

The Telegraph LUXURY



Days pass by in a haze at the blissful Four Seasons Bora Bora, Tahiti

TRAVEL

Luxury honeymoon destinations: 10 of the world's best

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ultimate romantic city breaks, honeymoon expert Amanda Statham shares her pick of the world's best honeymoon destinations.

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It's the most significant holiday a couple is likely to take, but after the stress of planning a wedding, deciding on a honeymoon destination can be a draining task. A travel editor for *You & Your Wedding* magazine for eight years, Amanda Statham has visited countless luxury resorts and hotels all claiming to be the most romantic in the world. Here she shares her selection of the 10 ultimate honeymoon destinations, all perfect choices for those who want to ensure their first holiday as a newly married couple kicks off in style.

Best for a scenic setting: Sugar Beach, A Viceroy Resort, St Lucia

A recent trip to [this sprawling property](#)

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Hotel Cipriani's Dogaressa Suite

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revealed it has the best setting in the Caribbean: 59 villas dotted across a hillside between the Piton Peaks, which tower like sentinels either side of a crescent of golden beach. This is UNESCO territory and it's impossible not to be captivated by the forest and mountains. You could pass whole days on the enormous terrace of your pool villa, or, after waking late in a cocoon-like four-poster, you could ask your butler to hail a buggy and head to the beach for freshly grilled fish and a swim in the warm sea. Also notable are the Rainforest Spa with treehouse treatment rooms and the resort's

late-night lounge which looks like it's been transplanted from New York.

Getting there: [Carrier](#) offers seven nights' accommodation in a Sugar Mill room, BA Club World return flights, private transfers and breakfast from £2385pp.

Best for 24-hour entertainment: NIYAMA, Maldives

This fashionable new Maldives escape has all of the usual honeymoon essentials – white sand beach, turquoise lagoon – but it's the unusual extras that set it apart. At [NIYAMA](#) guests aren't tucked up in bed by 10pm, instead they're at Subsix nightclub, where you can watch rays and reef sharks through floor-to-ceiling windows as you dance six metres below sea level. Should post-party restoration be required, the spa is 24-hour (another Indian Ocean first), while a beach cinema beneath the stars, supper at offshore restaurant Edge and sunset drinks at rooftop bar Fahrenheit all boost its romance credentials.



Thailand's Elephant Hills Rainforest Camp

[Enlarge](#)

Getting there: [Seasons in Style](#) offers seven nights from £2555 per person, including flights, breakfast and seaplane transfers.

Best for wild beauty: Loisaba, Kenya

Heaven-sent [Loisaba](#) lies on top of a rocky escarpment in a 60,000-acre private reserve. Suites are dreamy affairs with four-poster beds and timbered decks with views across the plains to Mount Kenya; if you really want to embrace the elements you can also spend an unforgettable night on a handcrafted Koi star bed, rolled onto an elevated, open-air platform for an evening spent gazing at the Milky Way. Loisaba has also just started offering couples a thrilling guided evening star safari, either on horseback or foot; to unwind together afterwards, request an al fresco champagne bath for two in the bush .

Getting there: [Cheli & Peacock](#) offers five nights from £1312pp, incl. full board, night game drives, guided bush walks, bush breakfasts and sundowners, excluding flights.

Best for cultural mystique: Taj Lake Palace, India

Widely regarded as one of India's most romantic hotels, [Taj Lake Palace](#) is a beautifully preserved 250-year-old white marble building which appears to float in the middle of Lake Pichola – a sanctuary of tranquillity amid Udaipur's churning chaos. You arrive by boat (always a great start to a



Admiring the view in the Kiss Room



Hotel suites with spectacular views



Outdoor hotel bedrooms

honeymoon) and it's not hyperbole to say your jaws will drop once you see this fairytale retreat of turrets, domes, ornate windows and opulent rooms filled with exquisite antique furniture and hand-painted murals. Dine al fresco on gourmet Indian dishes at the Lily Pond Courtyard or at a floating, candle-lit pontoon for two. Excursions to explore Udaipur are a must, as is a couples massage in the Jiva Spa. Already finding that the property seems strangely familiar? That could be because the hotel appeared in the Bond movie Octopussy. Double-Oh-Heaven indeed.

Getting there: [Kuoni](#) offers five nights from £2067pp incl. flights.

Best for laidback luxury: Ponta dos Ganchos, Brazil

The fact you can have breakfast at 3pm if you choose sums up the ethos of this [hip resort](#) by Florianopolis. Everything is exquisitely simple and geared towards relaxation, such as the Christian Dior spa (the only one in South America), which has just three ocean-view white tents, or the 25 vast bungalows with double hammocks and private pools to laze in. Dining on octopus rice and basil (a local speciality) at a petal-strewn table on the resort's tiny private island is distractingly romantic. A special mention has to go to the staff, who second guess your every move: favourite drinks are remembered, candles are lit in your room at night and your initials are drawn inside chocolate hearts on top of your coffee at breakfast.

