

FIRST ANNUAL WORLDWIDE GUIDE

destination
weddings
& honeymoons

THE TRAVEL MAGAZINE
FOR BRIDES AND GROOMS

WHAT'S HOT NOW!

101 best
planning tips

Ideas that work wherever you go



**GORGEOUS REAL
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bride ideas

A Token of Thanks

An essential part of any destination wedding is the welcome basket. A simple gift that greets guests upon arrival to their hotel room not only shows gratitude but also gets people excited about the days to follow. "Make sure there is some thought behind it," says international wedding designer Lisa Light. "Your budget doesn't have to be huge. Just be sure to do your homework, and be creative."

To make a gift truly unique, include items specific to your locale. Below are some easy yet valuable gifts your guests are sure to appreciate long after they've returned home.

BASKETS AND BAGS

Look for packaging that does double-duty. Many Caribbean vendors sell woven baskets, or your hotel may have its own logo-gear beach bags. Not only will this gift hold your welcome goodies, but it can also be used again.

WELCOME LETTER An itinerary gets guests pumped up about the festivities and lets them know where to be and when to be there.

FOOD AND DRINK

Visit a nearby grocery store (a huge cost-saver) and find a local beverage or snack to include in your gift. In Italy, look for limoncello liqueur or a regional bottle of wine. For a Chinese wedding (above), add chopsticks and a cashew-nut cookie.

MUSIC From reggae in the Caribbean to the tango in Argentina, nothing beats local rhythms. You can find CDs of local music online, in the markets or even at your resort's gift shop.

POSTCARD A postage-paid postcard lets guests send greetings to loved ones — or themselves — back home.

SOUVENIR Include a souvenir that's symbolic to the destination. "In London, we put tea inside an English teacup along with subway tickets, local currency and an umbrella, in case it rained," Light says. "In Saratoga Springs, New York, the welcome party was on the race track, so we gave them some mad money to gamble with." — **TB**



What's the biggest color in weddings today? Green! Here are 10 easy ways to add eco-friendly elements to your wedding away.

Stationery Have your invites printed on recyclable paper, or better yet, plantable papers embedded with wildflower seeds. Invites from Of The Earth can be planted directly into a soil-filled pot or garden.

Location A gorgeous beach, scenic mountaintop or botanical garden doesn't usually need much in terms of decoration. Let the beauty of your locale speak for itself by keeping extraneous items to a minimum.

Send-offs Freeing butterflies at the end of the ceremony might seem like a green idea, but in reality, packaging butterflies can be fatal

to the winged creatures. Instead, hand out biodegradable confetti, freeze-dried rose petals or lavender buds from Ecoparti.

Transportation Forgo the fancy limo and arrive in eco-friendly fashion via a hybrid luxury car, battery-powered golf cart or elegant horse-drawn carriage.

Catering Ask your chef to utilize things from your locale, including local, seasonal meats, fish and produce (organically grown, if possible).

Cake Decorate the cake with edible or icing flowers rather than plastic or paper embellishments. Top the cake with a family heirloom or vintage piece that will not only have some meaning behind it but won't end up in the trash.

Flowers Use seasonal blooms indigenous to your locale. Not only will they lower carbon emissions from shipping, but they'll stand up to the climate and cause less of a dent in your budget.

Lighting For evening events, get your light source from solar-powered lanterns or candlelit luminarias.

Photography Hire a photographer who shoots digitally, and place disposable digital cameras on the tables for your guests rather than film ones. Digital is more earth-friendly than film photography that uses toxic chemicals to process.

Give Back In lieu of gifts, ask for donations to a local charity. When the party is over, donate the flowers to a local retirement home or shelter. — **TB**

For a destination do, save-the-dates work double — and even triple — duty. "The destination-wedding save-the-date does more than simply announce your upcoming nuptials," says Puneet Messler, creative director of Alia Designs. "It builds excitement for the wedding and gives guests the info they need to plan their trip."

Companies like Invitation Consultants offer ready-made save-the-dates with travel-friendly themes including luggage-tag, boarding-pass and flip-flop designs. Customizing firms like Alia Designs or Olio Style can create tailored packets to suit any theme. "Your design should express who you are as a couple and reflect the mood of the destination," Messler says. She recommends including accommodation and travel info, activities and event schedules, so guests can plan accordingly. — **EH**

SAVE WITH STYLE



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: MOODBOARD/SUPERSTOCK; COURTESY OLIO STYLE; CORBIS

FOR MORE INFO, SEE THE 411 ON PAGE 69.