

now arriving

Free for All

Stay at one of these idyllic Caribbean resorts, and the wedding is on the house.



1

Breezes Bahamas NASSAU

A respite at this 391-room Cable Beach resort comes with the essentials: a dedicated wedding planner, a cake, a bouquet and an island-inspired theme. Now, Breezes Bahamas waives government and administrative fees for all of its Dream Weddings. Add a sand ceremony, unity-candle lighting or jumping-the-broom custom, all gratis. Rooms from \$178 per person, all-inclusive.



2

Nisbet Plantation NEVIS

An old-world Caribbean plantation sounds ultra-exclusive, but nuptials don't cost a thing with a seven-night stay in one of this inn's 36 cottage-style rooms. Exchange private vows overlooking the sea or on a palm-lined lawn, followed by a candlelit dinner on the white-sand beach. Bonus: The resort will plant a coconut palm in your names. Rooms from \$541, including breakfast, tea and dinner for two.



3

Sirenis Hotels & Resorts DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND MEXICO

Bring a party of 10 for a minimum stay of four nights, and a wedding comes gratis. Swap vows in a coconut grove at the 816-room Sirenis Punta Cana Resort, or explore Maya ruins at the 954-room Grand Sirenis Riviera Maya Resort. They'll cover the coordinator, decor, cake — even breakfast in bed the next day. Rooms from \$155 per couple, all-inclusive. — Brooke Showell

SAY YES TO THE *rented* DRESS

Groomsmen can rent their tuxes, but bridesmaids have to buy dresses they'll never wear again? No fair! **Vow to be Chic**, debuted in April 2014, one-ups the boys by offering online rentals of designer bridesmaid gowns. After submitting their measurements, the girls will receive their frocks in two sizes to ensure the perfect fit. The dresses arrive a week before the big day, and afterward, they'll send them back in prepaid packaging. Rentals \$95 to \$125. — Ivette Manners

FLIGHT TRACKER

SIMPLIFY GUEST TRAVEL BY CHOOSING ONE OF THESE NEW DIRECT ROUTES.

1 CHICAGO (ORD) >> SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO (SJU)
United (4 hours, 40 minutes)
Check your status on United's new smartphone app.

2 BOSTON (BOS) >> SAVANNAH/HILTON HEAD (SAV)
JetBlue (2 hours, 30 minutes)
JetBlue is the only airline to fly this route nonstop.

3 NEW YORK (EWR) >> SANTIAGO, DR (STI)
JetBlue (3 hours, 50 minutes)
Sign up for the JetBlue AmEx credit card to get 20,000 frequent-flyer points.

4 ATLANTA (ATL) >> ST. THOMAS, USVI (STT)
Delta (3 hours, 30 minutes)
Flights depart twice daily for a total of 14 per week.

5 TAMPA (TPA) >> SEATTLE (SEA)
Alaska (6 hours)
Sample Silver Gulch Brewing & Bottling Co. pale ale on flights between several Alaskan cities.

the next Costa Rica

NICARAGUA

ONE OF CENTRAL AMERICA'S MOST AFFORDABLE COUNTRIES IS JUST HITTING ITS STRIDE.

What's the vibe? >> About as easy to reach as Costa Rica but far less developed, Nicaragua has put its political troubles behind it and is seducing visitors with authentic local culture, stylish new hotels, primo surfing in the Pacific and diving off its Caribbean islands — not to mention rainforests, volcanoes and the colonial city of Granada.

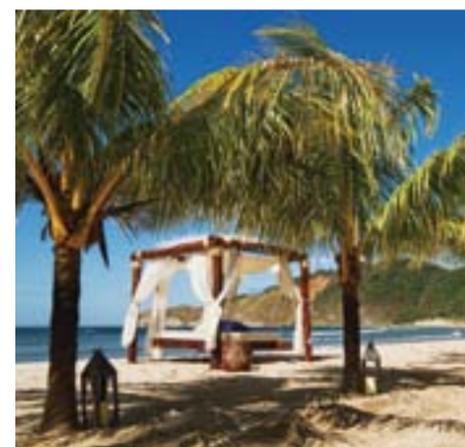
Where to wed >> Opened in 2013, Mukul Beach, Golf & Spa brought true five-

star luxury to the country's Pacific coast (read: each of the 37 suites has a private plunge pool). Exchange vows on the white-sand *playa*, under the soaring *palapa* or in the 20,000-square-foot presidential suite, all of which have ocean views. *Suites from \$500; weddings custom.*