Getting there: [Scott Dunn](#) offers seven nights in a Luxury Bungalow, with breakfast, private transfers and flights, from about £2,309 per person.

Best for city splendour: Eiffel duplex terrace suite, Shangri-la Hotel Paris

Everything about the [Shangri-La Hotel Paris's](#) split-level [suites](#) – a glamorous mix of regal gold and soft beige furnishings, wood floors and marble bathrooms – is perfect. I loved the lavish curtains, which cascade from the mezzanine bedroom down to the lounge below – opening them in the morning to reveal the Eiffel Tower perfectly framed through enormous windows is a memorable moment. Later on the vista is even more irresistible – I defy any couple not to be seduced by the sight of the Tour Eiffel shimmering at night, as they toast the panorama from their own private terrace. If you can drag yourselves away from that view, book a table at the hotel's Shang Palace, Europe's first Cantonese restaurant to gain a Michelin star.

Getting there: Eiffel duplex terrace suite from €2900 (about £2375) per night

Best for beachside glamour: Four Seasons Bora Bora, French Polynesia

Days at [Four Seasons Bora Bora](#) slip by in a haze. Usually they include a spot of sunbathing on the terraces of guests' over-water villas, but they could also include learning to paddle surf, snacking on seafood salads at the Faré Hoa beach bar, soaking in tubs with mountain views and snorkelling in the resort's fabulous Ruahatu Lagoon Sanctuary, where you can spot more than 100 species from octopus to eagle rays. The entrance of the dramatic cathedral-like spa looks like a temple and, melting to putty during a hot stone massage in the Kahaia couples suite as fish shimmer under the glass floor beneath you, it's hard not to feel a little closer to heaven.

Getting there: [Black Tomato](#) offers seven nights incl. flights from £4,567pp.

Best for grown-up elegance: Cipriani, Venice

The triumph of this hotel, cast away on an island in the Venetian lagoon, is that it manages to feel relaxed and intimate despite its grandeur and celebrity clientele. The [Cipriani](#) experience starts the moment you're picked up from the airport in a custom-built boat – everything about the property exudes style. The decor is exquisite – Murano chandeliers, polished parquet wood flooring and silk curtains – and junior suites are the rooms to book for a honeymoon, particularly Room 44 for its large private terrace overlooking the (almost) Olympic-sized pool. Breakfast in the luxurious Fortuny Restaurant is a chic affair but my favourite Cipriani eatery is Cips Club, which features a picturesque terrace overlooking the lagoon and city. There's also a vineyard and Casanova Wellness Centre with a treatment room for couples.

Getting there: [Elegant Resorts](#) offers three nights in a Double Garden View room from £1,790 per person, including breakfast, flights and transfers.

Best for outdoor adventure: Elephant Hills Rainforest Camp, Thailand

Khao Sok National Park, a 160-million-year-old rainforest, is home to elephants, hornbills, rare rafflesia (the world's largest flower) and Thailand's first [floating hotel](#). Hidden away in a remote corner of Cheow Larn Lake are ten luxury tents secured to pontoons, so you can literally roll out of bed and dive into the water. Kayaking along the forest edge, spotting gibbons, trekking through rainforest and swimming in the lake are all unforgettable experiences and the fact that solar power lights the camp and that furniture was built by local craftsmen using sustainable wood means your honeymoon's ethical credentials are taken into account too. Combine your stay with a night at [Elephant Hills Tented Camp](#), which offers the chance to interact with and feed elephants.

Getting there: [Audley Travel](#) offers a 13-day Thai "elephants and island escape" which includes accommodation in both camps and costs from £1715 per person including flights.

Best for fun in the sun: Saint Anne Resort, Seychelles

[Sainte Anne Resort](#) remains my favourite five-star in an archipelago where they're ten a penny. That's mainly due to its setting, on a private island just 10 minutes by boat (or helicopter) from Mahé, and because there's something to suit most couples. Want to dive every day? You're surrounded by one of the largest marine parks in the Indian Ocean. Looking to unwind for a week? Spa by Clarins will pamper you from top to toe. Need some fine dining served with your sun and sand? There are four excellent restaurants to choose from, including Le Mont Fleuri which is set on stilts above the beach. Sign up for yoga in a pavilion open to the balmy breezes, cycle together around the island then dive into your beach villa's pool at sunset. That's activity day and night sorted.

Getting there: [Turquoise Holidays](#) offers seven nights from £2899 per person incl. flights and all meals. Honeymooners enjoy champagne & fruit in-room on arrival, one gift voucher at Beachcomber Boutiques & a spa treatment per couple.

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