

How to Get Married in Hawaii on a Dime!

Simple, Fun,
and Low-Cost
Hawaii Weddings

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How to Get Married in Hawaii on a Dime!

Your Guide to Simple, Low-Cost, and Fun Hawaii Weddings

Hi, I'm Lisa. Find me here: <http://www.hawaii-lisa.com> - and find my other books here: <http://www.hawaii-lisa.com/answers/hawaii-guide-book/> There are 8 total and all are free. There's one for each island plus specialty books on topics like visiting Hawaii for the first time.

This ebooklet is an answer to all the requests from people asking for my personal advice on getting married in Hawaii and doing so without spending a fortune.

Hawaii is such a beautiful place that it makes it an ideal location for weddings. More than 10,000 couples travel here every year to get married. The islands are just naturally romantic, and with the great weather and amazing settings, you don't even need to rent an indoors venue. You will already be in one of world's favorite honeymoon destinations, and family and friends able to attend will appreciate the great excuse to visit Hawaii.

The book is free, you may give it away to anyone you like, but you may not change it in any way.

I Disclaim any Liability: I have made every effort to ensure that this information was correct when I wrote or updated it, but I do not assume any liability to any party for any loss or damage caused by any errors or omissions, regardless of how they occurred. Nothing in this book is guaranteed.

But I think you are going to be surprised when you find out how easy it is to not only get married in Hawaii but to do so within a tight budget.

Most everything in this book is **my opinion**, based on my preferences and resources and experiences. I hope it helps point you in the direction you most want to take based on your preferences and resources. ☺ Aloha!

My Experience Getting Married in Hawaii & Coordinating a Wedding Here

In 1996, my husband and I got married in Kona on the Big Island. We had lived in Hilo for about a year so we knew a little bit about the islands. My husband planned the wedding with some help from a coordinator in Kailua-Kona, and we spent less than \$600 on it.

The most valuable piece of information to know about getting married in Hawaii is it is legal to get married on almost any beach or public park in the islands. (There is a \$20 permit required for beaches now, if you have a coordinator.)

Plus, if you get married on the West side of any island you are practically guaranteed good weather (very little rain falls on the West sides) so you may decide not to have a fallback plan. We didn't. We just decided the weather would be nice and went for it. The weather was awesome.

We got married at 10 a.m. 10 or before or else after 5 are good times to get married - any other time may be too hot.

Our wedding costs were like this:

coordinator: \$80

cake: \$40

leis: \$30

pastor, photographer, and videographer: about \$400

(my husband rented a tux and I made my dress)

The coordinator brought the cake and the leis and found the pastor, photographer, and videographer.



Us in Pahoehoe Park



At Jameson's by the Sea

We got married in Pahoehoe Park off of Alii Dr. in Kona. It was actually a wonderful experience. We had a light breeze. A praying mantis climbed up the pastor's pant leg, climbed out on his bible, and then hopped onto my dress. That was cool. Plus, a van full of hippies stopped when they saw us walking and ran over and gave us all maile leis they had

probably been making. Afterward we walked next door to Jameson's by the Sea Restaurant for oceanfront dining. They opened up an hour early for us and we had the ocean lanai area to ourselves. What a nice memory :)

Then, we drove to the airport and went off to Molokai for our honeymoon.

A few years later I coordinated my brother-in-law's wedding in Kona also for under \$200. Here's what I did for that one.

We stayed at the then Kona Surf (now Sheraton Keauhou). We used their gardens for wedding grounds for a small fee. I ordered a small wedding cake from KTA (a local grocery store) and went there to pick it up before the wedding. I ordered a Haku lei (very extravagant and pricey and awesome lei) for the bride and a maile lei for the groom and I picked these up from the lei store.

Before the wedding we went to Hilo Hatties and got matching tropical-style clothing for them.

I found a pastor in the phone book and his fee was around \$100 I think.

I took the pictures of the event and my husband took the video.

It was small, inexpensive, and perfect - and they are still married :) , as am I and my husband. So that's the secret to a long and happy marriage. Get married in Hawaii for under \$1000. :)

The coordinator I hired is no longer in business but here's a good one for Kona.

<http://www.konaweddings.com/> Their packages start out very reasonably.

You could do it without a coordinator, but I wouldn't if you don't have reliable friends in Hawaii. It's not worth the hassle, imo. I would get a coordinator for the basics (they can help you pick a place and make sure that you have everything done that needs to be done) and then if you want to save money by getting your own leis and your own cake, etc, do that.

