

Dream Destination Hop, Skip or Jump

Looking to hop to a homegrown spot in the States, skip to a spicy hideaway south of the border or jump to a laid-back island in the Caribbean? An infinite number of honeymoon havens wait just a few short hours away. Whatever your pleasure, finding your dream destination is nearly as easy as turning the page. By Annette Burden

california

The Golden State has it all for honeymooners, from some of the world's most happening cities to unparalleled beaches, mountains and deserts. **BEACH LOVERS:** Vast stretches of sun-baked sand trim the Southern California coastline. But for epic romance, follow the mile-long path to the beach at Big Sur's Andrew Molera State Park. **NATURAL WONDER:** Behold Yosemite National Park's Half Dome from Glacier Point, a 3,000-foot freefall above the valley floor. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Hop a high-speed catamaran for Catalina Island, the original "isle of romance." Up to 30 round-trips leave daily from Long Beach, San Pedro and Dana Point. **DINNER FOR TWO:** You'll have to book two months ahead for Thomas Keller's nine-course tasting menu at the French Laundry in Napa Valley. But it's worth it. **AFTER DARK:** Party with the stars who come out to play at clubs along the Sunset Strip, West Hollywood's infamous stretch of Sunset Boulevard.

nevada

Romance blooms under blue skies more than 300 days a year in Nevada. **BEACH LOVERS:** Snuggle on an opium bed at the Moorea Beach Club at Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas—one step from a convincing simulation of ocean, sand and rolling surf. **NATURAL WONDER:** Put the top down and circle the 72-mile road that skirts Lake Tahoe, the largest and surely the most scenic alpine lake in North America. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Take in Mother Nature's show of candy-colored rock formations at the Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area outside Vegas. **DINNER FOR TWO:** Reserve a window seat at the Eiffel Tower Restaurant at Paris Las Vegas for French cuisine and a VIP view of the dancing waters at Bellagio. **AFTER DARK:** Start with Cirque du Soleil's LOVE, based on the music of the Beatles at the Mirage Las Vegas—or Zumanity, the sexy side of le cirque at New York–New York.

arizona

The state's famously clean air, warm sun and breathtaking scenery promise romantic memories you'll treasure for a lifetime. **BEACH LOVERS:** Lake Powell, Arizona's largest lake, boasts more shoreline than all of California. Find your own secluded cove among the pink-sand beaches at Halls Crossing. **NATURAL WONDER:** Two words: Grand Canyon. Hang on tight when you peek over the edge. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Horse around at an upscale dude ranch—historic Tanque Verde Ranch outside Tucson, for example. **DINNER FOR TWO:** Dine creekside at L'Auberge de Sedona, where the chef will invent a tasting menu of creative French-American cuisine just for you. **AFTER DARK:** Steal away for wild lime blossom spa treatments in the Sanctum at Scottsdale's Sanctuary Camelback Mountain Resort. The private hideaway for couples comes with hot tub and optional fire pit, rose petals, candlelight and champagne.

florida

Florida means heaven on earth for lovers of sun-kissed days and moonlit nights, glorious countryside and pulsing city streets. **BEACH LOVERS:** Comb the shores of Sanibel Island for perfect seashells at dawn, then revel in the crushed-shell sand and warm Gulf Coast waters for the rest of the day. **NATURAL WONDER:** Dive a national treasure: the country's only living coral reef at John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park in Key Largo. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Mingle with exotic birds, alligators and dolphins on a ranger-led canoe trip through the Ten Thousand Islands in Everglades National Park. **DINNER FOR TWO:** In Orlando, select from two seatings at the California Grill in Disney's Contemporary Resort—during sunset or the nightly fireworks display over Cinderella Castle. **AFTER DARK:** Order nightcaps like the celebrities at Tantra Restaurant

& Lounge in South Beach. A sure bet? Twin shots of rum, vodka and peach schnapps laced with Tantra's secret blend of aphrodisiac herbs.

new york

Whether targeting the Big Apple or upstate, newlyweds face a mother lode of possibilities in the Empire State. **BEACH LOVERS:** Stroll the miles of unspoiled beach spread out from the Montauk Point Lighthouse on Long Island, or watch the surfers from the sand at Ditch Plains Beach about two miles east of Montauk Village. **NATURAL WONDER:** Feast your eyes on Niagara Falls, revered by generations as a symbol of wonder and inspiration for newlyweds. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Catch the ferry from Manhattan to the Statue of Liberty and the Ellis Island Immigration Museum in New York Harbor—a two-for-one excursion. **DINNER FOR TWO:** Book the private booth where O. Henry wrote “The Gift of the Magi” at Pete’s Tavern, the longest running bar and restaurant in New York City. Specialties: prime rib and the highly prized 1864 Original House Ale. **AFTER DARK:** Hire a horse and carriage outside the Plaza Hotel and spoon your way through Central Park.

