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# WEDDING GUIDE

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**Dominican Republic**  
**Has it all**



## Weddings in Dominican Republic

The second largest country in the Caribbean, Dominican Republic, is an ideal destination for weddings, honeymoons and romantic milestones. Nearly 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) of golden coastline dotted with pristine white sand beaches beckon brides-to-be, while a variety of sophisticated resorts, hotels, villas and wedding venues make Dominican Republic wedding planning a breeze.

For couples who dream of unique and fairytale-like engagements, weddings and honeymoons, Dominican Republic is a dream come true as it blends a tropical paradise with old-world charm and romance. With 25 percent of its land and coastal areas preserved as national parks, reserves and sanctuaries, Dominican Republic's magnificent nature, stunning sea and sand, and world-class accommodations set the scene for amazing weddings. No wonder Dominican Republic is rapidly becoming the top Caribbean choice for weddings.

Named one of 20 "Best Honeymoon Destinations in 2011" by *Destinations Wedding & Honeymoons* magazine, Dominican Republic resorts feature professional wedding planners, a variety of packages and professional support to ensure your celebration is the most enchanting and memorable one possible. The country also offers a favorable exchange rate and surprising values for such sophisticated hotels. And with eight international airports throughout the country, Dominican Republic is closer than you think to most cities. Come and explore Dominican Republic for your perfect wedding.

Cover Photo: Altos de Chavón, La Romana

# Facts

Dominican Republic occupies the eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola, which it shares with the Republic of Haiti, and is the second largest country in the Caribbean, comprising an area of 29,948 square miles (48,442 square kilometers). The country has a population of more than 9.5 million and enjoys sunny tropical weather year-round. The average year-round temperatures are 78° to 88° F (25° to 31° C). The cooler season is November through April, while it is warmest from May through October.

**TIME:** The local time zone is Eastern Caribbean Time (GMT -0400). Dominican Republic does not observe daylight savings time.

**CAPITAL CITY:** Dominican Republic's historic and sophisticated capital city, Santo Domingo, is the oldest city of the New World and was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1990.

**LANGUAGE:** Spanish is the official language; however, you'll be surprised by the fact that the majority of employees in hotels and tourist destinations speak relatively good English, French, German and Italian.

**CURRENCY:** The Dominican peso (RD\$) is the official currency.

**GETTING HERE:** Dominican Republic currently has eight international airports throughout the country, including: Punta Cana International Airport (PUJ), La Romana International Airport (LRM), Gregorio Luperón International Airport (POP) in Puerto Plata, El Cibao International Airport (STI) in Santiago, Las Americas International Airport (SDQ) in Santo Domingo, and El Catey International Airport (AZS) in Samaná. Maritime ports that regularly receive cruise ships include: Santo Domingo Port (Don Diego and Sans Souci terminals), Casa de Campo Port in La Romana and Samaná Bay facilities.

**DOCUMENTATION:** For most visitors, a passport along with a US\$10 Tourist Card (available at the airport) is required to enter the country. For a list of countries that can enter Dominican Republic without a visa, please visit: [www.GoDominicanRepublic.com](http://www.GoDominicanRepublic.com).

**ELECTRICITY:** Operates at 110 Volts/60 Hertz, the same as North America.

**TAXES:** Dominican hotels and restaurants collect 26 percent of their published prices (16 percent sales tax + 10 percent service charges).

**MEDICAL PRECAUTIONS:** Travelers visiting the country are advised to drink only bottled water. Also, because of the strength of the Caribbean sun, it is recommended that vacationers drink water throughout the day to avoid dehydration.

**DRINKING AGE:** The legal drinking age in the country is 18 years old.

**HOTELS:** For information about Dominican Republic hotels, visit [www.godominicanrepublic.com/en/hotels](http://www.godominicanrepublic.com/en/hotels) and the Association of Hotels and Tourism: [www.Asonahores.com](http://www.Asonahores.com)



# The Wedding

Dominican Republic is the perfect backdrop for those looking to tie the knot. Conveniently, brides-to-be have access to a vast variety of hotels that offer comprehensive wedding packages including wedding coordinators, bridal treatments, couples spa services, a photographer, music, flowers, honeymoon suite, personalized wedding cake, catering, amenities for guests and more to ensure that the wedding day is as hassle-free, cost-effective and relaxed as possible. Your biggest worry will be saying the cherished words, "I do."

