

FREE PLANNING WORKBOOK

Destination Wedding Feasibility, Budget & Vendor Workbook

Test whether a destination works before major commitments, model guest and budget reality, compare landed cost, and choose local versus travel-in vendors by operational risk.

TEST • COMPARE • BUDGET • SOURCE • COMMIT

Make the Destination Earn Its Place in the Plan

A destination wedding connects three systems: the celebration, the trip required to reach it, and the guest experience. Test all three before commitments become expensive to change.

1 FEASIBILITY

Test budget, must-have guests, travel burden, season, local infrastructure, and the experience you want to host.

2 LANDED COST

Separate production, couple travel, hosted guest costs, vendor travel, currency friction, and contingency.

3 VENDOR MODEL

Use local knowledge where it matters; bring trusted talent only when fit justifies the travel exposure.

CORE PRINCIPLE

Do not book a beautiful destination that only works if attendance, travel, weather, vendors, and logistics all behave perfectly.

WORKBOOK BASICS

Working destination(s): _____

Target date / season: _____ Guest-count range: _____

Current budget ceiling: _____ Decision deadline: _____

Define What the Destination Must Support

Clarify the wedding before evaluating a location. The destination should serve the experience, not force the experience to fit a photograph.

Decision	Our working answer	Non-negotiable?
Wedding format / number of days		
Guest-count range		
Must-have guest group		
Hosted events		
Design / production ambition		
Travel burden we consider reasonable		
Accessibility requirement		
Season / weather tolerance		
Local support needed		

Run the Four-Constraint Feasibility Test

A destination should work across budget, essential attendance, acceptable travel burden, and the kind of weekend you actually want to host.

Constraint	What must be true?	Evidence / current reality	Pass?
Total budget			
Essential guests			
Travel burden			
Hosted experience			

TRADEOFF TEST

- ☐ Smaller guest list acceptable
- ☐ Different season acceptable
- ☐ Simpler event schedule acceptable
- ☐ Higher couple travel acceptable
- ☐ Fewer shipped decor items acceptable
- ☐ Different destination acceptable

Compare Destinations as Operating Systems

Score the ecosystem, not only the venue market. Flight access, transfers, lodging, infrastructure, weather, guest feasibility, and vendor support all shape the weekend.

Factor	Destination A	Destination B	Destination C	Priority
Flight access				
Ground transfer				
Lodging range				
Season / weather				
Venue options				
Local vendor market				
Rental / production infrastructure				
Accessibility				
Guest burden				
Shipping / sourcing difficulty				

Test Priority-Guest Feasibility Before Venue Capacity

This is not an RSVP prediction. It is a check for obvious barriers among people whose absence would materially change the wedding for you.

Guest / group	Origin	Flight / transfer burden	PTO / trip length	Mobility / children	Barrier?	Works?

Build a Range That Works in Both Directions

Do not rely on a single destination-wedding attendance percentage. Model invitation capacity and low, expected, and high attendance scenarios.

MAXIMUM INVITATIONS

The largest number you are willing and financially prepared to host if every invitation becomes a yes.

MUST-HAVE ATTENDANCE

The group whose presence makes the destination choice feel worthwhile.

MAXIMUM ATTENDANCE

The largest attendance the venue, budget, lodging, and transport plans can tolerate.

Scenario	Guest count	Venue works?	Budget works?	Minimums work?	Transport works?	Action
High attendance						
Expected attendance						
Lower attendance						

RULE

Treat every invitation as a possible yes. Never use expected declines to create a guest list the venue or budget cannot support.

Adjust Guest Policies for Travel - Without Letting Travel Decide the List

Use destination-specific consequences to refine policies already defined in your master guest-list system.

Policy	Destination-specific issue	Our rule	Communicate by
Children			
Plus-ones			
Older / mobility needs			
Hosted lodging help			
Hosted transportation			
Private assistance			

CONSISTENCY CHECK

Destination complexity may influence policy, but the final rule still needs to be clear and consistent.

Build Three Budgets, Not One

A destination can look inexpensive when costs are hidden in travel or shifted to guests. Keep the three financial systems visible.

EVENT PRODUCTION

Venue, catering, bar, rentals, florals, photo/video, entertainment, planning, ceremony, reception production, and hosted events.

COUPLE TRAVEL

Flights, ground travel, lodging, transfers, planning visits, baggage, shipping, extra setup nights, and wedding-caused travel.

GUEST-BORNE TRAVEL

Flights, lodging, independent meals, local transport, documents where required, childcare, pet care, and optional activities.

OUR WORKING TOTALS

Event production: _____ Couple travel: _____

Hosted guest-related costs: _____ Vendor travel: _____

Contingency: _____

WORKING COUPLE-FUNDED DESTINATION TOTAL: _____

Make Financial Responsibility Explicit

Researching or organizing a travel item does not automatically mean the couple is paying for it. Define the hosting model before commitments are made.

Expense	Couple pays	Guest pays	Shared / subsidized	TBD	Communicate by
Guest airfare					
Guest lodging					
Airport transfer					
Wedding shuttle					
Welcome event					
Farewell brunch					
Optional activities					
Vendor travel					
Shipping / baggage					

Turn the Venue Package Into a Real Production Cost

The advertised package is useful only after you identify what remains to be purchased, upgraded, or outsourced.