How to Get Married in Hawaii

Legal Requirements

While some things have changed since I got married in Hawaii and since I coordinated my brother in law's wedding here, it is still very easy to get married in Hawaii.

Some mistakenly think that they need to get married "legally" on the mainland if they have a wedding ceremony in Hawaii, but Hawaii is our 50th state and weddings here are as legal as in any of the other states.

All you will need is a marriage license, and in most cases a picture ID or Driver's License. The marriage license costs \$60, is issued on site, and there's no waiting period before the marriage can take place.

There's a PDF you can download (link below) with the marriage license application. You will both need to sign in the presence of the marriage license agent here in Hawaii.

If you have any questions there's a number to call (listed on the page I'm going to give you a link to in a sec).

The second page of this two-page application contains the specific instructions on what you need to bring with you with your license. There is *no* blood test requirement. If you are under 19, you'll need a certified copy of your birth certificate. If over 18, you may be asked for a picture ID or driver's license. If you are under 18, you will need both parents' or guardians' consent or consent from the family court, and if 15, you will need these too along with approval from a family court judge. Instructions for the application and what you need to bring are very straight forward and easy to follow.

After much debate Hawaii decided not to legalize gay marriages; however, many coordinators and officiates will help with the ceremony as well as vow renewals and other non-legally binding but meaningful events.

If you're from a country outside of the United States, chances are they will recognize a United States wedding, and if an Apostil is required, you can get a copy of the license from the State of Hawaii for \$1.

Contact information for marriage license agents, along with the marriage license application and everything else you need to know about getting a Hawaii marriage license is on or linked to from this page:

<http://hawaii.gov/health/vital-records/vital-records/marriage/index.html>

The State will mail a certified copy of the *marriage certificate* to the address you provide on your marriage license application. Many of the wedding packages and coordinators offer personalized copies.

The Ceremony

Before choosing a wedding coordinator or officiate, consider the type of wedding you want. Do you want a traditional ceremony? Or a Hawaiian ceremony? A blend of the two or something unique? Just as with getting married anywhere else in the United States, it's all up to you and your fiance.

Many like to include both traditional and Hawaiian elements. This may be religious or non-religious. Often in this type of wedding the officiate will speak of the beauty of Hawaii – its waters, mountains and flowers, plus how they symbolize your love and marriage. Sometimes the ceremony will be announced with the blowing of a conch shell, and there will be a lei exchange between bride and groom. The officiate will talk about the lei and how it encircles in never ending love. The wedding will be completed with the exchange of rings and vows and of course the kiss.

Here are a couple of examples:

http://www.asimplyelegantwedding.com/traditional_hawaii_wedding.htm

<http://www.hawaiiwedding.com/hawaiian.html>

Just as with mainland weddings, if you want to write your own vows check with the officiate before hiring. Most will be happy to accommodate.

The Wedding Coordinator

I used a wedding coordinator and my advice is unless you have friends or family in Hawaii you trust to help you, then the money is well worth it. Find one you connect with and follow the coordinators advice - they will know what area blows too much sand, or which minister is the most personable. Often the wedding coordinator is also a marriage license agent.

Likely the coordinator will offer various wedding packages. Choose one you can afford. Most offer packages in varying increments from about \$250 to thousands. Ours cost about \$80 but that was in 1996. Since we purchased our own leis and cake and all, we just used the coordinator for help finding the minister, photographer and videographer. You can probably do the same today for about \$150.

Another advantage, depending on where you want to have your wedding, is that some of the state's places of historical significance that rent facilities, such as Iolani Palace require a wedding coordinator set things up.

To find a coordinator, I would search online along with the name of the island and maybe also the region or city (Kona's a long way from Hilo). If you want to marry on the beach, check for coordinators that specialize in beach weddings on the sand. Some will prefer parks near the ocean to avoid the beach permit (more on this later), so do read their sites and ask.

Packages start around \$200 for a minister, maybe two leis and some consultation. The most basic packages that include photography will often start at around \$500 and will include about an hour's worth of photography and around a dozen 4x6 prints. You're paying mostly for the photographer. I think the photography and videography are worth the extra money, but I would advise avoiding those second or third tier packages that add hundreds for two leis and a bottle of champagne because you can get these things yourself for far less.

Packages with video are found in higher price ranges. The following coordinator offers fairly decent prices and this will give you an idea of what to look for:

<http://www.konaweddings.com/alacarte.php>

You can also see what various packages offer by going to the state's official tourism site's wedding section: <http://www.gohawaii.com/offers/romance>
These are mostly expensive, but there are some deals.

