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# Paradise Found

Beach-bound after the wedding? Don't book your plane tickets before reading this list of the 50 best beaches in the world. TEXT BY Jennifer Benjamin PHOTOGRAPHS BY Johnny Miller

THERE ARE HUNDREDS and hundreds of beaches in the world, but you have only one honeymoon—talk about pressure! To help you find the right spot for your romantic rendezvous, we compiled a list of the 50 most spectacular shores in the world (trust us, your screensaver has nothing on these spots). Whether you're looking for crystal-clear snorkeling waters filled with tropical fish, a postcard-worthy sunset, or a staff that can't wait to pamper you, these idyllic locales are about as close to cloud nine as you can get.

## BEST SAND

### **Pink Sands Beach, Harbour Island, Bahamas:**

This famed pink beach, which sprawls out for three blissful miles, gets its color from the shells of microscopic sea creatures. The bathtub-warm waters that lap up against its shores are clear, pristine, and perfect for swimming.

**Stay at:** Pink Sands Resort

**Virtual Visit:** [pinksandsresort.com](http://pinksandsresort.com)

### **White Beach, Boracay Island, Philippines:**

The 2½-mile stretch of sand is soft, clean, and blindingly white—so white, in fact, that next to it, the colors of sea, sky, and landscape appear neon bright.

**Stay at:** Sea Wind Boracay

**Virtual Visit:** [seawindresort.net](http://seawindresort.net)

### **Anse Source D'Argent, La Digue Island, Seychelles:**

This picturesque spit of sand has a reputation to uphold—it's one of the most photographed beaches in the world. Blame it on the large granite boulders and shallow, sparkling water—and don't forget the gorgeous pale-pink sand that lines its shores.

**Stay at:** La Digue Island Lodge

**Virtual Visit:** [ladigue.sc](http://ladigue.sc)

**FYI:** The movie *Cast Away* with Tom Hanks was filmed on the beaches of La Digue Island.

### **Red Beach, Santorini, Greece:**

Located near the ancient village of Akrotiri, this beach is well-known for its red sand and blue Aegean water set against black and red volcanic rocks.

**Stay at:** Hotel Village Mathios

**Virtual Visit:** [vmathios.gr](http://vmathios.gr)

### **Punaluu Beach, Big Island, Hawaii:**

The shimmering black sand here is actually volcanic lava that cooled once it reached the ocean. Keep your eyes peeled for sea turtles, who love to sunbathe on the shore.

**Stay at:** Kona Village Resort

**Virtual Visit:** [konavillage.com](http://konavillage.com)

You won't come across any seaweed at Pink Sands Beach in Harbour Island, Bahamas, pictured here. What you will see: baby-pink sand, aqua water, and loads of exquisite seashells.



If your idea of heaven includes fish, coral, and floating in warm water, then a snorkelmoon should make you as happy as a clam.

Snorkel your way through your honeymoon at Anse Chastanet Beach in St. Lucia, pictured here—that is, if you can tear yourself away from the view. Fins, \$21, and snorkel set, \$16. Swim Outlet, [swimoutlet.com](http://swimoutlet.com).



## BEST SNORKELING

### Chankanaab Bay, Cozumel, Mexico:

With warm, crystal-clear waters and nearly 20 miles of reef, the island of Cozumel is truly a mecca for snorkelers and divers. You'll be surrounded by colorful creatures from the moment you jump in (there are 200 different kinds of fish, to be exact), so don't forget to pack an underwater camera. If you're an experienced diver, check out the underwater limestone caves and winding tunnels.

**Stay at:** Presidente Intercontinental Cozumel Resort & Spa

**Virtual Visit:** [intercontinentalcozumel.com](http://intercontinentalcozumel.com)

**FYI:** Cozumel has more than sea life in its waters; it boasts an underwater sculpture garden, too.

### Blue Pearl Bay, Hayman Island, Queensland, Australia:

The breathtaking section of the Great Barrier Reef known as the Whitsunday Islands is home to a range of interesting coral formations. There's also some pretty fascinating sea life, including the giant Maori Wrasse (otherwise known as the Napoleon fish), which bears a striking resemblance to Mick Jagger.

