

GETAWAY

HONEYMOON IDEAS FOR THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME



YOUR OWN **PRIVATE ISLAND**

PARADISE IS CLOSER THAN YOU THINK. GO OFF THE GRID AT ONE OF THESE FANTASY RESORTS. **BY HEIDI MITCHELL**

KIM MYERS ROBERTSON

COCO PLUM ISLAND RESORT, BELIZE

Although this barefoot-chic retreat is close enough to the mainland for day trips to the jungle caves or Mayan ruins, couples tend to stick to the isle's white beaches and azure waters. (The world's second-largest barrier reef is within kayaking distance.) Newlyweds rave about the warm staff, the overwater restaurant's ocean-to-table dishes, and the OMG Caribbean views from the 14 crayon-colored cabanas. Another highlight? The adults-only policy. *All-inclusive doubles from \$600 (minimum four-night stay); cocoplumcay.com.*



Coco Plum's pier is the place to soak in a Belizean sunrise.

GUANA ISLAND, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

On this tropical nirvana, laid-back luxe is taken very seriously: Flip-flop-clad honeymooners dine on local lobster, drinks are stocked in an honor bar on the beach, and staff stand ready to respond to your every need. Feel like catching a flick? A secluded cliffside spot can be turned into a private theater under the stars, complete with popcorn. *Doubles from \$695, including meals and wine with lunch and dinner; guana.com.*



White Bay Beach is one of seven on Guana Island.

WHAT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

PERSONALITY IS KEY If you're the type who can't sit still for long, decompress at a private island resort for a few days, then continue to a spot with more action, says Katie Frederick, travel advisor and founder of Ever After Honeymoons.

DO THE MATH Transfers are often extra—up to \$1,000 if via small plane. And you can't go off property to eat, so if your resort isn't all-inclusive, opt for a meal plan.

PACK LIGHT Transferring via a small plane? You'll often encounter strict baggage-weight restrictions—as low as 33 pounds per person.

DEAL WITH DELAYS If your flight from the U.S. lands late, you may need to wait until the a.m. for your connection. If so, ask your private isle's concierge to suggest a retreat near the airport that's worthy of your first honeymoon night.



Each cottage at Petit St. Vincent has a wooden sun deck, perfect for enjoying the breathtaking scenery.

PETIT ST. VINCENT, GRENADINES

Prepare for a glorious week of digital detox: The 115-acre isle's 22 luxe sea-view cottages—half of which hover high on the bluffs, the other half on the white-sand beach—have no phones, no TVs, and no Wi-Fi. Instead, guests communicate by hoisting flags outside their rooms. (Red equals "Do not disturb"; yellow, "Butler service, please.") For true isolation, arrange for a picnic on a deserted islet, with only a thatched *palapa* and your new husband for company. *Doubles from \$1,100, including meals; petitstvincent.com.*



'Moon like an A-lister in one of the ultraluxe (and seriously splurge-worthy) private residences at Parrot Cay.

PARROT CAY, TURKS & CAICOS

Don't be surprised if you spy a celeb or five among the revelers at the beach bar. Brangelina are fans, and Bruce Willis and Keith Richards own villas here. That's probably because this 1,000-acre Asian-inflected retreat a half-hour boat ride from Providenciales pampers couples with killer service (most of the staff is trained in Bali), a serene spa (think Japanese baths and yoga pavilions), and a jaw-dropping setting (hello, two-mile beach!). Ask and you can hop around the sandy island chain. But why go anywhere when you've already found paradise? *Doubles from \$500, including breakfast; comohotels.com.*

COURTESY OF THE RESORTS

Beqa Lagoon, which surrounds Royal Davui, offers world-class diving.

