



# Hot honeymoon destinations

By **NANCY SUNDSTROM**  
Special to the Record-Eagle

**D**o you want to scrimp or splurge? Go someplace close or halfway around the world? Opt for sun or snow? Be lively or lazy?

These are just a few of the questions you'll need to keep in mind as you begin planning to make your honeymoon the destination of your dreams. By now, you've most likely made perhaps hundreds of decisions about your upcoming wedding and the time has come to turn your attention to insuring that your honeymoon is equally perfect.

And like weddings, great honeymoons don't just happen. They are the result of good communication, thorough research and comparison shopping, exploring options and leaving as little as possible to chance.

According to the Institute of Certified Travel Agents (ICTA), the average U.S. couple spends more than \$4,000 on their honeymoon, which is three times the amount spent on other types of leisure travel.

ICTA has also identified a number of other new honey-

moon travel trends, one being that due to the significant emotional and financial investment involved in honeymoon planning, many Internet-savvy couples are not using large travel Web sites for bookings.

Instead, they are seeking the services of reputable, local travel agents whose knowledge and expertise often includes familiarity with e-commerce business.

Other trends include the fact that many couples delay the start of their honeymoon by as much as one week after their wedding to allow for time to spend with visiting family and friends and to attend to post-ceremony details. Another is that the South Pacific is being called the hottest new honeymoon destination, with Tahiti, Fiji, Bora Bora, Australia, New Zealand and the Cook Islands following closely behind.

Steve Kan, owner of Andrew Kan Travel Service in Traverse City, said that couples taking cruises and choosing all-inclusive resorts (primarily in the Caribbean) is another trend. Whatever couples' honeymoon destination, Kan said that travel agents can play an important role in guiding the decision-making process and helping to

**Cruise ship honeymoons are a current trend. Pictured here is the ship Volendam's Lido Pool as it cruises on the Caribbean.**

take some of the guesswork out of the equation.

"One of the first things we try to do is establish a budget and time frame, and then match that to what a couple's interests and expectations are," said Kan. "After everything that goes into a wedding, the norm for most people is relaxing, which generally means beach and sun or a cruise, though adventure honeymoons are also quite popular. We're here to make recommendations and help insure that this part of the wedding experience runs smoothly. And to do that takes planning."

Kan said that in recent years, destinations like Mexico and Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic have gained in popularity, though interest hasn't waned in spots like Europe, Hawaii and even Disney World in Florida. The all-inclusive resorts and cruise packages are attractive because entertainment and food are already paid for and the quality of the overall experience is generally high.

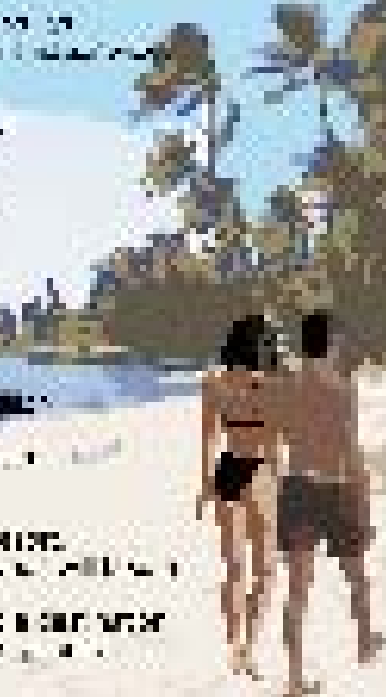
Whether it's a trek through a rain forest, taking in the culture of Europe, being pampered at a spa, or lounging on a beach on a South Pacific



## The honeymoon

The honeymoon is a special time for a couple. It's a time to relax and enjoy each other's company. Here are some tips to make your honeymoon unforgettable.

- Choose a destination that is meaningful to you.
- Set a budget and stick to it.
- Book your travel arrangements well in advance.
- Consider all-inclusive packages to simplify your trip.
- Don't forget to take your passports and necessary documents.
- Enjoy the moment and create lasting memories.



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