For a taste of the other side of Nicaragua, honeymoon at **Yemaya Island Hideaway & Spa**, a yoga-friendly 16-eco-casita retreat on remote Little Corn Island, a tiny speck in the

Caribbean — no cars allowed. *Casitas \$300.* **Add a local touch** >> Caribbean rum gets all the glory, but Nicaragua's Flor de Caña Rum has won more awards than any other rum since 2000. Try it in a *Macuá*, Nicaragua's national cocktail, made with Flor de Caña Rum and guava, orange and lemon juices. — Ann Abel

Nicaragua, meet extravagance. Mukul Beach, Golf & Spa draws a discerning crowd with its secluded location, treehouse rooms, quiet beach and inviting palapa.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ALLEN KENNEDY PHOTOGRAPHY; CARNIVAL CRUISE LINES; ICONIC SANTORINI; FONTAINEBLEAU MIAMI BEACH; RYAN FORBES; COURTESY MUKUL; OPPOSITE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: BREEZES RESORTS & SPAS; JENNIFER DAVIS PHOTOGRAPHY; COURTESY GRAND SIRENIS RIVIERA MAYA RESORT & SPA; BARBARA KRAFT; THIS MODERN ROMANCE PHOTOGRAPHY

HAPPENINGS

GROUNDBREAKING

BE THE FIRST TO GET HITCHED AT ONE OF THESE NEW, OR NEWLY RENOVATED, WEDDING SPOTS.

On-deck ceremony or a walk down the aisle on dry land? The choice is yours with **Carnival**

Cruise Lines' wedding program (right), totally revamped for 2014. Recently added ports include Grand Turk in **Turks and Caicos** and Freeport in the **Ba-**

hamas. Or reserve the Bahamian island of **Half Moon Cay**, where a bijou chapel, blissed-out beaches and soft waves create the sacred space for your private celebration. ... Set on sublime **Santo-**

rini, Iconic (right) is a five-star cave hotel unveiled in April 2014. The 22-room Greek boutique was built from former homes and shops in the white-washed village of Imerovigli. Work with a local planner for custom caldera-view vows. ... Pledge your devotion on

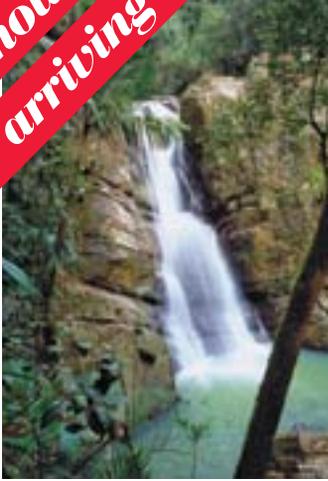
1,800 acres of equatorial paradise at **Indura Beach & Golf Resort**, launched March 2014 on **Honduras'** Caribbean coast. Hold a barefoot shoreline ceremony; then slip into heels for an elegant poolside reception. The 60-room hotel wows guests with its Maina Spa, 18-hole eco golf course and curious locals: spider and howler monkeys! ... Check off something *bleau* at **Miami Beach's** landmark **Fontaine-**

bleau resort (right), whose Ocean Lawn venue, opened in February 2014, offers waterside vistas and the modern BleauLive Stage, so guests can dance the night away under tropical starlight.

— Regina Winkle-Bryan



now
arriving



2 THE SEA ISN'T THE ONLY BODY OF WATER ➤ Swim in La Mina waterfall in El Yunque, the only U.S. tropical rainforest. Or kayak into Bioluminescent Bay in Fajardo, where tiny organisms ignite sparks when you stir the water.