cancún

Mexico’s No. 1 travel destination thrills thousands of honeymooners each year with its Caribbean beaches, cosmopolitan pleasures, surrounding eco-parks and Mayan history. **BEACH LOVERS:** You’ll be planning your second honeymoon halfway through the mango smoothies in a beach cabana at Le Méridien Cancun Resort & Spa. **NATURAL WONDER:** Dive or snorkel alongside the world’s largest fish—whale sharks—over nearby Isla Che Reef. The docile filter feeders average 20.6 tons and may reach up to 40 feet long. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Steel yourselves for the 91-step climb up Kukulkán’s pyramid, then behold the bird’s-eye view of Chichén Itzá’s other temples laid at your feet. **DINNER FOR TWO:** Order the famous cocobichuela at La Habichuela—curried Caribbean lobster and shrimp served in a coconut shell with rice and tropical fruit—a lovers’ favorite for nearly 33 years. **AFTER DARK:** Dance to Latin bands till dawn at Azúcar, part of Dreams Cancún at Punta Cancún.

puerto vallarta

Tucked between Banderas Bay and the jungles of the Sierra Madre, the city romances honeymooners with colonial Mexican charm, seaside beauty and big-city sophistication. **BEACH LOVERS:** Soak up the South Seas vibe at Boca de Tomatían, three miles south of Mismaloya (well worth a stop in itself). **NATURAL WONDER:** Meet the crocodiles at Cocodrilaro el Cora, a safe place to view the rare American species near Flamingos Golf Course in Nuevo Vallarta. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Sightsee and hobnob with the fishermen, artists, artisans and surfers of Sayulita on the Riviera Nayarit north of town. **DINNER FOR TWO:** Take in a birds-eye view of the city rooftops and bay while sipping sangría and nibbling tapas at the restaurant Barcelona. **AFTER DARK:** Cruise the lineup of trendy clubs along the Malecón—the Cheeky Monkey, Zoo, Mandala, Hard Rock Café and more.

los cabos

Known as Cabo by the cognoscenti, Mexico’s most popular desert playground pleases golfers, fishermen, divers and spa goers alike. And that’s just for starters. **BEACH LOVERS:** Catch a water taxi to Playa del Amor—Lover’s Beach—and frolic together framed by Cabo’s famous natural arch. **NATURAL WONDER:** Explore the marvels beneath the waterline of Los Arcos, where the Pacific meets the Sea of Cortez at Land’s End. Proximity to the marina enables dive operators to run several trips a day. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Kayak through the Río San José estuary, then browse the shops and galleries near the plaza in San José. **DINNER FOR TWO:** Exquisite Baja-Mediterranean cuisine tops the menu at The Restaurant, the signature dining room and terrace at Las Ventanas al Paraíso. **AFTER DARK:** Feeling a little wild? Dance on the tables at El Squid Roe in Cabo San Lucas.

the riviera maya

White sand perfection combined with laid-back lodgings, dive shops, restaurants and beach bars make the coast south of

Cancún ideal for a barefoot idyll. **BEACH LOVERS:** Share an awe-struck moment at the ruins of Tulum, viewing El Castillo from the beach at the base of the cliff. **NATURAL WONDER:** Hold hands as you float with life preservers and snorkels down more than half a mile of cool, dark underground river before spilling into the warm, bright sea at Xcaret. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Take a naturalist-led boat tour through the Sian Ka'an Biosphere, a 1.3-million-acre preserve edging 70 miles of coast south of Tulum. **DINNER FOR TWO:** Dine on steak or Asian-themed seafood in a tree house at Playasia, Playa del Carmen's jungle-chic restaurant at the Blue Parrot Hotel. **AFTER DARK:** Go snorkeling with the Akumal Dive Shop to meet the octopuses, coral and other nocturnal critters in Akumal Bay.

central america

Costa Rica, Honduras and Panama lead the burgeoning popularity of honeymoon sites in Central America. **BEACH LOVERS:** Dreaming of a horizontal honeymoon? Find just what you're after on the sands of Roatan in the Bay Islands, Honduras.

NATURAL WONDER: Take

in Costa Rica's Monteverde cloud forest by zip line.

If you dare, step off the Tarzan Swing attached only by a bungee cord. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Explore Copán, one of the world's most breathtaking archaeological sites, in western Honduras. Bonus: wild orchids, howler monkeys, toucans and scarlet macaws.