Many of the packages include something like "processing marriage license," which seems silly to me since you and your fiancé are the ones who must fill it out and then go to the agent to sign there. The lowest price ones are usually selling this service, the marriage performer and a little help finding locations. If you don't know the area and don't have someone here to help, again, it's the consultation that will be of the most value.

The Wedding Performer (Officiate)

As mentioned above, the wedding coordinator will help you find someone to perform the wedding. If you aren't using a coordinator, you can find an officiate in various ways. One is to ask the marriage license agent for recommendations but do so on the phone – don't wait till you get here.

Another place to look for marriage performers is to search online. If you wish to have an officiate with a specific religion perform your wedding ceremony, search online for places of worship on the island you wish to be married. Be sure that your marriage performer is licensed by the State of Hawaii.

Also good to know – your officiate will likely be a very good source of information, so if you don't have a wedding coordinator or others in Hawaii to help, don't be shy about asking the officiate for suggestions on free and low-cost locations, photographers, etc.

Plan on spending around \$100 for the marriage performer.

If you want to marry right on the beach, your officiate may add on to the price the cost of the beach permit fee (\$20 minimum and 10 cents per square foot).

The Wedding Photography

The photographs will likely be the most spendy part of your wedding, and if you have video, even more so, but you'll have them forever as visual memories of your special day. Unless you have a good photographer among your friends or in your family, plan to spend \$500 upwards, depending on if your getting video too and how many prints you want, if you want the DVD with the unedited photos, etc.

The wedding coordinator can arrange for or make recommendations. If you are coordinating, you'll find several photographers and videographers online. You might also add "budget" or "affordable" to your search terms. If you first find a wedding performer (officiate), ask for recommendations.

Look at the photo galleries, comments and prices, and then call or email the ones on your short list. Ask them questions like what type of wedding photography they specialize in or most enjoy and see if this rings a bell for you. For example, some specialize in fun and spontaneous wedding photos, while others are more formal and traditional. Some do mostly beach weddings, while others church weddings.

Where to Get Married in Hawaii

Oahu is the easiest island for getting married on a dime. Just about everything costs less on Oahu than the outer islands (except groceries in Waikiki!). Oahu also has more venues for weddings. Possibly on the downside, Oahu has lots of people at the beaches and parks. However, even Oahu has its secret beaches (like the hidden cove in walking distance from Turtle Bay) and Oahu also has venues you can rent for good prices. Actually when you are getting married in an outdoors location such as at the beach or in a park, you are saving hundreds or thousands right there, no matter which of the Hawaiian Islands you choose for your wedding.

Hotel Weddings

Many of the hotels offer wedding packages, but these can be extremely expensive. I would go with an alternative location, and then if you can afford it, save the romantic hotel or resort for your honeymoon (I'll list some of my favorites in the honeymoon section). You can check with them to see about fees for using their grounds only, but even for just the right to take wedding pictures (with your own photographer), it's going to cost a few hundred.

When I coordinated my brother in law's wedding we were able to use the Kona Surf (now Sheraton Keahou Resort & Spa) grounds for \$80, but this was over a decade ago and the hotel has changed ownership and undergone renovations.

The Sheraton Keauhou's lowest cost venue rentals now \$500 (sunset cliffs and the small chapel overlooking the sea), and their lowest cost package is \$750 (coordinator, officiate, location, lei and a solo musician). Sunset weddings, as at many venues, are extra – in this case, \$250 more.

One of the best hotels to get married out these days is also on the Big Island: King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel. This is one of the Top 10 – and really the only low cost one – in *Destination Weddings and Honeymoons* article "Hawaii Weddings on Any Budget." And their luau is both a local and visitor favorite on the Big Island \$70 per adult, making a great place for a wedding with guests.

The King Kam's wedding packages start at \$500 like most of the lower cost wedding packages do. The location here though is what makes this budget wedding special. The grounds are lovely and include the beach overlooking Kailua

Bay, the gardens and the sacred grounds once occupied by King Kamehameha himself.

Honestly though, this hotel is starting to show it's age. The grounds are awesome, but unless they start renovating rooms, you might want to stay elsewhere and just use their accommodations for the wedding itself.

The best value hotel wedding packages in Hawaii start around \$500, but quickly jump to a thousand and upwards for very few extras. The basic packages usually include something like this: the officiate, wedding coordinator, location (of course) and two leis. If you really want that particular location, this makes sense, otherwise it doesn't really when you consider you'll like pay about about half that for these things and the location could be free or nominal. The photography usually at least doubles the prices of these basic packages, and it will likely be your biggest expense package or no, but a very important item.

