



Pacific PARADISE

By Doug Wallace

Surrender to the isolated tropical island charms of the South Pacific and give your romantic destination wedding an exclusive, unique and exotic edge.

©TAHITI TOURISME

While the white-sand beaches and creature comforts of the Caribbean and Mexico all boast ample benefits, nothing beats the story you will take home from a wedding in French Polynesia, Fiji or Hawaii. The South Pacific is a world unto itself – peaceful, natural, secluded, exotic – full of incredible wildlife, mesmerizing watersports, and tranquil over-the-water bungalows.

Tahiti is a dream-come-true for couples looking for a private affair. Opt for a luxe property such as the InterContinental Tahiti Resort & Spa where you can say your vows on a motu (island reef), on a catamaran, or even in your private bungalow. Expect romantic dinners, intimate sunset cruises, and an ideal spot to spend your honeymoon afterwards. There's also an option for a traditional Tahitian ceremony with flower crowns and leis, traditional outfits, and a priest who can baptize the couple with a Polynesian name.

Near Tahiti is the island of Moorea where couples can expect to luxuriate in its small, crystal-clear lagoon, sample exquisite seafood, and hike up lush mountains around the island's bays. Moving on to the showpiece that is Bora Bora, there are wild stingrays to swim with, black pearls to buy, and a world-famous lagoon to explore by speedboat.

Even further from North America, the islands of Fiji offer loads of resorts to serve as the wedding anchor. The paperwork for obtaining a marriage licence here is straightforward, with arrangements easily made by your destination wedding specialist. Fiji offers a nice mix of activities for the varying interests of your guests. Hikers and eco-tourists head to the island of Taveuni for the lush forests and secluded waterfalls. Kadavu exhibits a quiet slice of true Fijian culture. The popular islands of Mamanuca are filled with dive sites and surfing.



INTERCONTINENTAL TAHITI RESORT & SPA
@ POMEO BALANCOURT

INTERCONTINENTAL TAHITI RESORT & SPA

@TAHITI TOURISME

@TAHITI TOURISME

That same variety can also be found closer to home. Hawaii is the perfect mix of island exoticism with American comforts and hospitality thrown in. From quiet elopements to giant luaus, the choice is endless and the price points wide. Oahu and Maui are the most popular picks for weddings, but you can spread out to enjoy the mountain scenery of Kauai or the Kohala Coast on the big island of Hawaii, perfect for its great weather and multitude of luxury accommodations.

The bonus of staging your wedding in the South Pacific is that your honeymoon can literally be next door. You can sneak off after your nuptials to an even more secluded place to enjoy your first week of wedded bliss. French Polynesia has also recently passed new laws that make it easier to get married here than previously. But whether you're eloping or going all out, the legalities of marrying in each region of the South Pacific vary; ask your destination wedding specialist for advice.

And while these places may seem incredibly far away, remember that you can always break up the trip with a few days in Vancouver or Los Angeles first. Because when it's wheels-up for the South Pacific, going the extra mile will be more than worth it. And when the day comes that breakfast is delivered to the door of your over-water bungalow by canoe, you will know that your South Pacific plan couldn't have been more perfect.