Dominican Republic also offers a range of nuptial details for couples to consider, whether you are looking for lush tropical gardens or the uniqueness of a quaint village, the exotic island accommodates extravagant or intimate, and exciting or relaxed for every style and budget.

## THE HONEYMOON:

A major advantage of traveling to Dominican Republic is that newlyweds are already at their honeymoon destination, simply an "all-in-one" package. If you will be at a resort in the south, take time out to visit Santo Domingo, the first city in the New World. Have pictures of the two of you strolling through the 16th century Colonial City, an area dripping with romance. Visit the Alcázar de Colón, where Diego Columbus courted his newly arrived bride, Maria de Toledo. The cobble-stone streets and yellow lamplight will inspire old-fashioned romance. In Santo Domingo, choose from one of the large chain hotels or a smaller boutique hotel in the colonial city. For serenity-seeking honeymooners, choose a small private hotel far away from the all-inclusive party atmosphere. How about a small mountain enclave or a guest house at a secluded beach?

Still stumped about which direction to take? Then make it a split decision - spend a week in the south or the east and a week in the north. Some destinations are only 3 or 4 hours apart so you won't waste a whole day traveling. After all, it's your honeymoon; make it memorable!

## RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES:

For those who like the idea of getting married in a tropical setting but still want a religious ceremony, it is possible to arrange a church wedding in the Dominican Republic. Many hotels have experience with church weddings but a Dominican wedding specialist will be able to better assist the couple through the formalities.

## CEREMONIES CAN BE HELD AT:

- San Estanislao Church in Altos de Chavón (La Romana)
- Basilica La Altagracia, Higüey, La Altagracia (Punta Cana)
- Jesús Maestro Parish (Bávaro)
- Cathedral of Puerto Plata
- Sosúa Synagogue (Puerto Plata)
- Santo Domingo Synagogue
- Cathedral of Santo Domingo
- Dominicus Convent (Santo Domingo)
- Cathedral of Santiago

## WEDDING REQUIREMENTS:

Submit the following paperwork before the Oficialia del Estado Civil (Civil Registry Office) for the preparation of your marriage certificate. Note that you may send photocopies in advance and bring the original with you:

- Original passport with photocopy of the front page with the latest entries into the country.
- Sworn declaration before a notary public of being single and eligible to marry, this is also known as a single status affidavit.
- Birth Certificate(s).
- Divorce Certificate(s) when applicable.
- Two or more witnesses, each with a copy of their identification card. Relatives cannot be witnesses.

Legal transcripts of the birth certificates, single status affidavit and divorce certificate are usually prepared at the Dominican Consulate in the country where the documents were issued.



# Punta Cana

The sophisticated East Coast boasts 100 miles (160 kilometers) of the world's top beaches that are surrounded by turquoise waters and some of the world's most luxe resorts, from all-inclusives, to boutique hotels, to private oceanfront villas.

**BEACHES** – The main draw to this area is the beaches that border the meeting point between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. The multi-shaded blue waters of the ocean complemented by pristine white sands create lasting impressions, making for a perfect sunrise or sunset with your sweetheart.

**DOLPHIN ENCOUNTER** – One of Punta Cana's newest and most remarkable experiences, visitors are taken to a floating platform located just off the beach where they can snorkel, swim and take pictures with dolphins, sharks, stingrays and sea lions.

**PUNTA CANA ECOLOGICAL RESERVE/FOUNDATION** – Romance seekers can hold hands as they walk trails that meander through tropical forests filled with local biodiversity. The Indian Eyes Park culminates in a cooling dip in one of the 11 lagoons after winding through deep green tunnels that are home to more than 500 species of exotic plants.

**SPAS** – A spa visit to Punta Cana and Bávaro's all-inclusive resorts and spa facilities is an ideal way to decompress with your loved one. The East Coast's world-class brands boast some of the best spas in the Caribbean and specialize in some of today's hottest and most luxurious spa services. It does not matter if you receive spa treatments outside or indoors, individual or as a couple, for one hour or an entire day, spa professionals customize each and every treatment to a visitor's needs.

**GOLF** – Punta Cana offers golf enthusiasts the largest selection of world-class golf set among sumptuous resorts in the country. This enchanting region continues to be the top destination for travelers who seek challenging golf at some of the world's most memorable courses.



