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Honeymooners

Key for perfect trip: Plan ahead

By Tasha E. Kelter
 Staff Reporter

Neither the excitement nor the stress associated with a wedding is over when the vows are exchanged.

In many cases, the planning and execution of the honeymoon is at least as substantial, if not more so, than the wedding ceremony itself.

There are many different aspects of a honeymoon that couples should keep in mind when planning this event, the most important being the budget, according to several travel agencies.

In general, couples should have an idea of how much they're willing to spend on the trip.

"Know what you're going to be able to spend. You can do it reasonably or you can spend thousands of dollars easily," said Craig Deats, manager at Aardvark Travel Agency. "Some places offer package deals. The earlier you can plan the better. The later you plan, the more the trip will cost."

"The farther away they go the more expensive it gets," said Lisa Jensen, leisure specialist at Omni Travel Inc. "The most important thing to remember is to save for the trip."

Activities on the trip are another important thing for a couple to consider, Deats said.

"You can relax and do nothing or be really active—it varies depending on the people," he said.

A popular choice for honeymoons is a cruise. They have a variety of activities and couples can either relax and enjoy leisure time or participate in recreational activities.

Before planning a honeymoon, said Leslie Von Seggern of Executive Travel, couples need to figure out what they'd both like to do in terms of recreation, what type of climate they want to spend it in, and how long they want to be gone.

"The more information they can give us, the more it helps us plan," Deats said.

Unfortunately, there are many bad deals out there aimed at honeymoon couples. One thing to avoid is buying tickets for sale in the paper, he said.

"People need to be careful when they go to bridal fairs and get a phone call that says they've won a free cruise," Jensen said. "It's never free. Don't count on those for the honey-

moon! They often want a large fee, and the person will also need to pay for their own air fare.

"The best thing to do is let the professional travel agent look at the advertisement," she said. "There are a lot of scams out there."

The most popular honeymoon spots are Hawaii, Jamaica, anywhere in the Caribbean, Cancun, Las Vegas, and Disney World.

"Orlando is extremely popular," said Darlene Sheppard, office manager at Allied Tour and Travel.

As for exchanging currency, Deats said, "The best deal is to wait until you get there and go to a bank that's not in the airport."

"Don't [exchange your money] in the airport or at the hotel where you're staying," Sheppard said.

The most important thing to remember, Von Seggern said, is to plan ahead. Most travel agents suggest planning — contacting a travel agent, choosing a trip, and making the reservations — three to six months in advance.

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