Destination Wedding Checklist

A planning checklist for a destination wedding covering travel, legal requirements abroad, guest logistics, vendors, packing, and timeline.

Choose the Destination

- [ ] Pick a location that fits your budget, season, and travel reach.
- [ ] Research the weather and avoid storm or monsoon seasons.
- [ ] Estimate the total cost for you and a realistic guest count.
- [ ] Check entry requirements and visa rules for you and your guests.
  Some countries require passports valid for at least six months beyond travel.
- [ ] Visit in person or hire a local planner before committing.
- [ ] Confirm a venue and lock the date.

Legal and Marriage Requirements

- [ ] Research the destination's marriage laws and residency rules.
- [ ] List every required document, such as birth certificates and passports.
- [ ] Arrange certified translations and legalization or apostille if needed.
- [ ] Confirm any waiting period or in-country days required before the ceremony.
- [ ] Decide whether to marry legally abroad or sign paperwork at home.
  A symbolic ceremony abroad plus a legal signing at home avoids most red tape.
- [ ] Verify how to register the marriage back home afterward.

Travel and Lodging

- [ ] Book your own flights early for the best fares.
- [ ] Reserve a hotel room block at a group rate for guests.
- [ ] Arrange airport transfers and local transportation.
- [ ] Build in extra days before the wedding as a buffer.
- [ ] Confirm travel insurance for you and recommend it to guests.
- [ ] Research local currency, tipping customs, and SIM or data options.

Guest Logistics

- [ ] Send save-the-dates much earlier than a local wedding.
- [ ] Build a wedding website with travel, lodging, and schedule details.
- [ ] Share cost estimates so guests can budget for the trip.
- [ ] Provide lodging options at several price points.
- [ ] Assemble welcome bags with local maps and essentials.
- [ ] Plan a group activity or welcome dinner to gather everyone.
  A welcome event helps guests who traveled far meet before the big day.

Vendors From Afar

- [ ] Hire a local planner or rely on the venue coordinator.

- [ ] Book photography, florals, music, and catering early.
- [ ] Review portfolios and read reviews from international clients.
- [ ] Confirm contracts, currency, and payment methods in writing.
- [ ] Schedule video calls to align on the vision and timeline.
- [ ] Ask vendors about local marriage officiant options.

Packing Essentials

- [ ] Carry attire, rings, and vows in your carry-on, never checked.
- [ ] Pack all legal documents and printed confirmations together.
- [ ] Bring a steamer, sewing kit, and stain remover for attire.
- [ ] Pack comfortable shoes and weather-appropriate clothing.
- [ ] Include a small first-aid and emergency kit.
- [ ] Carry adapters, chargers, and backup power banks.

Final Timeline

- [ ] Confirm all vendor details and payments before you travel.
- [ ] Reconfirm flights, transfers, and lodging for you and the party.
- [ ] Arrive early to recover from travel and complete any paperwork.
- [ ] Do a venue walkthrough and rehearsal once on site.
- [ ] Distribute the timeline to vendors and the wedding party.
- [ ] Plan how to bring gifts and personal items home afterward.