You might want to just call though and check with the hotels you like and see what it would cost to hold the ceremony on their grounds and be allowed to take pictures. Alternatively, if you have a beach wedding directly in front of hotel's landscape, you've got the nice background for free.

As for the low cost and free venues...

You can marry on the beach for free. There are also parks and waterfalls that you can use as settings for your ceremony, free of charge.

Tying the Knot on the Beach

Beach Wedding Rules

Perhaps you have heard you need a permit to marry on the beach in Hawaii. You actually don't, but the vendors now do. As of August 1, 2008, the State of Hawaii requires all commercial service providers to carry a Right-of-Entry (ROE) Permit. So anyone making a profit from your wedding, such as the officiate, wedding coordinator, musician, must get the permit and give copies to their staff serving at your wedding. This only applies when the wedding is on the actual sand. It has to do with commercial vendors operating on Hawaii's free, public beaches.

If you'll notice, in my pictures, we got married in front of, but not on a beach at Pahoehoe Park in Kona. And it was still perfectly lovely.

Again, the wedding couple does not need a permit nor are they responsible for getting this for the service providers. And don't worry...Hawaii will not not interrupt your wedding if one of the service providers doesn't have their permit – they may later fine them but Hawaii will not interfere with your wedding. Hawaii loves weddings (and the visitors they bring to the islands)!

Your officiate and other service providers may add on to the fee the cost of the permit, but unless you need lots of space, this shouldn't be much. Each service provider is charged .10 cents per square foot with a \$20 minimum.

There are some restrictions that the new law brings that *you* should know about if you don't have a coordinator to handle it. Alcohol is not allowed. Neither are receptions (although many beaches have pavilions and grassy parks you can use). Two hours is the maximum time allowed. Weddings on the beach aren't allowed to place chairs (except for elderly, disabled and others who need to sit for health reasons).

Arches and other structures and decorations cannot be used, although you can have loose flowers. For example a petal path can be created with loose flowers and leis can be used for decorative purposes, but vases of flowers could not be set up to mark the path. Acoustic but not amplified music is allowed. I'm not sure if a CD player would count as "amplified" music, but your wedding coordinator or officiate should know.

The permit application lists all of the rules.

<http://hawaii.gov/dlnr/land/forms-1/ROE-WeddingPermit-Fillable.pdf>

Finding the Best Location for your Beach Wedding

To make finding a quiet spot on a beach easier, avoid weekends, major holidays and the high tourism seasons of summer, Christmas vacation and spring break.

You might also want to take a look at Hawaii's school vacation schedule, although when the parents are at work, you won't see a great deal of extra people at the beach except maybe more teens who want to catch waves or hang with friends. Hawaii has a year-round school year, with vacations split up throughout. You can get the school's vacation schedule at the DOE site here:

<http://doe.k12.hi.us/calendars0910/>

To make this easier though, just check with your coordinator, officiate or if you have friends or family here that know the beaches. You can find quiet beaches on every island. Usually they are more out of the way. Or if you go during the quieter times as mentioned above, and you don't go to the busiest beaches, like Waikiki, you can likely find a quiet spot on your beach.

While many of the parks do rent pavilions, keep in mind that alcohol is not allowed at state and county parks. If you want to serve champagne or have an open bar at your reception, there are other venues that will accommodate.

If you do want to look into a pavilion, check the Hawaii State Parks site: <http://www.hawaiistateparks.org/parkrules/> or the county parks site for your wedding destination island.

A pavilion next to the beach is a good idea to have for a back up should the weather turn bad. If it's first come first serve basis, don't plan your wedding on a busy day, like those mentioned above, if you have someone who can arrive early in the morning to set up the decorations, all the better. Again, this is where a coordinator can come in handy. Some parks will be more suitable to your special day than others, and your coordinator can help with this.

Sunset Weddings

Many couples to exchange vows with the sunset as a romantic backdrop. Along with early morning, evening when the sun is setting is another of the more quiet times at the beaches. Choose a leeward (west) side location for the perfect, sun setting over the horizon views, and depending on the beach, south (Waikiki) and north (North Shore's Sunset Beach) offer some of Hawaii's most awesome and romantic sunsets. Silhouetted palm trees add lots to the photos.