**Stay at:** Hayman Island Resort

**Virtual Visit:** [hayman.com.au](http://hayman.com.au)

**Hanauma Bay, Oahu, Hawaii:** Calm, sheltered waters make this the perfect spot for those new to snorkeling. Just wade out from the beach and pop on your mask to see trumpet fish, bright-yellow tangs, and butterfly fish.

**Stay at:** Kahala Hotel & Resort

**Virtual Visit:** [kahalaresort.com](http://kahalaresort.com)

**Anse Chastanet, St. Lucia:** This beach's underwater ecosystem is a designated marine reserve, with miles of coral reefs that you can swim to from the shore. The deep-teal waters

(the color is due to the black sand underfoot) are home to more than 150 different species of tropical fish and wildlife. If you're lucky, you might even spot an octopus or turtle.

**Stay at:** Anse Chastanet

**Virtual Visit:** [ansechastanet.com](http://ansechastanet.com)

**Savusavu Bay, Vanua Levu, Fiji:** The beaches of Fiji are home to the largest variety of fish and coral in the world.

It's for that reason that Jacques Cousteau's son, Jean-Michel, built a five-star "green" resort on Savusavu Bay. In addition to the full-time marine biologist on staff, the resort also offers night snorkeling—scary, but worth it!

**Stay at:** Jean-Michel Cousteau Fiji Island Resort

**Virtual Visit:** [fjiresort.com](http://fjiresort.com)

## BEST BEACH TOWNS

**St.-Tropez, France:** The name alone is synonymous with luxury, and this town does not disappoint. With its high-end shopping, gourmet restaurants, and exciting nightlife, St.-Tropez was made for the posh. Celebrities tend to storm the beaches when the weather is warm, so go there if you want to see—and be seen.

**Stay at:** Hotel La Ponche

**Virtual Visit:** [laponche.com](http://laponche.com)

**South Beach, Miami:** While the beach here is gorgeous, most of the beautiful people that flock to South Beach want a little something extra—like the area's amazing restaurants, bars, and clubs, and the shopping on Lincoln Road.

**Stay at:** Sagamore the Art Hotel

**Virtual Visit:** [sagamorehotel.com](http://sagamorehotel.com)

**Kaanapali Beach, Maui, Hawaii:** You could come to Kaanapali and spend all day and night on the gorgeous beach, but then you'd be missing out on the shopping. There are dozens and dozens of boutiques, jewelry stores, and local chains a few feet (literally) from the sand at Whalers Village.

**Stay at:** Hyatt Regency Maui

**Virtual Visit:** [maui.hyatt.com](http://maui.hyatt.com)

**St. Thomas, Virgin Islands:** Bargains, anyone? In addition to a plethora of bars and restaurants, the city center is packed with duty-free shops. You'll find everything from locally made jewelry to fine art at serious discounts.

**Stay at:** Wyndham Sugar Bay Resort & Spa

**Virtual Visit:** [wyndham.com](http://wyndham.com)

**FYI:** Despite its decidedly exotic locale, St. Thomas is a U.S. territory, so you can get married here without the hassle of international paperwork.

**Waikiki Beach, Oahu, Hawaii:** This two-mile-long beach is lined with hotels, restaurants, and an eight-acre shopping center, Waikiki Beach Walk. If you're in the mood to do some serious damage, hit up 2100 Kalakaua Avenue for upscale stores like Gucci, Chanel, and Bottega Veneta.

**Stay at:** Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa

**Virtual Visit:** [moana-surfrider.com](http://moana-surfrider.com)

## HONEYMOONS

### BEST PAMPERING

**Four Seasons Hualalai, Kailua-Kona, Big Island, Hawaii:** The attendants at this oceanfront spot will roll out your towel on your chaise for you, adjust your umbrella, and come by frequently to spritz you with Evian water and offer up a chilled towel. If the attention feels a bit weird at first, remember—it's your honeymoon!

