at qualifying hotels for a trip booked by July 6 for travel through Sept. 30. There are no minimum stay requirements.

Visit [orbitz.com](http://orbitz.com) and click on the Summer Sale logo.

#### Web world

At no charge, [TripIt.com](http://TripIt.com) organizes details of your journey: flight, hotel, rental car, train, cruise, and activities. Users forward their travel confirmation e-mails to [plans@tripit.com](mailto:plans@tripit.com). TripIt then builds a travel itinerary that can be printed, viewed online, accessed from a mobile device, and shared with friends and other travelers. TripIt also searches sites such as Google, Eventful, Flickr, Wikipedia, NOAA, and others to add details like weather, local maps, driving directions, and travel guides.

#### Moose mania

What do most visitors to Maine hope to see? Why, a moose, of course. The Birches Resort in Rockwood has a variety of activities designed to help guests get their wish. For instance, there is the Moose Safari by boat on Moosehead Lake. Excursions, which explore the lake and a nearby stream, are offered in early morning and late afternoon (including dinner). Prices start at \$35 per person. Or you might paddle up Baker Brook in a kayak to seek moose, herons, blackbirds, and beavers. This two-hour guided trip costs \$55 per person. You can also look for the creatures from on high with a seaplane ride. Trips start at \$65 per person. And there is an early morning bike ride into prime moose stomping grounds, followed by breakfast. The guided 2 1/2-hour trip is \$40. Lodging ranges from \$81 to \$140 a night, depending upon the type of accommodation chosen.

Visit [birches.com](http://birches.com) or call 800-825-WILD (9453).

When not included, hotel taxes, airport fees, and port charges can add significantly to the price of a trip. Most prices quoted are for double occupancy; solo travelers will usually pay more. Offers are subject to availability and there may be blackout dates. Richard P. Carpenter can be reached at [carpenter@globe.com](mailto:carpenter@globe.com). ■