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DESTINATION

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& HONEYMOONS TOO!

**50 PERFECT PLACES
TO SAY "I DO"**

Honeymoon Hideaways

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FRENCH POLYNESIA

LAID-BACK
LUXURY
IN THE U.S.

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DESTINATION
WEDDINGS**

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(continued)

Laid-Back LUXURY



Photo courtesy of: The Crystal Coast Tourism Authority

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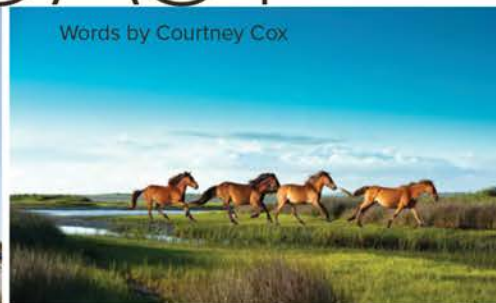
Luxury doesn't have to mean dressing in your Sunday best or an ostentatious atmosphere. When it comes to your destination wedding or honeymoon, you want all the creature comforts of home not only in your accommodations, but in attitude. We've scoured the country for the best in laid-back luxury for your wedding away or start of your life as Mr. and Mrs.





Photos courtesy of, (top to bottom, left to right) Courtney Cox (1st-3rd) and The Crystal Coast Tourism Authority (4th)

North Carolina's CRYSTAL COAST



Words by Courtney Cox

Whether you're a fan of Nicholas Sparks-type romance, or a lover of dune-laced beaches, the Crystal Coast just might be your dream come true. More than just a pretty face, its history ranges from Spanish explorers in the 1500s and famous pirates like Blackbeard himself, to Civil War battle sites. Located in the southern Outerbanks of North Carolina, the Crystal Coast has plenty to offer in the way of destination weddings and honeymoons. The location boasts Southern-facing beaches, meaning you get both glowing sunrises and sunsets over the water. Arguably two of the most important must-haves in choosing where to honeymoon or wed away is a beautiful destination and plenty of things to do – both of which you can find here.



If you're looking to get your adrenaline pumping, suit-up for world-class scuba diving in the area known as the "Graveyard of the Atlantic." A major highlight is the U-353, a World War II German U-boat sunk by the Coast Guard in 1942. If you prefer keeping your head above water, fish for dramatic catches like yellowfin tuna, dolphin fish, mahi mahi and bill fish including blue marlin, white marlin and sail fish.

On the flip side, if you want to get your romantic heart racing, a ferry to the 150 year-old Cape Lookout Lighthouse, also known as the "Diamond Lady," is a must-see. Best of all, Shackleford Banks is on the way and an absolute must with its famous wild horses. How they came to be isn't known for sure, but the most popular version is that they are descendants of Spanish horses which swam ashore over 400 years ago from shipwrecks. The island and these beauties are heavily protected, so bring your binoculars and telephoto lens.

Whether you're honeymooning or looking to say "I do" on the Crystal Coast, the historic colonial town of Beaufort needs to be on your to-do list. Ranked as the "Coolest Small Town in America" by *Budget Travel* in 2012, take a double-decker bus tour to get a



comfy, birds-eye view of historic homes dating back to 1709. Prefer to take your time? There are also self-guided walking tours or, if you're lucky, you can catch a home tour to see the inside of some of these monumental homes.

Destination wedding groups should call Emerald Isle home with its own infamous lodging options in the form of beach "cottages." Cottages is a bit of a stretch with most of the homes featuring expansive decks, elevators and more bedrooms than you and your guests can count. While a bit removed from the hustle and bustle of town, stock-up your chef's kitchen and settle into your massive

home-away-from-home for some much-needed R&R with your guests. Get married on the beach just outside your backdoor with wild dolphins just off shore. Contact Emerald Isle Realty for rental options and the inside scoop on hosting your wedding in this coastal gem.

With endless activities, beautiful beaches and enough history to keep your guests busy for weeks, the Crystal Coast is a popular East Coast vacation spot for a reason, and ideal for your destination wedding or honeymoon.