**Virtual Visit:** [fourseasons.com/hualalai](http://fourseasons.com/hualalai)

**Cap Juluca, Maundays Bay,**

**Anguilla:** Allow yourself to be pampered by a staff that will serve you breakfast on the breezy patio of your ocean-facing room, set you up with umbrellas and lounge chairs for lazing around on the beach, and indulge you with private seaside massages.

**Virtual Visit:** [capjuluca.com](http://capjuluca.com)

**Las Ventanas al Paraíso, San Jose del Cabo, Mexico:**

With staff outnumbering guests five to one, you're guaranteed personalized service in this all-suite resort. Between the aromatherapy turndown service, personal butlers, and a romance director, it's no wonder celebrities flock here.

**Virtual Visit:** [lasventanas.com](http://lasventanas.com)

**Parrot Cay, Turks and Caicos:** From the minute you arrive by speedboat at this private island, you'll feel like a movie star. It's no surprise, then, that the resort is a hot spot for A-listers, one or two of whom you may very well see roaming the grounds during your stay—just try not to stare! If you're having trouble reaching full-on vacation mode, make it a priority to kick back and really relax at the COMO Shambhala holistic spa—it's considered the best in the Caribbean.

**Virtual Visit:** [parrotcay.com.bz](http://parrotcay.com.bz)

**FYI:** Ben Affleck and Jennifer Garner were married at Parrot Cay.

**Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru, North Malé Atoll, Maldives:** Tucked away on its own small island, this resort, complete with restaurants and a spa, is a secluded paradise that'll make you feel like luxe-living castaways. The villas open out onto the beach, so you can step right into the soft white sand and down to the crystal-blue water the moment you wake up.

**Virtual Visit:** [banyantree.com](http://banyantree.com)



Be indulged at Las Ventanas al Paraíso in San Jose del Cabo, Mexico, pictured here. OPI Tropical Citrus Scrub, \$14, [opi.com](http://opi.com) for stores; beechwood facial massage brush, \$22, [Acca Kappa shopaccakappa.com](http://AccaKappa.shopaccakappa.com).

### BEST SUNSETS

**Punta Mita, Nayarit, Mexico:** This beach boasts views of the Sierra Madre Mountains in addition to truly breathtaking sunsets. It's the perfect place to lounge on the sand with your new hubby—and a frozen margarita, natch—to watch the sun slip down into the deep-blue Pacific.

**Stay at:** St. Regis Punta Mita

**Virtual Visit:** [stregis.com](http://stregis.com)

**Kuda Huraa, North Malé Atoll, Maldives:** The Maldivian Islands are well-known for their kaleidoscopic Indian Ocean sunsets. You'll see rich red and orange hues that often glow purple against the midnight-blue sky.

**Stay at:** Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa

**Virtual Visit:** [fourseasons.com/maldives](http://fourseasons.com/maldives)

**FYI:** Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes as well as Fergie and Josh Duhamel spent their honeymoon in the Maldivian Islands.

**Flic en Flac, Mauritius:** The blood-orange sunsets off the west coast of this African island light up the entire sky. And though this mile-long beach has a goofy name, there's no better place to spend a few hours. To experience the full range of colors and treat yourselves to the bright starscape, too, you'll want to get there well before sunset and stay until after dark.

**Stay at:** Sofitel Mauritius L'Impérial  
**Virtual Visit:** [sofitel.com](http://sofitel.com)  
**Anaehoomalu Bay Beach, Big Island, Hawaii:** Sunsets on the western sides of Hawaii's islands are ridiculously impressive, especially here. And you'll be able to brag to your friends that you've seen something that only happens in one place in the

world: As the sun sinks into the ocean watch for the elusive "green flash," when the sky glows bright green for a split second as the sun disappears out of view. Be sure to have your camera ready, because it's something you may never experience again.