Item	Included	Upgrade	Outside vendor	Extra fee	Still unclear
Ceremony space					
Chairs / tables / linens					
Catering / alcohol					
Staffing					
Basic decor / lighting / sound					
Setup / teardown					
Rehearsal					
Rain / weather backup					
Power / security / cleaning					
Additional event spaces					

PACKAGE QUESTION

What will we still need to buy after signing this venue?

Look Beyond the Headline Package

Most destination 'hidden' costs are costs created by exceptions, upgrades, travel, timing, and distance.

Potential cost	Applies?	Estimated exposure	Source / contract	Resolved?
Outside-vendor fee				
Setup / breakdown / room flip				
Minimum stay / room commitment				
Vendor meals / transport				
Planning visits				
Power / production / weather protection				
Late-night overtime / security / cleanup				
Shipping / storage / return				
Airport / event transport				
Bank / conversion / card fees				

Track Foreign-Currency Exposure Separately

A contract in another currency does not have one permanent U.S.-dollar value until fully paid. Keep both the contracted amount and a working estimate.

Vendor	Contract currency	Contract amount	Working USD estimate	Next payment	Fees / method	Exposure note

PAYMENT FRICTION CHECK

Bank transfer · Intermediary fee · Foreign-transaction fee · Conversion spread
Payment-platform fee · Tax and service-charge assumptions

Build Contingency Around Complexity, Not a Universal Percentage

The more remote, weather-sensitive, international, shipment-heavy, transportation-heavy, or multi-day the plan becomes, the more flexibility may be useful.

Pressure factor	Low	Moderate	High	Why
Remote property				
Weather exposure				
International vendor team				
Heavy shipping / baggage				
Multi-day hosted program				
Complex guest transportation				
Limited local sourcing				
Currency exposure				

CONTINGENCY PURPOSE

Protect against last-minute transportation, replacement items, extra vendor hours, additional lodging, emergency sourcing, weather changes, and currency movement.

Compare Destinations by Landed Cost

A lower ceremony package is not automatically a lower-cost destination. Compare the same full system for every option.

Cost / pressure	Destination A	Destination B	Destination C
Wedding production			
Couple travel			
Vendor travel			
Hosted guest costs			
Shipping / baggage			
Transport			
Currency / fees			
Contingency pressure			
Guest burden - qualitative			
Total couple exposure			

BEST-VALUE DESTINATION

The option that supports the experience you want at an acceptable total cost - not simply the lowest venue quote.

Choose Local vs. Travel-In Vendor by Risk

Ask the same four questions for every category: local knowledge value, creative or personal fit, added travel risk, and local replaceability.

Vendor	Local knowledge value	Creative / personal fit	Travel risk	Replaceable locally?	Likely model
Planner / coordinator					
Photo / video					
Florist					
DJ / band					
Hair / makeup					
Rentals / production					
Other					

DECISION RULE

Choose the model that removes more unresolved dependencies for this service.

Price the Entire Travel Model Before Booking

A familiar vendor is not 'their normal fee plus a plane ticket.' Travel creates a different service and cost structure.

Travel term	Included?	Couple books?	Vendor books?	Estimated cost	Contract clear?
Flights / mileage					
Lodging / nights					
Ground transportation					
Baggage / equipment					
Meals / per diem					
Travel-day fee					
Assistant travel					
Site visit					

TRAVEL DISRUPTION

What happens if a flight, bag, equipment shipment, or arrival window fails? _____

Evaluate Process, Not Only Portfolio

Remote consultations should leave you with a clearer operating process. Verify who performs the service and how the vendor learns the venue.

Review area	Evidence / answer	Strong	Clarify	Red flag
Recent full-event work				
Similar logistical demands				
Venue / comparable-property experience				
Assigned person / team clear				
Remote-couple workflow				
Planner / venue coordination				
Time-zone communication				
Contract / currency / payment clarity				
Backup / substitution process				

Plan the Failure Point Before Anyone Travels

If a travel-in vendor cannot arrive, decide what happens before the wedding depends on hope.

Vendor	Failure scenario	Local substitute?	Who activates backup?	Equipment available?	Refund / credit?	Open action

SITE-VISIT TEST

- ☐ Layout decision needs in-person review
- ☐ Power / lighting / sound requires site knowledge
- ☐ Load-in / setup risk is material
- ☐ Guest flow / weather backup needs on-site review

Destination Wedding Go / Not Yet Decision

Commit only when the destination works across the celebration, the trip, priority guests, budget, and vendor model.

DESTINATION CHOSEN

WHY THIS DESTINATION WORKS

GUEST-COUNT RANGE

HOSTED EVENTS / WEEKEND STRUCTURE

WORKING COUPLE-FUNDED TOTAL

MAJOR GUEST-BORNE COSTS

LOCAL PLANNING SUPPORT

LOCAL VENDOR CATEGORIES

TRAVEL-IN VENDOR CATEGORIES

MAJOR RISKS / CONTINGENCY

FINAL STATUS

[] READY TO COMMIT [] NEEDS REVISION [] DESTINATION DOES NOT PASS

Next decision / owner: _____

NOTES & REFERENCES

Destination Decision Notes

Use this space for destination questions, budget assumptions, venue or vendor follow-ups, guest feasibility concerns, and risks that still need an owner.