# Dominican Republic



## KEY

	City and Town		Beach
	Point of Interest		Protected Area/Park
	Cruise Port		Golf Course
	International Airport		Whales
	Domestic Airport		Highest Peak

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# La Romana

La Romana features a combination of picturesque beaches, chic accommodations and desirable attractions. With its brilliant waters, tropical forests, rich colonial history and excellent range of activities, La Romana provides the perfect destination for honeymooners and couples alike.

**ALTOS DE CHAVÓN** – Built in 1976, Altos de Chavón is a romantic cobblestone lined replica of quaint 16th century Tuscan village. Bride and groom can get hitched high above the Chavón River in this cultural center that features shops, artists' studios and a historic church in stone and coral block buildings.

**CASA DE CAMPO** – Casa de Campo, a favorite getaway for celebrities, is the venerable resort and villa complex in La Romana that includes exclusive access to La Romana's marina, a variety of gourmet and casual restaurants and three of Dominican Republic's top golf courses. Get married on the fairway or on beautiful private beaches at the resort.

**SAONA ISLAND** – With excursions departing from Bayahibe, Saona Island forms part of the National Park of the East, and its pristine beaches are the main draw. Saona Island is home to some 112 species of birds in addition to turtles, sharks, bottlenose dolphins and manatees, making it a unique spot for romantic declarations.

**CATALINA ISLAND** – Catalina Island is a secluded and private island just off the coast of La Romana. It features one of the best dive spots in Dominican Republic. From the beach surrounding the island, a soft slope is the platform for a rich underwater garden of corals and fauna at less than 9 feet (3 m) depth, making it ideal for snorkeling.

**CUEVA DE LAS MARAVILLAS (CAVE OF WONDERS)** – Cave that feature an abundance of crystallized minerals with some 500 petroglyphs etched into the walls by the ancient Taino Indians can be explored by couples. Make a wonderful proposal amid the serenity of ancient drawings.

**BAYAHIBE** – Located 25 minutes east of La Romana is the local resort area of Bayahibe, known as a favorite destination for the beach and sun. Originally founded in 1874 as an authentic fishing village, Bayahibe boasts a combination of picturesque beaches, majestic nature, chic accommodations and desirable attractions.



# Samaná Peninsula

Known for its magnificent beauty and quiet unspoiled beaches lying within spectacular views of the Bay of Samaná, the Samaná Peninsula is one of the most natural and undiscovered regions in the Caribbean. The Northeast Coast was also named one of the top ten honeymoon destinations with the best beaches in the world in *The Knot's* 3rd annual "Guide to the Best Honeymoon Spots."

**WHALE WATCHING** – From January through March, Samaná Bay is a haven for humpback whales that mate and breed in Dominican Republic's protected waters. Appreciate the pristine nature and animal life as you endure a romantic milestone watching whales frolic in the distance. If visitors would rather observe the whales on land, a Land Whale Observatory opened in January 2011 at Punta Balandra.

**LOS HAITISES NATIONAL PARK** – Located just south of the Samaná Peninsula, this national park is 83 square miles (215 square kilometers) of mangrove swamp. Within it, however, couples will find themselves surrounded by more than 100 species of birds, 90 plus plant species, a wide variety of mammals and caves bearing pre-Columbian Taino art. Lovers can enjoy the park's magnificent series of limestone caves and boat excursions through the exotic vegetation.

**SALTO EL LIMÓN** – Celebrate your love in a cascade of water. Considered one of the most spectacular and breathtaking waterfalls in the country, Salto El Limón captivates as it cascades 170 feet (52 meters) into a large swimming hole. While the waterfall is accessible by foot, the best way to get there is by a couple's horseback ride.

**CAYO LEVANTADO** – Located in the Bay of Samaná, this idyllic island has become one of the area's top tourist destinations for romance, relaxation and refreshing Dominican cuisine.

**LAS GALERAS** – Las Galeras is the perfect destination for romance seekers. Serenely located on the tip of the peninsula, its main beach offers a breathtaking respite for sunning, swimming and strolling along the beachfront's stores and restaurants.