**Stay at:** Waikoloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa

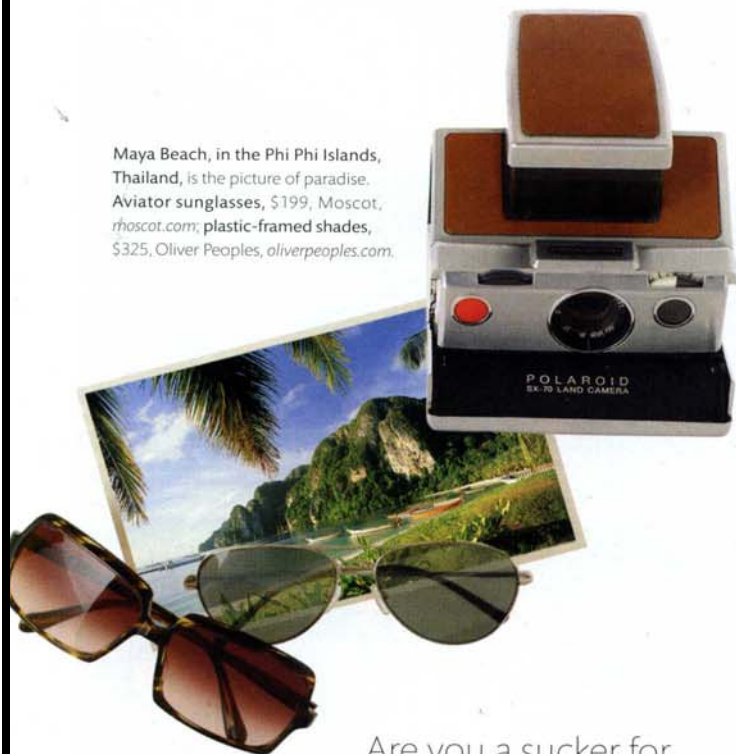
**Virtual Visit:** [marriott.com](http://marriott.com)

**Cable Beach, Broome, Western Australia:** The turquoise-blue water and palm trees are really beautiful, but the fiery-red sunsets are what really wow. If the sky is especially clear, you might see bits of pink, purple, orange, and even blue, too. Since your trip is once in a lifetime, why not go for the splurge and take in the view from atop a camel. (Yes, a camel—the beach's sunset treks are a must.)

**Stay at:** McAlpine House  
**Virtual Visit:** [mcalpinehouse.com.au](http://mcalpinehouse.com.au)

## HONEYMOONS

Maya Beach, in the Phi Phi Islands, Thailand, is the picture of paradise. Aviator sunglasses, \$199, Moscot, [rhoscot.com](http://rhoscot.com); plastic-framed shades, \$325, Oliver Peoples, [oliverpeoples.com](http://oliverpeoples.com).



Are you a sucker for natural wonders? Choose a beach that boasts vibrant vistas of jagged cliffs and jungly peaks.

### BEST VIEWS

**Maya Beach, Phi Phi Islands, Thailand:** Look up "beach" in the dictionary and you might see a picture of this spot. Located on the western side of the island of Phi Phi Lay, it's postcard-perfect, with swaying palm trees and limestone cliffs rising out of the water. **Stay at:** Phi Phi Island Village Beach Resort & Spa **Virtual Visit:** [ppisland.com](http://ppisland.com)

**FYI:** Leonardo DiCaprio's movie *The Beach* was filmed on Phi Phi Lay.

**Temae Beach, Moorea, French Polynesia:** While relaxing on this powdery beach, you'll be able to take in views of colorful grape trees overhead and the lush, jade-green mountains of Tahiti in the distance. **Stay at:** Sofitel Moorea **Virtual Visit:** [sofitel.com](http://sofitel.com)

**Johnson's Point, Antigua:** Nope, those giant mountains off in the distance aren't part of a mirage—this soft-sand beach offers a clear view of two beautiful neighboring islands: Montserrat and Guadeloupe.

**Stay at:** Blue Heron by Rex Resorts **Virtual Visit:** [rexresorts.com](http://rexresorts.com)  
**Poipu Beach, Kauai, Hawaii:** With rows of palm trees on the horizon and lava formations jutting from the water, the three crescent beaches of Poipu create a picturesque scene along the bright-blue Pacific Ocean. **Stay at:** Sheraton Kauai Resort **Virtual Visit:** [sheraton-kauai.com](http://sheraton-kauai.com)

**Tulum, Riviera Maya, Mexico:** From the snow-white beaches, you can spot the ruins of Tulum—that is, if you can stand to take your eyes off the sparkling, clear Caribbean. **Stay at:** Blue Tulum Resort & Spa **Virtual Visit:** [luxehotels.com](http://luxehotels.com)

### BEST WALKING

**Costa Alegre, Jalisco, Mexico:** Its name translates as the "Happy Coast," and the Costa Alegre's many beaches are part of an ecologically protected zone that spans more than 100 miles of shoreline. You can walk along the water to your heart's content, taking in views of both the mountains and the uncharted tropical jungles.

