



## **Overseas Wedding Ceremonies, costs, types and legalities – the truth! (Part 1)**

We are often asked for average wedding ceremony costs and, as you can imagine, it's quite difficult to give a reply as ceremonies vary from country to country and from couple to couple. Your dreams of the perfect wedding are not going to be the same as anyone else's and wedding planners the world over have to take that into consideration when designing each ceremony.

Usually a wedding planner or venue will have a basic idea of a ceremony which can then be adapted to suit each couple, however, depending on your budget, you can of course have your wedding ceremony completely designed from scratch.

Weddings abroad are by their nature different from a wedding at home, and quite often the wedding couple decide to make the most of being away and either go completely low key and get married barefoot on the beach, or really push the boat out and have the lavish ceremony they probably couldn't afford at home.

Beach weddings are very popular, especially for couples from countries which don't get much sun (like the UK!). However you do have to take some things into consideration when planning a beach wedding. Many countries, especially in Europe, don't allow legal weddings to take place outdoors, so if you have your heart set on a beach wedding in Europe check very carefully with your wedding planner that this is actually allowed. If it isn't permitted in the country you wish to marry in you have a few choices – either change country to one which does allow legal beach weddings, have a legal ceremony where it is permitted in your chosen country and then have a blessing on the beach, or get married at home and then fly out to your chosen country and have a blessing on the beach. More and more couples are deciding not to compromise on the type of wedding they want and take one of those latter two options, choosing to have a non-legal ceremony in their ideal location, with the legal bit taking place elsewhere. Sometimes the guests have no idea the ceremony they are witnessing isn't actually legal and sometimes they've been to both weddings, the choice, as always, is yours!

As you can imagine, a beach ceremony can be very inexpensive if you go for the basic option – from under \$500 usd, depending on the country and wedding planner. However, as you can imagine, costs can go up to whatever you're happy paying if you choose the full bells and whistles version.

Another popular overseas wedding ceremony is a tropical garden wedding, where you exchange your vows under a gazebo in a tropical garden setting. This is often the grounds of the lovely upmarket hotel or resort you're staying in, or it can be a private garden – there are several private gardens in Hawaii with stunning backdrops which are used as wedding locations. Again, you will need to check the legalities of this with your wedding planner as many countries won't allow legal wedding ceremonies

outside, especially in Europe. It's much easier in the USA and Canada because there the officiant is licenced, not the venue, which allows more scope for location.

A garden wedding makes a good wedding choice for couples who don't relish the idea of sand in their shoes or prefer to have the "aisle" to the gazebo decorated and set out in advance, especially if there are several guests at the ceremony. Yet again, these ceremonies can be a lavish or as simple as you wish, either just the two of you with the wedding planner and photographer as your witnesses, or the "full monty" ceremony with all the trimmings but set outside and (hopefully) with sunshine. Garden weddings do tend to cost more than a beach ceremony, mainly due to having more to arrange, so average prices start from \$500 usd for the ceremony, although they can go much higher!

So, we've covered the two most popular overseas wedding locations, next time we'll go through a few more types of ceremony and the things you should think about before tying the knot abroad.

#### Summary

A wedding abroad offers a much larger choice of wedding ceremony than a simple registry office or church do. From beaches to tropical gardens and much more, the choice is yours!