

# 9 Romantic Getaways

By **Judy Koutsky**

From private plunge pools to beachside massages, these special spots have it all. And it doesn't even have to be your honeymoon; these trips cater to anyone looking for a romantic getaway.

## STUNNING BEACHES

### **Riviera Maya, Mexico**

(See photo above)

Boasting the world's second largest coral reef, Riviera Maya is a surefire winner for avid scuba divers and snorkelers who will be captivated by the cenotes (underwater caves). Just a four-hour plane ride from New York City, the **Fairmont Mayakoba** resort is located within a tropical forest intersected by crystal clear waters. Indulge in a romantic couples' massage in the treetop hideaway, or relax during the two-hour Yucatan Healing Retreat in a private spa suite. Stay in the "La Tortuga" Presidential Suite, located on its own island, with an infinity pool overlooking the lagoon and canals. Take a day trip exploring the surrounding area including the Mayan ruins in Tulum, about an hour away, with fantastic hiking, snorkeling and diving.

Tortuga suite from \$3,119/night



*The wedding gazebo at Blue Waters Resort & Spa*

### **Antigua, Caribbean**

Located in the West Indies and considered one of the Leeward Islands, Antigua has 365 beaches; couple could stay for a year and visit a different one every day. At the all-inclusive **Blue Waters Resort & Spa**, couples can toast with Champagne and chocolates upon arrival, then head to the spa for the Togetherness Massage which combines traditional Swedish techniques with custom-designed aromatic oils. Stay at the private villas, which are spacious and off the beaten path, and enjoy a private chef's breakfast served on the secluded terrace. The concierge can book a sunset cruise with cocktails, followed by gazebo dinner with a special four-course menu. The next day, go off property for a snorkeling or scuba diving excursion at Cades Reef where the coral and diverse sea life will impress even the most seasoned diver. Don't forget to spend a day on the sand at Half Moon, Deep Bay or Darkwood—some of Antigua's most beautiful beaches.

Villa rates from \$1,630/night



*Montpelier Plantation & Beach used to be an old sugar mill.*

### **Nevis, Caribbean**

Known for its sandy beaches, including the palm-fringed Pinney's Beach and tranquil Oualie Beach, Nevis is a small, quiet island. Situated at the base of Nevis Peak, **Montpelier Plantation & Beach** is an intimate Relais & Châteaux boutique property—there are only 19 rooms—built on the site of an 18th century sugar cane plantation. Stay in the Tamarind Villa, which has its own private plunge pool, two covered porches, and a sun deck with chaise lounges. Visitors will find three types of sea turtles here: the Leatherback, Hawksbill and Green. Go diving in Booby High Shoals to view not only the turtles, but also sting rays, colorful fish and other unique aquatic life.

From \$225/night

## **PRIVATE ISLANDS**



*The pool and expansive Indian Ocean at Coco Privé Private Island*

### **Yasawa Island, Fiji**

Fiji is known for its remote, pristine white sand beaches and the all-inclusive [Yasawa Island Resort & Spa](#) takes full advantage of that, by placing their 18 bungalows right on the water. After a long flight, couples should book the ultimate spa package at the award-winning beachfront Baravi Spa, which allows them a spa treatment each day during their stay, even if they are staying for two weeks. Then, they can enjoy a cozy picnic for two. A concierge will drop them off on a deserted beach, with a gourmet lunch of poached lobster, Champagne, an artisanal cheese board and more. They can agree upon a time for pick-up or be left with a phone to call when they are ready. The Blue Lagoon Caves excursion is another must-do. A small boat ferries passengers along the length of Yasawa Island, on turquoise water, past dramatic cliffs before stopping at the Blue Lagoon Caves, featured in the movie of the same name featuring Brooke Shields. Today, the lagoons still hold a quiet beauty for those who swim in their hidden passageways. The honeymoon villa, called the Lomalagi (meaning “heaven”), has its own pool with water views. From \$2,300/night for the Lomalagi





*The Sawa-I-lau caves are popular for snorkeling.*

## **The Maldives**

One of the most popular—and romantic—honeymoon spots in the world is The Maldives, a tropical nation in the Indian Ocean, which has 26 ring-shaped atolls, consisting of more than 1,000 coral islands. At [Coco Privé Private Island](#) the property is rented out in its entirety (five villas and one main house—perfect for honeymooners who want to bring the wedding party with them!). Couples will have their own personal chef catering creating custom menus (think: crispy duck breast, seared beef fillet, slow roasted lamb leg and lobster). The chef can also give private cooking classes, including how to make local dishes.

