



**Essence**tours  
Discover our Islands

*Your Essential Guide to a Destination Wedding*

## **Congratulations on your engagement and your decision to explore the possibilities of a Destination Wedding.**

With the cost of an average wedding in Australia now estimated to be in the vicinity of \$35-40,000, more and more couples, just like yourselves, are looking for a better option. A Destination Wedding is an option that's definitely more affordable, decidedly more romantic and will be a holiday you, your family and friends will never forget.

Let's face it, what could be more romantic than exchanging your marriage vows on a balmy tropical evening with the backdrop of golden skies as the sun sets on the crystal clear lagoon of your chosen resort?

It sounds wonderful ... it is wonderful ... but where do you start?

Well, that's easy ... right here!

Essence Tours specialises in Fiji and Pacific Island destinations and we've been helping couples plan their dream wedding for more than 12 years. We offer you complete wedding co-ordination services and, as an international travel agency, we also look after all the travel details for you and your guests. Whether you want an intimate wedding for two, a celebration with fifty guests, an "island informal" ceremony or a "barefoot black-tie" occasion, we'll take care of all the details.

That includes helping you with:

- Selecting your resort (the most difficult part of the journey)
- Legal documentation
- Tailoring your wedding package
- Reception details - venue, set up, menus, etc
- Group travel arrangements for you and your guests
- The all important honeymoon
- And, working within your budget!

**So, let's get started.**

### **Selecting your Resort**

The only hard decision you'll have to make!

Once you've decided on your destination, there are a number of factors that need to be considered when narrowing down your choice of resorts.

- Do you want a garden, beach or chapel wedding?
- How many guests do you think will be travelling with you?
- Will you have children, elderly or disabled guests in your group?
- Would you like a "whole of resort" booking, ie depending on your group size, it may be possible to select a resort that will accommodate you and your guests exclusively ... great fun!
- What facilities the resorts offer, eg activities, Kids Club, babysitting, etc



## Legal Documentation

The legal documentation requirements vary from country to country, but we will provide you with the appropriate documentation requirements and make sure that your documents are in order and submitted to your resort 28 days prior to your departure. In most cases you will still need to take your original documents with you for sighting at the Registry Offices if required.

## Tailoring Your Wedding Package

Most resorts offer several wedding packages and a list of 'Optional Extras' that allow you to tailor-make your dream wedding. Once you've decided on your resort, we'll provide you with all the relevant information, but if you have any special requests, or would like to see all the packages, please contact us on 1300 762 901 or email us on [weddings@essencetours.com.au](mailto:weddings@essencetours.com.au) for full details.

## Your Reception

You'll find the resorts offer a selection of venues for your reception and a choice of menus to suit your dietary requirements and budget. Once you've chosen your resort, we can send you photos of venue options, table set ups, floral arrangements menus, etc

## Travel Arrangements

Whether you're eloping, or taking a group of family and friends with you, we'll take care of all your travel arrangements. Essence Tours is an International Travel Agent and we can organise group flights, negotiate on your behalf with the resorts for accommodation and meal packages (if required), and ensure that you and your guests are met on arrival at your destination and transferred by private vehicle or coach to your resort.

We offer our couples a flyer detailing the resort they've chosen, travel arrangements and accommodation options. These flyers are complimentary and entirely optional and can be provided in either pdf format for emailing, or as a colour laser print out to go with your save the date cards or invitations.

## Your Honeymoon

After the big day you might want to spend extra time at the same resort for your honeymoon, or slip away to a smaller, boutique resort that's more intimate and ideal for couples. Perhaps you would prefer a cruise, or head to a different destination altogether. Whatever you decide, we can offer suggestions, provide quotes and take care of all the arrangements for your special time together..

## Working Within Your Budget

All expectations and no surprises ... A major consideration for both of us!  
You may not have an exact figure in mind, but at least an indication of your budget helps us to recommend suitable resorts, hens and bucks party options, and other additional activities you may want. We will provide you with regular updates on confirmed bookings for your guests to assist with your planning.