The view of the sunset will change slightly from day to day, as will the sunset time. If you're reeealy into sunsets and want the perfect angle, here's a sunset calculator:

http://aa.usno.navy.mil/data/docs/RS_OneDay.php

If you are not sure which island you want to get married on, see my other free eBooklets at <http://www.hawaii-lisa.com/answers/hawaii-guide-book/>

Wedding Weather

Basically the windward (east) sides of the islands are lush and tropical but get lots of rain, while the leeward (west) sides are hot, dry and sunny. Most rain on the

windward side falls at night and in the morning, but sometimes it can rain for weeks straight. Most showers on the leeward side fall in the late afternoon on the upland slopes. If you marry on the leeward side and the weather reports look good you might not even need a back up location. My husband I didn't use one.

Other Places to Marry in Hawaii on a Dime

Tying the Knot at a State Park

Hawaii State Parks include some of the most beautiful and romantic locations in the islands. Akaka Falls is one of them. Here you can get married in front of a 400 foot waterfall amidst lush tropical gardens on the windward side of the Big Island. There's always a chance of rain here, but you just need two volunteers to hold umbrellas :-)

If you want to get married at a state park, note that you must send in your permit application at least 45 days before the requested date of use.

You can find lists of parks by island here: <http://www.hawaiistateparks.org/parks/>

The permit information is listed here:

<http://www.hawaiistateparks.org/parks/permits.cfm> This is also where you can apply for a group permit to use a pavilion at the state parks that require this.

Tying the Knot at a National Park in Hawaii

Are you and your betrothed outdoorsy types who are looking for a unique wedding location? If there will be no more than 25 people, you can get married in one of Hawaii's national parks. To preserve the natural and cultural grounds and atmosphere, there are restrictions; for example, only acoustical music if any (depends on the location).

Pu'uhoonua o Honaunau National Historical Park – Big Island

Also known as the Place of Refuge, this is a lovely and peaceful park with a lagoon, ancient royal fish ponds and a replica of an ancient Hawaiian village. There

are picnic tables near the ocean. You will need to apply for a permit for your wedding here. They also require permits for group picnicking (over 25).

For information on the permit (I think it's \$50), use the contact info here:

<http://www.nps.gov/puho/index.htm>

For more details about the Place of Refuge:

<http://www.nps.gov/archive/puho/home.htm>

Haleakala (House of the Sun) National Park – Maui

As the National Park description reads – "Haleakala volcano is a marriage of light and stone, clouds and forest..." It's a very unusual place and an unusual place for a wedding, but if you love it here, it may be just right for your wedding. There's much majesty and splendor here, and the serenity is quite profound. If you're both adventurous types, instead of riding off in the limo to your honeymoon, take the downhill bike ride here!

Permits are \$100 for Haleakala weddings. Here's the permit info:

<http://home.nps.gov/hale/parkmgmt/special-use-permits.htm>

And the Park info: <http://home.nps.gov/hale>

Hawaii Volcano National Park – Big Island

Getting married on an active volcano – now there's an opportunity for some powerful symbols. Ceremonies may be held anywhere that is easily accessible with the exception of Halema'uma'u Crater and the hula platform near the Kilauea Visitor Center. Most couples choose overlooks with a view into Kilauea Caldera or Kilauea Iki Crater, or the pretty, forested areas filled with bird song like Kipukapuau. Start your honeymoon with a helicopter tour of the fiery lava or a hike (free) out to see the lava flow to the ocean !

Caution: Have a backup plan because since Halemaumau's recent eruptions the sulfur dioxide levels have on occasion increased to the point that the park had to close. You can see the changing levels here:

<http://volcano.wr.usgs.gov/hvo/so2/havoalert.php>

There is a non-refundable \$50 application fee for the wedding permit. Park [entrance fees](#) also apply.

Learn more here: <http://www.nps.gov/havo/parkmgmt/weddings.htm>

Tying the Knot at a Garden

Honolulu Botanical Gardens There are five sites in all, each with lovely settings for weddings (ceremonies and photography only, not receptions). The tropical plant collections are home to many rare and endangered plants from around the world. The use of music, chairs and table is decided on a case by case basis. Permits need to be filed at least three weeks in advance. Your photographer/videographer may also need a permit.

Up to five parties (weddings, commercial photography shoots, etc.) are allowed to use a park at one time, and this is on a first come first serve basis, meaning you might have to wait for your turn. On the other hand the gardens are amazing.