Maldivian curries. Then couples can create a schedule that suits them: sunrise meditation with the in-house yoga master, a two-hour beach massage with your private masseuse, or scuba diving with your own guide. Due to the island's remote location and complete lack of light pollution, this is one of the best places for stargazing in the world. Couples can snuggle under a blanket on the beach and sip some wine as they check out the Milky Way and Orion constellations.

\$45,000/night, inclusive of meals, drinks and unlimited spa treatments and diving trips

## ADVENTURE TRAVEL



*Each of the nine Spanish-style haciendas and casitas at the Inn at Dos Brisas have an indoor-outdoor feel.*

### Washington County, Texas

**The Inn at Dos Brisas**, a 313-acre Relais & Châteaux retreat set in Texas Hill Country, is ideal for honeymooners interested in ranch-style, rugged adventure. Think: horseback riding or a horse-drawn carriage ride at sunset, cozy evenings snuggling by the outdoor fire with s'mores and scenic hikes with picnic lunches curated from the 42-acre USDA-certified organic farm. There are also wine-tasting classes lead by the resident sommelier, and couples can book private cooking classes with Chef Matt Padilla and craft cocktail classes with mixologist Tara Padilla. Sports enthusiasts can go hunting, fishing, clay shooting, biking, golfing and play tennis. Visitors should also embrace the heritage of the Lone Star state by catching a live rodeo show. Antique enthusiasts will love the nearby Round Top Antiques Fair, held four times a year, where they'll find everything from furniture to jewelry.

From \$490/night



*The Sable Alley resort in Botswana*

### **Khwai Private Reserve, Botswana**

In Botswana, the landscape changes drastically, from woodlands, floodplains and open savannah, to rivers and lagoons. This makes for amazing scenery and a diverse range of wildlife, including elephant, lion, leopard, wild dog and cheetah. The adventurous should stay at the Skybeds and Sable Alley, sister properties within the [Khwai Private Reserve](#). Skybeds are three-story raised platforms that resemble stand-alone tree houses that overlook the wild. Honeymooners will be sleeping directly under thousands of African stars (it looks like someone threw a bag of glitter in the sky) surrounded by the sounds of nature. After a few nights of outdoor sleeping, they may opt to transfer to the honeymoon suite at Sable Alley, where rose petals will fill their deep-soaking bathtub. A favorite excursion is taking a *mokoro* water safari in private dugout canoes; game viewing from the waterways provides eye-level views of the animals. A perfect end to the day: gin and tonics with a view of 30 hippos.

From \$395 per person/night

## **QUIET ROMANCE**



*The infinity pool at Grace Santorini*

### **Santorini, Greece**

Santorini is one of the southernmost Greek islands; it's surrounded by the Aegean Sea and dotted with picturesque white buildings. Newlyweds should book one of the honeymoon suites at [Grace Santorini](#), equipped with a private plunge pool and terrace with sea views, a perfect spot for admiring the beautiful Santorini sunset. Couples can charter a private yacht or catamaran and explore the Caldera coastline, including stopping at secluded hot springs for a swim. If they prefer to stay on dry land—and soak up a bit of local culture—they can head to the ancient site of Akrotiri, known as the Minoan Pompeii. A volcanic eruption in 1627 BC left the area covered in ash and today visitors can see the beautiful fresco paintings that remain. That volcano was also responsible for the excellent wine found in Santorini (wineries can be found throughout the island).

Honeymoon suites from \$1,000/night



*Lanai is a quiet, laid-back destination.*

## **Lanai, Hawaii**

With no stop lights, fast food chain stores or malls, this secluded 90,000-acre island paradise offers a glimpse of Hawaii as it used to be. At the [Four Seasons Resort Lanai](#), guests can indulge in treatments, like the four-hour Suite Serenity signature ritual or the full-body Lanai Lomi Lomi massage, both of which can be enjoyed in the private spa couples' treatment suite. Golfers should play a round at the Jack Nicklaus-designed Manele Golf Course. When it's dinner time, the chef will arrange a private consultation and then custom make a five-course meal, with wine pairings, served at a secluded table overlooking Hulopoe Bay. Another good option is to pack a picnic and a bottle of wine and hike a quick 20 minutes to see the sun set over Sweetheart Rock, an 80-foot rock formation that is one of Lanai's iconic, and romantic, natural landmarks. For wildlife sightings, head a little off the beaten path to Polihua Beach to see sea turtles, humpback whales and spinner dolphins.

From \$1,150/night