1 IT'S "THE CARIBBEAN'S HAWAII" ➤ Every winter the beach town of Rincon transforms into a surfers' paradise. With more than 20 surf spots like Little Malibu and Domes Beach, the waves can approach 30 feet, paralleling Oahu's infamous North Shore swell. For the ultimate surfer-chick experience, say I do on the sand at Rincon Beach Resort, home to the island's best sunset views.

5 THINGS WE *love*

PUERTO RICO

With loads of direct flights from the mainland and no passport needed, this U.S. commonwealth feels both exotic and familiar.



4 THE PRETTIEST BEACH HAS THE BEST SLEEPS ➤ Chic and central Condado Beach in San Juan is home to a slew of hotels such as the **San Juan Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino**, which wrapped renovations to all 525 guest rooms in December 2013. Host beachside vows, and serve up signature Bacardi Dragonberry mojitos.



5

PUERTO RICAN TOUCHES ELEVATE WEDDING WEEKENDS ➤ Serve shrimp and mahi *mofongo* and Bacardi piña coladas (invented in San Juan's own Barrachina restaurant), hire a *cuatro* player to strum sexy salsa, and line the aisle with pink and red maga flowers. And to give your group a uniquely Puerto Rican experience, arrange an outing to the Luquillo Kiosks for lobster tacos, empanadillas and coconut fritters on the beach. — *Vicky Hodges*

HISTORY + SHOPPING = GROUP ACTIVITY! ➤ Founded in 1521, Old San Juan is one of America's oldest cities, where cobblestone streets are lined with sherbet-color colonial buildings with carved wooden doors and wrought-iron balconies. After meandering through the maze of art galleries, shady courtyards and cigar shops, explore ancient El Morro Castle with sweeping views across the Atlantic.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY PUERTO RICO TOURISM COMPANY; ERIC BONESKE PHOTOGRAPHY; ROBERT HARDING WORLD IMAGER/ALA MY; SHUTTERSTOCK (2); COURTESY SAN JUAN MARRIOTT



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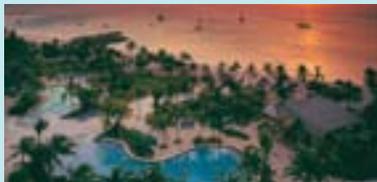
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Everyone Inclusive

With more states legalizing same-sex marriage in ripple effect, resorts are welcoming all types of couples with special wedding offerings. “Separate wedding packages for same-sex couples aren’t necessary as long as all the language is inclusive,” says Bernadette Coveny Smith of 14 Stories. “Packages should avoid terms like *bridal suite* to openly welcome all couples.” At these standouts, everyone is pampered equally. — *David Duran*

HAWAII

WHAT’S NEW

On Nov. 13, 2013, the Hawaii State Legislature officially made the Aloha State the 15th to recognize same-sex marriage.

WHERE TO WED

At the beachfront **Grand Wailea** resort in Maui, wed in the seaside chapel, in the gardens, in a gazebo or by a waterfall — or do something totally different with stand-up-paddleboard vows.

ROMANTIC PERK

Packages are created on an individual basis with an expert planner — think a day for two in Spa Grande’s Terme Hydrotherapy Circuit.

ILLINOIS

WHAT’S NEW

Weeks after Hawaii legalized same-sex marriage, the Illinois General Assembly made Illinois state 16.

WHERE TO WED

Waldorf Astoria Chicago nods to art and fashion in touches like a chandelier inspired by a Coco Chanel brooch. Celebrate in the Sinclair Ballroom, reminiscent of 1920s Paris with silk-covered walls.

ROMANTIC PERK

Couples who wed at the property stay gratis in a wedding suite; book by the end of 2014 to also receive a couple’s massage with champagne.

NEW MEXICO

WHAT’S NEW

With a Supreme Court ruling on Dec. 19, 2013, New Mexico took the 17th spot for legalization.

WHERE TO WED

The tranquil **Four Seasons Resort Rancho Encantado**, in the high Santa Fe desert, is ideally suited for nature lovers. Three outdoor venues include a flagstone terrace overlooking the Jemez Mountains.

ROMANTIC PERK

The new “experience assistant” works closely with wedding couples to arrange outings like a stargazing dinner with a private butler.