**Top Honeymoon and Destination Wedding Trends for 2016**

A destination wedding has become a way to make a memorable event even more memorable. For many couples, it’s a chance to gather family and friends for an extended period of time for an occasion that’s centered on joy.

According to the wedding planning website The Knot, nearly 25 percent of couples chose a destination wedding in 2014, with international locations becoming increasingly popular.

As part of its annual Travel Trends Survey, Travel Leaders Group polled its 1,316 U.S.-based travel agency owners, managers and front-line agents about the top international locations for destination weddings and honeymoons that they’ve booked for 2016.

Cancun was by far the most popular, with 62 percent; followed by Punta Cana, in the Dominican Republic, 39.1 percent; Montego Bay, Jamaica, 34.6 percent; Playa del Carmen/Riviera Maya, Mexico, 30.5 percent; and Negril, Jamaica, 26.8 percent. Cancun was also the top honeymoon spot, cited by 46.7 percent; followed by Caribbean cruises, 37 percent; Punta Cana, 27 percent; Montego Bay, 21.7 percent; and Playa del Carmen/Riviera Maya, 18.5 percent.

It’s not surprising that Mexico, Jamaica and the Dominican Republic dominate the list. They’re close to the United States, making the planning easier and making it easier for friends and family to travel there. They’re also some of the most picture-perfect and romantic places to tie the knot or spend a honeymoon.

And all of the locations fit the criteria that couples say they look for when selecting a spot for a destination wedding: a tropical/beach setting, a place that will be restful and relaxing, as well as affordable, for their guests and a place that offers a variety of activities.

Cancun, on Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula bordering the Caribbean, has long been a popular place for weddings and honeymoons. Couples have their pick of backdrops for the ceremony, from a tropical garden to a beach at sunset to a Mayan village. South of Cancun is Riviera Maya, where the town of Playa del Carmen offers a chance to sample shopping, nightlife and recreation, including scuba diving and snorkeling.

In Jamaica, Montego Bay and Negril offer two different options for destination weddings, each with a lively Caribbean vibe. Montego Bay is a bustling city with many options for shopping, dining and nightlife. Negril is a small resort town that offers an intimate experience, and its Seven Mile Beach is considered one of the best in the world.

Punta Cana, in the Dominican Republic, has a variety of inclusive resorts that cater to weddings and honeymoons. Among its recreation offerings are 11 golf courses. Many resorts can help plan group activities for wedding guests, whether it’s zip lining through the jungle or a tour of a chocolate factory.

After the wedding, many couples will choose to set sail on a Caribbean cruise. With everything onboard, from restaurants to nightlife, as well as a way to take in the many charms of Caribbean ports, a cruise can be the perfect relaxing and romantic honeymoon.

For help planning a destination wedding or honeymoon, contact your travel agent.