**Stay at:** El Tamarindo Beach & Golf Resort

**Virtual Visit:** [eltamarindoresort.com](http://eltamarindoresort.com)

**Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman Island:** As the name implies, this beach is miles long (although it's actually more like five or six). Take a break from your "long walk on the beach" to have a cocktail at one of the many ocean-front bars along the way.

**Stay at:** Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman **Virtual Visit:** [ritzcarlton.com](http://ritzcarlton.com)

**Grace Bay, Turks and Caicos:** With its calm Caribbean waters and soft, white sand, it's no wonder that Grace Bay is considered one of the best—not to mention most romantic—beaches in the world. There are almost 12 miles of coastline, which means you and your new husband can literally spend all day strolling hand in hand.

**Stay at:** Grace Bay Club **Virtual Visit:** [gracebayclub.com](http://gracebayclub.com)

**FYI:** When astronaut John Glenn spotted the 40 Turks and Caicos Islands from space, he commented that it "must be paradise."

**Hapuna Beach, Big Island, Hawaii:** With its lava rocks, blue water, and bright-green trees, this half-mile-long stretch is perfectly picturesque.

**Stay at:** Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel **Virtual Visit:** [princesortshawaii.com](http://princesortshawaii.com)

**Flamenco Beach, Culebra, Puerto Rico:** The water at this horseshoe-shape beach spans four shades of blue. **Stay at:** Club Seabourne **Virtual Visit:** [clubseabourne.com](http://clubseabourne.com)

### BEST PRIVACY

**Playa Arrocito, Bahias de Huatulco, Oaxaca, Mexico:** The bays of Huatulco are protected by the government, so they remain almost totally free from the tourism industry. Find your own secret spot on Playa Arrocito, in the Tangolunda Bay area. To get there, you'll have to descend long stairs along a rocky cliff—but it's worth it.

**Stay at:** Quinta Real Huatulco

**Virtual Visit:** [quintareal.com](http://quintareal.com)

**Petit St. Vincent, Grenadines:** This Caribbean resort island accommodates just 44 people, and it can be reached only by boat. If that feels strange at first, you'll probably start to come around once you realize that the entire white-sand beach is yours and yours alone—save for a few palm trees.

**Stay at:** Petit St. Vincent **Virtual Visit:** [psvresort.com](http://psvresort.com)

**FYI:** Want to really escape? Petit St. Vincent has no phones, no TVs, and a strict Do Not Disturb policy.

**Kaihalulu Beach, Maui, Hawaii:** For total privacy, take an early morning drive to Maui's only red-sand beach. It's a little hard to get to, but you'll be glad you made the hike—the crimson-hued sand, turquoise water, green ironwood trees, and red lava rock are blow-your-mind beautiful.

**Stay at:** Hotel Hana-Maui and Honua Spa

**Virtual Visit:** [hotelhanamaui.com](http://hotelhanamaui.com)

**Baía de Sancho, Fernando de Noronha, Brazil:** The government restricts the number of visitors to this bay, but adventurous types can arrange for boat transport. Once on this quiet stretch of sand, you can swim in the warm, calm waters alongside gentle sea turtles and dolphins.

**Stay at:** Pousada Maravilha **Virtual Visit:** [pousadamaravilha.com](http://pousadamaravilha.com)

**Palmetto Point Beach, Barbuda, Antigua and Barbuda:** While many of the islands in the West Indies are crowded, the beaches of Barbuda have managed to remain under the radar. On Palmetto Point Beach, you'll lounge in almost total seclusion.

**Stay at:** Coco Point Lodge **Virtual Visit:** [cocopoint.com](http://cocopoint.com)