Foster Botanical Gardens is located in Honolulu and gets the most visitors, but you're practically guaranteed sunny, nice weather. Hoomaluhia Botanical Garden is located in Kaneohe on the Windward side and is very quiet, gets far less visitors than Foster but you do need to be prepared for rain showers, and due to the moisture more mosquitoes. You can read about all five of the gardens in detail here:

<http://www.honolulu.gov/parks/hbg/>

Note that while Lili`uokalani Botanical Garden has waterfalls, they are a popular lunch spot with those working in the nearby businesses.

This page provides permit information

<http://www.honolulu.gov/parks/hbg/weddings.htm>

Waimea Valley Gardens

Home to Waimea Falls on Oahu's North Shore, this is what used to be an adventure park and then later was run by the Audubon Society. The park is a cultural and serene place of great beauty now run by a non profit organization. They have facilities for receptions and you can get married here by a waterfall or

in one of their other awesome settings. I don't know if you can still swim under the waterfalls. If after viewing their site, you are interested, use the contact information there to inquire about fees.

<http://www.waimeavalley.net/default.aspx>

There are many public and private gardens on all of the islands with awesome sites for weddings. Some have wonderful photography settings like gazebos, waterfalls and lily ponds, and many have covered areas you can use if it rains. You'll find these by searching online for wedding locations on your destination island. Or ask your wedding coordinator, officiate or photographer for recommendations.

Regal Weddings

`Iolani Palace

For a fairy tale wedding, consider getting married at the only royal palace in the United States. Iolani Palace in Honolulu has sites on its beautiful grounds for weddings and receptions. Since the palace is considered a sacred place and a historical gem, there are restrictions and policies that need to be followed. After exchanging vows in one of the Palace's gardens, you can have a reception in the private open-air courtyard of the historic `Iolani Palace Barracks, a coral block structure of limestone with crenelated parapets and towers.

If you wish to marry here, you will need to apply for a permit from the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources. Permits usually take about two weeks to process.

Receptions require a non refundable \$250 deposit, and a wedding professional such as a wedding coordinator must submit the application. Permission for professional photography such as wedding pictures and other special events on the Palace grounds should be obtained through the State Parks Office (808) 587-0300.

Queen Emma Summer Palace

Located just a couple of miles from Honolulu in the lush, Nu'uuanu Valley, this was the summer retreat of Queen Emma (1836-1885), wife of one of Hawaii's favorite kings, King Kamehameha IV, Alexander Liholiho (1834-1863). The lovely palace

(Victorian summer home) and grounds are preserved by the Daughters of Hawai`i in a charming Hawaiian-Victorian setting.

Rental of the separate and less regal Emmalani Hale reception room starts at \$100 for less than 25 guests. A \$200 security deposit is refundable. For less than 50 guests tables and chairs and parking (valet not required) are available. The open air reception room is over 1,000 square feet and has a kitchen. Weddings are more spendy - \$400 for use of the Palace's Terrace. Admission to the museum palace for everyone is included. For more info:

<http://www.daughtersofhawaii.com/>

What to Wear?

If you will be getting married outside or in a venue without air conditioning, keep in mind Hawaii's weather is usually warm and humid except in the evening or early morning or higher elevations. The tradewinds help a lot with the humidity, but still a tuxedo might be very uncomfortable. Same goes for a dress made with heavy materials. While the wedding ceremony itself isn't long, the photo shoot could run an hour to two. You want those pictures to reflect your happiness with smiles not grimaces!

If you do want to rent a tux, there are places you can do that in Hawaii. Check with your coordinator or do an online search.

The Bride's Attire

Getting married right on the beach with feet in the sand calls for a few special considerations but also opens the door to some really fun options – going barefoot, for example. (I was barefoot)

It can get quite breezy on the beach, no matter what side of the island. With this in mind, it's probably best to avoid full skirts. A slightly flared dress, if long, is pretty much wind-proof, or if you have the figure for it, something slinky. Short and tea-length dresses, long sundresses, and strapless and halter top gowns are all classic beach wedding attire. Hawaiian sundresses with white on white Hawaiian floral print can be very pretty as well as elegant.

Some brides even wear bikini tops with a sarong tied around as a skirt, although I'd like something a bit more special for my wedding that is fun and memorable for others.

Airy lightweight fabrics and cotton are best. Think cool and relaxed, yet sexy and beautiful. And if you want something fancier than barefoot, consider barefoot sandals.

Here are some examples of dresses for beach weddings:

<http://hawaiianweddingshop.com/attire.html>

A very formal looking gown with a long train might look out of place on the beach but could be very fitting in a garden sitting or at an Iolani Palace wedding. Some though like going all out with the tux and Cinderella wedding gown on the beach – the contrast is rather fun, and Hawaii doesn't have much of a fashion police force.