DINNER FOR TWO: Enlist the chef at Costa Rica's Florblanca to create a customized meal in your villa. Try tasty tuna maki rolls or gourmet burgers topped with bacon, foie gras and Gorgonzola—served with truffle fries. **AFTER DARK:** Take a crash course in Panamanian culture at Al Tambor de la Alegría in Panama City. The show traces the history of the isthmus from the arrival of the Spanish conquistadors to the construction of the Panama Canal.

bahamas

You'll wish you had several lifetimes to honeymoon among the 700 picture-perfect islands and 2,000 cays. **BEACH LOVERS:** Harbour Islands' blushing Pink Beach casts a rosy glow that's not only flattering to brides, it's perfect for honeymooners. **NATURAL WONDER:** Get up close to sharks, moon jellies and other denizens of the deep at Atlantis, Paradise Island, home of the world's largest open-air marine habitat. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Catch the ferry from Marsh Harbour to spend the day on Great Guana Cay, the largest of the cays off Great Abaco. Dive from shore at the foot of Nippers Beach Bar & Grill, loll on the sand, swim in the pool and watch the sun set from barstools perched 55 feet above sea level. **DINNER FOR TWO:** Join the celebrities at Nassau's Graycliff, known for its fine cuisine, legendary wine cellar and setting in the 260-year-old estate of a British pirate. **AFTER DARK:** Slow dance under the stars on a deserted Out Island beach.

u.s. virgin islands

These three U.S. beauties cover the honeymoon spectrum from shopping to water sports, nature preserves and luxury resorts. **BEACH LOVERS:** Rest up on the sugar-white sands of Trunk Bay, and you'll see why it's the most photographed beach on St. John. **NATURAL WONDER:** Disappear among the tranquil pools and giant white boulders of The Baths, a must for lovers on Virgin Gorda in the neighboring British Virgin Islands. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Tour the Cruzan Rum factory on St. Croix. Be sure to pick up a bottle or two flavored with mango, coconut or banana—souvenirs for the folks back home, of course. **DINNER FOR TWO:** Dine on Latin-Caribbean cuisine as long white curtains waft in the sea breeze at Havana Blue, part of Frenchman's Reef & Morning Star Marriott Beach Resort on St. Thomas. **AFTER DARK:** Join the happy mix of tourists and locals at the Quiet Mon Pub, a funky Irish-Caribbean mainstay in Cruz Bay, St. John.

dominican republic

While Santo Domingo's Colonial Zone romances history buffs, the outlying resort areas specialize in beachside bliss. **BEACH LOVERS:** Sip piña coladas from giant hollowed-out pineapples at Playa Minitas, the jet-setters beach at Casa de Campo in La Romana. **NATURAL WONDER:** Tour Puerto Plata's Amber Museum to see the world's largest collection of this indigenous gemstone. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Adrenaline junkies? You'll love 27 Charcos, a series of corkscrew waterfalls, slides and pools carved

by the Río Damajagua near Puerto Plata. The hike-swim-climb requires guides, helmets and lifejackets. **DINNER FOR TWO:** Descend the iron staircase into Santo Domingo's Mesón de la Cava, a real-life cave complete with stalactites and stalagmites. A Latin soundtrack fuels a festive atmosphere in keeping with the menu of Dominican delicacies. **AFTER DARK:** Brush up on your merengue moves with lessons at your resort before hitting the Mangu club at Occidental Grand Punta Cana.

jamaica

The land of One Love embraces honeymooners with picture-perfect beaches, mountains and heart-felt hospitality. **BEACH LOVERS:** For about \$20 round trip, any boat operator in Negril will take you to Booby Cay, a swimsuit-optional islet offshore. Or stay behind and savor the scene on Negril's famous seven-mile strand. **NATURAL WONDER:** Scramble up and down the stones of Dunn's River Falls, Jamaica's most beloved cascade. Come early or late in the day to avoid the crowds. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Life is but a dream as you float down the Martha Brae River on a bamboo raft. Ask nicely, and your pilot will relate the legend of Martha Brae as he guides you through the forest with his long bamboo pole. **DINNER FOR TWO:** Feast on Jamaica's best jerk at Norma's on the Terrace in Kingston. **AFTER DARK:** Groove to old-school reggae at Sunday's street party at Rae Town, Kingston's waterfront district.

st. lucia

Breathtaking beaches, lush mountainsides and romantic resorts make St. Lucia a Garden of Eden for lovers. **BEACH LOVERS:** Choc Beach north of Castries gives you plenty of coconut palms and clear, tranquil waters for your Blue Lagoon moment. **NATURAL WONDER:** Take a South Island helicopter tour to see the steaming cauldron of Soufrière's volcano up close. **PLEASURE TRIP:** Test your pedal prowess on Bike St. Lucia's Jungle Biking Adventure. The company maintains 12 miles of trails through the ruins of Anse Mamin, an 18th-century sugar plantation, along with practice facilities and state-of-the-art mountain bikes. **DINNER FOR TWO:** Order something fabulous—like Smoked Poulet & Coconut Salad with pineapple salsa—as you watch the sun sink between the Pitons from Ladera's lofty dining terrace, Dasheene. **AFTER DARK:** Wear your brightest outfit to Friday's jump-up in the village of Gros Islet. You'll hear traditional music, taste local foods, drink, dance and basically have the time of your life.