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DESTINATION WEDDINGS

honeymoons

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- **CAKE HOW-TO'S**
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APART AS A

romantic retreat.



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With 33 beaches – each one quiet, clean and lapped by ultra-clear and calm Caribbean water – Anguilla is inherently romantic. Yet the island's soothing seaside serenity is only one reason this Caribbean getaway is such a gem for weddings and honeymoons. Couples can lodge, marry and celebrate in luxe villas, charming escape properties and resort hotels. The dining options are magnificent, from personable roadside grills to indulgent emporiums of fine fare, with dozens of casually chic bistros in between. For activities, think of leisurely bike rides to explore the terrain, sunset cocktail cruises, exciting parasailing adventures and even tropical treks through a small, lush rainforest.

Barefoot-on-the-beach weddings are always an option on Anguilla, yet they're not the only way to go. In fact, traditionalists appreciate the wealth of religious alternatives: In only 35 square miles, Anguilla boasts more than a dozen churches. Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists and Methodists are among those who can find a quaint chapel ideal for their big day. Many couples prefer the privacy of a boat or villa for their ceremonies. Hotels offer some spectacular options, both in air-conditioned comfort and in the always-temperate open air.

As for the celebration, Anguilla boasts an array of pros to provide the extras you might want. Florists will decorate with dreamy arrangements. Photographers will capture the moment digitally. Musicians will play inspiring music. And wedding coordinators will graciously pull all the elements together for you.

In addition to offering exceptional accommodations and 12 miles of lovely beachfront, Anguilla makes getting married easy. Its residents tend to be sincerely friendly; expect warm hellos from nearly everyone you pass. The language is English, so communication will never be an issue. And the rules are straightforward. Learn what you'll need in advance by contacting the minister and then the magistrate at 264-497-2377 then 264-497-3477. Find details of venues and services on Anguilla's user-friendly website, www.anguilla-vacation.com.

Exquisite amenities. Lush landscaping. Asian-tropical architecture. And total privacy. They're all yours – and yours alone – at **Bird of Paradise**, a luxurious villa ideal for weddings and honeymoons. Designed for romance, this

award-winning hideaway overlooking the beach boasts four suites plus an office/fifth bedroom. You and your guests will have the estate totally to yourselves. Other than the dotting staff, you'll see no one.

How they will tend to your needs! The property manager will greet you at the airport or ferry dock and, upon arrival at the villa, give you a tour of the facilities. The roster of service providers includes housekeepers, a sommelier and a 24-hour concierge. For an additional fee, you can also have a masseuse, a chef or a bartender. Boat captain to explore deserted islands? Fishing? Scuba expeditions? Steel-drum lessons? All can easily be arranged.

Bird of Paradise is *that* indulgent. Located on a bluff overlooking the Caribbean Sea and neighboring islands, this hideaway is a study in indoor-outdoor living. Social areas with overstuffed sofas intertwine with three lagoon-style swimming pools. Snuggle up by a fireplace in the open-air living room or relax indoors, folding back entire walls to welcome gentle breezes. The decor borrows from nature with finely chiseled rock walls and stained-wood ceilings. Choose the ideal spot for a wedding ceremony, then meander to another lovely locale for a sit-down dinner for 20 or a cocktail reception with as many as 50 guests. The villa's executive chef, trained in Paris and San Francisco, will create sumptuous buffets and meals based on the foods you love.

You'll want for nothing at Bird of Paradise. The staff will prestock every bedroom suite's refrigerator and wet bar with guests' favorite items. Beds are covered in Frette linens. Baths are supplied with Bvlgari sundries. Fresh orchids abound and Voss water, plush bathrobes and comfy slippers are in every suite. The Bird of Paradise is an idyllic sanctuary away from the world where the two of you can focus on each other. And, for those so inclined, the famous Anguilla nightlife is just a short drive away. 414-791-9461, anguillabird.com