For a Hawaiian wedding dress that is both formal and yet fitting for any wedding location, check out the [holoku](#). This goes back to Victorian times in Hawaii but has many modern variations. The holoku is a long fitted dress that flares at the bottom. It's slightly shorter in the front and has a fishtail or short train. It's what Maile wore when she married Elvis' character in Blue Hawaii. The holoku can be floral print or elegant white, as tropical or formal as you like.

To save money on a formal gown, check out [eBay](#). At last check today, I saw traditional wedding gowns starting at \$200. You can also save money on formal gowns by looking at prom dresses. My sister-in-law got a beautiful white dress for \$50 off ebay last year.

The Groom's Attire

As mentioned above a tux might be uncomfortable at an outdoor or open air venue in Hawaii's warm and humid climate. Still many do rent tuxes here and wear them for the short ceremony. My husband did – he was fine (if I do say so myself ;) lol). Places in Hawaii to rent tuxes can be found online or through your coordinator.

The Hawaiian tradition for the groom is a white shirt with maile lei. A lightweight white jacket with maile lei and black slacks looks very elegant and nicely complements a bride wearing a more formal gown.

Many men wear tan slacks and a white shirt or tasteful aloha shirt (Hawaiian print, usually floral) or tan dress shorts. I think the slacks go better with full length wedding gowns and the dressy casual shorts (resort wear) work better when the bride is wearing something more casual, like a sun dress.

Men can go barefoot in the sand too (don't forget the pedicure!). I like this look much better than flip flops with slacks.

Matching Attire

Another option is to wear matching aloha wear and leis, like my brother in law and his bride did. Hilo Hatties is a good place to find matching shirts and dresses.

Locations are listed here:

<http://www.hilohattie.com/>

And don't worry, this isn't tacky. My Hawaiian friend and her local groom did this for her second wedding. They had the whole family (two kids also) in matching outfits. They all looked very nice.

If you are looking for more trendy and don't mind the additional expense, Macy's in Hawaii carries very nice Hawaiian lines, including Reyn Spooner and Kahala, two of the trendier aloha wear designers.

Head Adornments and Lei

If you wear a veil on the beach (many don't) or anywhere that it could get breezy, insert small weights at the bottom to keep the tail from flying and pin it down well to your hair. Some Hawaiian wedding dress sites have veils with silk orchids, but for a more real Hawaiian look, wear a [haku lei](#) or a flower/cluster of tropical flowers in your hair.

The haku lei is a crown of flowers and other plant materials and is gorgeous. Many of the haku leis have lots of greenery woven in but you can have one made with flowers to match your wedding colors or even white orchids. You can order these at florist shops. These take much longer to make than neck leis so they are more spendy – around \$50 upwards, but a beautiful haku lei will do so much for those photos. Be sure to order in advance (many of the florists are online) or work with your wedding coordinator on this.

If you decide to instead wear loose flowers in your hair...You can find these everywhere – grower's markets, supermarkets, florists...refrigerate and then if

you are having your hair done bring to the stylist. There are so many lovely flowers here that you will have no problem finding ones you love and that coordinate with your dress: gardenia, Tahitian gardenias, plumeria, orchids, hibiscus of varying colors, and the list goes on.

Saving Money on Airfare and Lodging

You can find some really good fares and hotel and car rental rates by using sites like [Expedia](#), [Priceline](#), [Hotwire](#) and [Hotels.com](#)

To learn how and to get lots more money saving tips check out my free ebooklet: [How to Save Thousands on a Hawaiian Vacation](#)

If you have guests flying over for the wedding, they can save by sharing vacation house(s) or condo(s). I also talk about these in the above ebooklet.

For my lists of favorite "Most Romantic" hotels on each island, check out my island guides, also free at <http://www.hawaii-lisa.com/answers/hawaii-guide-book/>

These romantic hotels and resorts aren't budget, but by using my Hawaii budget travel guide linked above you can learn how to find the best rates on them – I've often paid 2-star hotel rates for luxury hotels. You might want to spend your entire honeymoon at one or your wedding night.

Just being in Hawaii is romantic, so don't feel bad if your budget doesn't allow for one of these luxury hotels. If you both love camping, there's a beautiful and secure campground on Oahu that also has yurts and beach houses: [oahu camping info](#)

Low-Cost & Free Things to do on Your Honeymoon (besides the obvious)

To save money on activities in Hawaii I use the [Hawaii Entertainment Book](#). I recommend this coupon book for Oahu and Maui. While it has some coupons for Kauai and the Big Island, there's not enough to make it worth your while. If

you're going to be on Oahu or Maui, you can save hundreds on activities and dining. I explain how in my review [here](#).

