

DESTINATION WEDDINGS & honeymoons

Hit the road!

Great ideas for your big day

Hawaii

FOR ALL
BUDGETS

**SAVE VS.
SPLURGE**
A GROOM'S
TAKE

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SCOUTING DEALS

Think you can't afford a prewedding scouting trip? These resorts make it easy with discount deals.

ESTANCIA LA JOLLA HOTEL & SPA, SAN DIEGO, CA

Take a midweek peek at this ranch-inspired hotel, and receive 10 percent off the best available rate, plus a gratis bottle of wine (bookings must be made at least 14 days in advance).

SAN JUAN MARRIOTT RESORT & STELLARIS CASINO, SAN JUAN, PR

Scope out your wedding on sunny Condado Beach, and receive Marriott's special friends-and-family rate (roughly 20 percent off). Follow through with your plans, and score a free two-night vacation before the big day.

ESENCIA, A SEASIDE ESTATE, RIVIERA MAYA, MEXICO

Esencia offers what amounts to 40 percent off the usual room rate for engaged couples considering its private estate. Receive three nights in a garden suite, daily breakfast and one spa treatment per person — not to mention a romantic dinner and a wedding menu tasting.

BOLONGO BAY BEACH RESORT, ST. THOMAS, USVI

Duck over to this tropical hideaway, and receive 50 percent off either an ocean-view or beach-front room, plus swag.

— Adam McCulloch



For Love or Money

Our groom's tips on splurging vs. saving

While planning our wedding, we quickly learned that everything costs money — a lot of money. Regardless of your budget, it's important to pick where to scrimp and where to splurge. Here are a few ideas.

[1] SPLURGE: FIND A GREAT DESTINATION. Most importantly, if you're going to require your guests to travel to distant lands, splurge on a place worthy of your wedding. On our first visit to Cayucos, California, we fell in love with the town. We knew it would work for our wedding because we were excited to share it with our guests.

[2] SCRIMP: GET CENTER-PEACE OF MIND. Don't get talked into blowing your budget on centerpieces. Nobody leaves a wedding saying, "It was a beautiful day, but the ugly centerpieces ruined everything." Conversely, after your wedding, if your guests talk only about how incredible your expensive centerpieces were, you probably dropped the ball somewhere else. My advice: Spend just enough money to make your centerpieces absolutely nice ... and forgettable.

[3] SPLURGE: EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY. I'll bet everything I own that the primary cuisine of your wedding locale isn't overdone chicken, mashed potatoes and a garlicky squash/zucchini/green-bean medley. Find out what the local specialty is, and then spend the scratch to serve it to your guests. Also, search out delicious local beers that those big brands haven't yet put out of business!

[4] SCRIMP: DE-FAVOR YOUR WEDDING. There's no denying it: Favors are a wedding staple. They're also an unnecessary expense and hold your guests' attention for less time than the latest viral video. Just say no to favors; no one will miss them.

[5] SPLURGE: CAPTURE IT WELL. It's impossible to overemphasize the importance of a good photographer. Your special day will be a complete blur, and sadly, it's over in the blink of an eye. Your mission is to find a photographer who's able to transport you back to every special moment each time you flip through your album. When I look at our photos, taken by *DWHA-List* Photographer Callaway Gable (shameless plug, ahem), I travel back in time. Pay to fly your photographer to your location, rather than hiring any cheap option that might come with your venue.

by DAVID SOLDINGER illustration by MAX SAVVA