## The Next Step

Start with your Destination Wedding Checklist on the following pages and we'll work our way through with you until the day you say "I Do"



## My Destination Wedding Timeline & Checklist

Following is a Destination Wedding checklist to help you plan for your dream wedding. Use it as a guide and modify it to suit your own requirements. Let's start ticking boxes!

### 12 Months or More

- Contact Essence Tours to discuss choice of destination and resort options
- Create a shortlist of resorts that will most suit you and your guests
- Obtain quotes for travel and wedding packages for these resorts
- Make a decision on your resort and wedding date. (Where possible, avoid school holiday periods, as flights are generally more expensive and most resorts will have blockouts on their special deals)
- Confirm time for your ceremony and have Essence Tours check availability. (Sunset weddings are romantic, but you need also to consider the light factor for your photography and, if you choose an island wedding, that you will have to pay for overnight accommodation for photographer and minister/celebrant)
- Work out a provisional guest list and your budget
- Create a wedding folder where you can store all your ideas, photos, magazine articles, correspondence, etc so that everything is in one place and easily accessible

### 10 - 11 Months Prior

- Finalise your guest list
- Send out save the date cards and guests travel packages (Remember the more notice you can give your guests the more likely they are to be able to travel with you, but don't be offended if they decline. It could simply be due to problems with annual leave or their own budget)
- Decide whether you want to have your honeymoon at a different hotel/resort or on a cruise.
- Book your own travel arrangements and take out travel insurance
- Decide on your wedding package, the form of service required (minister, priest or celebrant) with any optional extras and pay deposit to confirm the date
- Complete Notice of Intended Marriage (this can be emailed to you)
- Book photographer (if there's none included in your wedding package)

### 8 - 9 Months Prior

- Start putting together your legal documents required for your destination
- Check whether vaccinations are required or advisable for your destination, and how long prior to travel they are recommended.
- Select style and colors of your wedding
- Begin search for your wedding gown, bridesmaids dresses, groom and groomsmen's attire
- Consider stationery and invitation options

## 6 - 7 Months Prior

- By now your wedding gown and bridesmaid's dresses should be organised / purchased and the groom's and groomsmen's attire booked or purchased
- Shop for wedding rings
- Discuss floral options for bouquets, buttonholes corsages and table decorations (Keep in mind that most of the island destinations are subject to seasonal availability of tropical blooms which may limit your choices. If you have something particular in mind which is unavailable, you might consider taking silk floral arrangements from home)
- Work on your ceremony details and any personal vows you might want included
- Decide on fiance's gift (optional)
- Decide on favours for guests (optional) Keep in mind that there are many options to purchase unique gifts for your guests from your chosen destination and these can be organised before you travel and delivered to your chosen resort
- Decide on gifts for wedding attendants and parents

## 4 - 5 Months Prior

- Finish addressing invitations and mail out. Give an RSVP date of at least 2 months prior to departure to enable you to finalise reception arrangements
- Check that your passports are in order and have a minimum of 6 months validity from your date of return to Australia
- Obtain venue and menu options for reception

## 2 - 3 Months Prior

- Review your budget and update if necessary
- Finalise menu choices for reception and start creating seating plan
- Call guests who have not yet responded
- Source hens party / bucks party arrangements
- Finalise travel arrangements and pay balance of wedding package

## 1 Month Prior

- Confirm final number of guests traveling
- Finalise wedding day itinerary
- Confirm reception details, seating plan and place cards
- Finalise details for bouquets, floral arrangements, corsages, buttonholes, etc
- Reconfirm photographer and time they will arrive at the resort
- Make appointments for hair, makeup & spa treatments, etc
- Confirm hens party / bucks party arrangements

## 1 Week Prior

- Don't Panic!
- Confirm meeting time with resort's Wedding Co-ordinator
- Confirm time of Registry Office appointment (if required)
- Confirm with attendants, best man and mother of the bride (or friends) items that need attending to after the wedding
- Ensure that you have packed all the required travel and wedding documents
- Arrange for someone to return hired suits
- If you or your partner are on any medication, ensure you pack it
- Finish packing early!
- Make sure you've ticked ALL the boxes

## Day of Departure

- Arrive at the airport at least 2 hours before departure
- Everything's done ... Relax and enjoy the flight!



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