Here's a few of my romantic favorites:

Go for a moonlight swim in Hanauma Bay. The famous Oahu snorkeling spot and marine preserve is open for night swims, just like the famous one in Blue Hawaii taken by Elvis' character and Maile.

Stroll through lovely gardens (all islands).

Enjoy a free torch lighting ceremony and hula show at the Hawaiian Hilton or on Prince Kuhio Beach at Waikiki.

Watch the sunset. Anywhere on the west, northwest or southwest sides of any of the Hawaiian islands.

Frolic in the Seven Sacred Pools (Oheo Gulch Pools) off Maui's Hana Highway.

Watch the famous and inspiring Haleakala Sunrise (Maui).

Explore Maui's Iao Needle Park and picnic by the stream.

Take a sunset sail (any island – best rates on Oahu).

Paddle a two-person kayak (any island).

Cozy up by the fire that never goes out at Kilauea Lodge on the Big Island's active volcano.

Take the short coastal hike under the stars to view the lava (Big Island).

Be enchanted by Akaka Falls - Take the short hike and steal a kiss or two in the tropical gardens that end at the 400-foot waterfall.

Visit a summer palace of Hawaiian kings and queens and learn about their romantic history (Oahu and Big Island).

Behold Spouting Horn on Kauai.

Visit the romantic and mystical North shore of Kauai – take the 2 mile hike to a secluded beach cove on the Napali Coast, snorkel holding hands at Ke'e. View the thundering twin falls of Wailua on Kauai (as shown in Fantasy Island TV series).

Be serenaded with the Hawaiian Wedding Song in the Fern Grotto. (Kauai – Smith Family's Wailua boat ride takes you there).

Enjoy an early morning breakfast picnic at Rainbow Falls, the best time of day to see the rainbow (just up the road from Hilo's Farmers Market where you can pick up some yummy delights).

Stroll through the beautiful grounds of some of Hawaii's most romantic resorts. Linger by a waterfall, enjoy the entertainment. (Any Island).

Food, Wedding Favors, & Gift Bags

Food

For your Honeymoon

Save something in your budget to splurge on a romantic dinner at one of Hawaii's really nice oceanfront restaurants or luaus. It's easy to save when you have a hotel room with a kitchenette, shop at supermarkets and growers markets and use restaurant coupons from the [Hawaii Entertainment Book](#). Hawaii also has many family budget restaurants and the famous plate lunches found around the islands are filling and cheap.

You'll find romantic picnics and breakfasts on your lanai (balcony or patio) save you bundles too.

Hawaii's grower's markets offer wonderful picnic fare including fresh island fruits, gourmet island cheeses, and delicious baked goods, as well as island grown meats and fish. Hawaii has many grower's markets. Kapiolani on Oahu is very popular and very good.

For your Wedding

As I mentioned, I bought my brother-in-law's wedding cake at a local supermarket's bakery and it was lovely. All the supermarkets have bakeries. KTA's on the Big Island is a favorite. Expect to spend around \$50 for a small wedding cake.

If you're looking for an extravagant, highly customized cake, speak with the wedding coordinator about where to best find one.

Your wedding coordinator can also arrange for catering, but again you save bundles if you and your fiance or a trusted friend or relative takes care of the menu. Again, the supermarkets will save you lots. Just order those platters with cold cuts, cheeses and such, like you do for holiday parties or have someone make those tiny sandwiches and put together nice platters. Better yet, do what we did and go to a restaurant. One of Kona's nicest oceanfront restaurants, Jameson's by the Sea, was in walking distance of our park wedding, so we just all walked over there.

Wedding Favors and Gift Bags

It's really easy in Hawaii to find affordable wedding favors and gifts for your guests. Walmart and Kmart have big souvenir sections that have many items that would be nice for the gift bags and favors. So do Hilo Hatties and the ABC stores. You can also find cute bags in these stores too that have Hawaiian print or words on them that guests will enjoy as souvenirs. Or if you want them personalized with your names, search online.

In Conclusion

Want more information on specific islands or other advice? [See my other books](#). Have a wonderful wedding in Hawaii – and again, congratulations and best wishes! Drop me a line if you want to share any stories or ask any questions: lisakleinweber@gmail.com Aloha!