ROYAL DAVUI ISLAND RESORT, FIJI

Rising out of the crystal waters of Beqa Lagoon like the most romantic mirage ever, this tiny oasis is exactly what you'd imagine a Fijian private island to be: shrouded by palms, ringed with sand, and encircled by a reef with some of the best snorkeling you will ever encounter. Dense foliage separates each thatch-roofed *vale* (the Fijian word for *house*), providing plenty of privacy for couples taking a dip in their private plunge pools. After the sun sinks into the sea, head to the restaurant to cheer on a hermit-crab race or participate in a traditional *kava* ceremony. Or stay in, open your balcony doors wide, and fall asleep to the sound of the sea. *All-inclusive doubles from \$1,066; royaldavuifiji.com.*

HOW TO GET ALONE TIME IF YOU'RE NOT ON A PRIVATE ISLE

1 THINK SMALL A retreat with fewer than 50 rooms, like Antigua's 25-suite Hermitage Bay or St. Lucia's 29-suite Jade Mountain, will generally feel way more private than a sprawling 375-room property.

2 CONSIDER A VILLA Rent a private house with full staff, a view, and even a pool (you can find romantic options at tripadvisor.com), or upgrade to a cottage- or villa-style accommodation at your resort.

3 GET A ROOM WITH ITS OWN POOL Just be sure to ask how private it really is—will other guests be able to see you?—before you splurge, says Jasmine Folden, a travel advisor at Cadence in Beverly Hills.

4 DO A PRIVATE DINNER If you have a dream and the budget, you can have one thrown anywhere—the beach, the jungle, a museum. The Four Seasons Florence even offers one on a balcony on the Ponte Vecchio!



Teppanyaki, Velassaru's Japanese restaurant, hovers over the lagoon.

VELASSARU, MALDIVES

Getting from Male International Airport to most of the Maldives' stunning atolls can be a haul and a half, but this 21-acre coral island is only 25 minutes away by speedboat. And what an arrival! As soon as you step off the dock, you're met with coconut groves touched by sea breezes, a sparkling turquoise lagoon, and sand so fine that most guests walk around with powdery "booties" throughout their stay. There isn't a bad room, but our favorites are the stilted water bungalows with plunge pools—so isolated, they could be their own private islands. *All-inclusive doubles from \$584; velassaru.com.*

YOUR PRIVATE ISLE PACKING LIST



ANTINAUSEA BEADS These acupressure bracelets settle stomachs during bumpy boat rides. Bracelets, \$21 per pair; queasybeads.com.

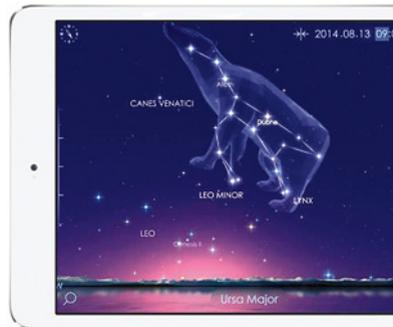


SOFT-SIDED LUGGAGE

Because some small planes ban hard-sided bags. Duffel, \$90; herschelsupply.com.



Après massage, retire to the upstairs nook at Kamalame Cay's Overwater Spa.



STARGAZING APP The farther you get from city lights, the more stars you'll see. *Star Walk 2*, \$2.99; itunes.com.



UNDERWATER CAMERA You can take this pocket-size cutie 32 feet down. *Kodak PIXPRO SP1*, \$199; bestbuy.com.



WATERPROOF PHONE COVER Just in case you drop your mobile in the drink. "Nüüd" case, \$90; lifeproof.com.

KAMALAME CAY, BAHAMAS

There may be just nine villas scattered across its 96 hushed acres, but Kamalame has enough perks and activities to keep even a megaresort fan happy. Among them: an overwater spa, three miles of beaches, tennis courts, a fleet of flamingo-pink golf carts, a new marina where you can ogle billionaires' megayachts, fly-casting lessons, an herb garden, and even free-range chickens. Speaking of which, breakfast is a high point (there's an on-site bakery), as are the amazing wine list and the seasonal Bahamian dinners, which you can do at the super-social Great House or on an isolated sliver of beach glowing with tiki torches. The best part? It's all just an hour's puddle jump from Fort Lauderdale. *Doubles from \$407; kamalame.com.*

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY OF VELASSARU MALDIVES, QUEASYBEADS.COM, HERSHEL, APPLE, KODAK, LIFEPROOF, AND KAMALAME CAY