**LAS TERRENAS** – Las Terrenas, a Mediterranean-influenced town, features a mixture of distinctive restaurants, bars, shopping and vibrant nightlife bound to satisfy all genres of travelers. The town welcomes romantics with its beautiful white sand beaches lined with pastel-colored wooden fishing boats, along which the shops, delicious restaurants, and pate and pastry shops reflecting the European influence can be found.



# Puerto Plata

Known as the country's most versatile playground, the Puerto Plata province on Dominican Republic's North Coast is an eco-tourist's paradise set among mountains and sugar cane fields, all of which serve as the backdrop to miles of gorgeous coastline of golden-sand beaches.

**OCEAN WORLD ADVENTURE PARK** – A favorite with kids and adults alike, Ocean World allows visitors to get up close and personal with dolphins, sea lions and sharks. Swim together with some of the underwater world's most majestic creatures, creating an undeniable bond.

**VICTORIAN ARCHITECTURE AND AMBER** – Get down on one knee while taking in the beauty of the late 19th and early 20th century preserved Victorian homes and public buildings in the heart of Puerto Plata. Visit the Amber Museum to see this prehistoric gem that is abundant in Dominican Republic.

**FORT SAN FELIPE** – Built by Spaniards in the 16th century to protect themselves from intruders and pirates, this large fort is the oldest standing edifice in Puerto Plata and the only remnant of the colonial time architecture. Pop the question while peeking through the fort's potholes.

**MOUNT ISABEL DE TORRES** – Get engaged in the heavens, or at least pretty close, while taking a suspended cable car 2,565 feet (781 meters) up to the top of Mount Isabel de Torres at the foot of the shores of Puerto Plata. Among the magnificent views, a statue of Christ the Redeemer can be seen at the peak.

**27 WATERFALLS OF DAMAJAGUA** – Tap into love while discovering one of Dominican Republic's best kept secrets just south of Puerto Plata. Climb one of numerous waterfalls in order to "cascade" back down by jumping off cliffs or sliding down water chutes – an adrenaline rush not to be forgotten.

**CABARETE** – The magic of Cabarete is unveiled in a variety of delicious restaurants that draw couples seeking premier dining experiences. Incredible moonlit views of the golden sand beach make dining here an unforgettable romantic treat. The colorful array of kite surfers in the bay also adds to the magic.



# Santo Domingo

Santo Domingo, the 2010 Cultural Capital of the Americas, is the largest and most populated city in Dominican Republic. With fascinating museums, delicious gastronomy, exciting entertainment options and rich history with the azure Caribbean Sea as your romantic backdrop, Santo Domingo is the Caribbean's most diverse and, arguably, its most vibrant destination awaiting all romance seekers.

**COLONIAL CITY** – Located in the capital city Santo Domingo, the Colonial City was the first city established in the New World by Christopher Columbus' brother, Bartholomew. Here, lovers will find hundreds of amazingly preserved buildings dating back to the early 1500's, many of which are museums. Among them are Alcazár de Colón (Diego's home), Ozama fortress, and the palace of the Spanish court (Museo de las Casas Reales), offering exciting exotic backdrops to a lifelong proposal. The area is gorgeous and romantic at night with well-lit restaurants, museums and ancient stone structures. Nearby, couples can take in the view of the Gothic style architecture of the Cathedral of Santo Domingo, the first cathedral of the New World. The building is highlighted with Renaissance details dating from 1514 to 1546, thus setting itself apart from today's modern architecture and romantically emphasizing its cultural and historical content.

**CULTURAL PLAZA** – Santo Domingo has dozens of museums, many of which are located in the city's Plaza de la Cultura. Here, couples can explore the Museum of the Dominican Man, the Museum of Modern Art, the National Museum of History and Geography, and the National Museum of Natural History.

**LOS TRES OJOS** – Los Tres Ojos, or The Three Eyes, is the name of a 50-foot (15 meter) open-air limestone cave in Mirador del Este Park near Santo Domingo. Inside are four lakes created by tectonic fractures when underground caves collapsed ages ago. Surrounded by stalactites and stalagmites, and inhabited by bats, turtles and fish, the lakes give rise to mysterious reflections of blue, green and yellow.

**SHIPWRECKS** – Lovers interested in scuba diving will especially enjoy exploring the wrecks off the coast of Boca Chica. "The Hickory" and "El Limón" are found in the La Caleta National Underwater Park and act as a reef to thousands of species of colorful fish and fauna.



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