

6 of the BEST

WOW-FACTOR HONEYMOONS

Sell the happy couple a holiday to remember with **Laura French's** pick of breathtaking experiences

Weddings and honeymoons might have largely been put on hold over the past year, but that needn't mean giving up altogether on this lucrative market. Couples will no doubt want to pull out all the stops when travel restrictions are lifted, making up for lost time with a celebration to remember – and for that, they'll need your expertise. Here we've put together a list of some of the most jaw-dropping honeymoon experiences to suggest for when travel does return – from flying over the Masai Mara in a hot-air balloon to picnicking on a private sandbank in the Maldives, and plenty more in between.



1 WAKE UP NEXT TO AN ELEPHANT

As far as wow moments go, it's hard to match waking up in the jungle with elephants peering into your room. That's exactly what Anantara Golden Triangle Elephant Camp offers in its Jungle Bubbles – transparent domes on wooden decking, offering up-close views of these majestic creatures. Guests get a luxury dinner hamper delivered to their door, while activities range from learning about elephant behaviour to heading out on elephant-accompanied walks and yoga sessions. **Book it:** If Only combines three nights' all-inclusive here with two nights at the Anantara Riverside Bangkok and nine nights at Sala Samui Choengmon Beach Resort (both B&B) from £3,989 per person, including all flights and transfers. ifonly.net



2

FLOAT ABOVE THE MASAI MARA IN A HOT-AIR BALLOON

Picture floating above the savannah against a sunrise sky, with lions, elephants, giraffes and rhinos roaming in the bush beneath you. Abercrombie & Kent offers the chance to do just that as an add-on to its Classic Kenya itinerary, with a cooked breakfast and champagne toast to the happy couple back on the ground afterwards. Add in 4x4 drives at Lewa Wildlife Conservancy (home to East Africa's largest rhino population) and time to flop on the white-sand beaches of the Kenyan coast, and this is the type of honeymoon that wows from start to finish. **Book it:** Abercrombie & Kent offers a tailor-made Classic Kenya trip from £6,599 per person for 11 nights, including accommodation (full-board while on safari), flights, transfers and hot-air balloon ride. abercrombiekent.co.uk

3

SAIL AROUND SANTORINI AT SUNSET

For a closer-to-home honeymoon, it's hard to beat Santorini, and no couple's trip here would be complete without a romantic sunset sailing. For clients after exactly that, Elegant Resorts recommends Canaves Oia Suites, whose honeymoon package includes a five-hour private catamaran trip that takes guests to idyllic spots as the island's caldera is bathed in a rainbow of colours. Back at the resort there's plenty more in the way of scenic sunset views, with cliffside suites each featuring their own private infinity pool and terraces overlooking the Aegean. **Book it:** Elegant Resorts offers five nights in a Junior Suite with plunge pool from £2,335, including a sunset catamaran tour, private transfers, flights and UK lounge passes (for travel October 1-November 15). elegantresorts.co.uk



4

ARRIVE AT YOUR RESORT BY HELICOPTER

There's making an entrance – and then there's swooping down in a helicopter to your own private retreat overlooking the soaring Piton peaks. All hail Saint Lucia's Jade Mountain Resort, where the mode of arrival is just the first of many wow moments. Others include the panoramic views from your Sanctuary suite (where there's no fourth wall, meaning a breeze drifts in from the ocean) and a private candlelit dinner on a castaway beach accompanied by violinists, which is every bit as blissfully surreal as it sounds. **Book it:** Caribtours offers seven nights' all-inclusive in a Sky Whirlpool Suite from £4,399 per person, including return helicopter transfers and a bottle of champagne on arrival, for travel June 1-October 31. caribtours.co.uk



top tip

The Caribbean Tourism Organisation is holding a virtual Luxury Romance roadshow for UK agents on February 9. To sign up, visit caribbean.co.uk/trade

DESTINATIONS

WEDDINGS & HONEYMOONS | WOW FACTOR

5



RIDE A CAMEL TO A SECLUDED SAND DUNE

Nothing says honeymoon quite like riding off into the sunset, glass of champers in hand beneath a cocktail-coloured sky – but why not add a little local flair to the idyll? Dubai's Al Maha, A Luxury Collection Desert Resort & Spa offers guided sunset camel treks taking riders to the top of a secluded dune for butler-served bubbly against a serene backdrop of gently billowing sand. It's not the only memorable experience to be found here, with desert safaris, falconry shows, nature treks and horse rides luring couples after an adventurous honeymoon to remember.

Book it: Emirates Holidays offers three nights' full-board in a Bedouin Suite from £2,169 per person, including sunset camel ride and flights, for travel between August 15-28. emiratesholidays.com

BEST
OF THE
rest

Stay on a private island in French

Polynesia: Clients swayed by visions of waking up on a private island in the heart of the South Pacific? Look no further than Conrad Bora Bora Nui, set on the exclusive island of Motu To'opua, with overwater villas, personal butlers and a secluded hilltop spa among the draws. If Only offers 13 nights from £7,749, including flights and transfers.

Watch a film under the stars:

Six Senses Zil Pasyon, set on its own private island in the Seychelles, is the stuff of pure honeymoon bliss. But for a real standout moment, suggest its 'cinema under the stars' experience, available for exclusive hire so couples can cosy up with nobody else around. Carrier offers a week from £5,670, including breakfast, private helicopter transfers and flights.

Wake up among the treetops:

Direct nature-loving newlyweds to Treehouse Villas Koh Yao, a cluster of two-storey rainforest-style villas set in the jungle canopy. Each has its own private plunge pool, day beds and minibar, with views overlooking Phang Nga Bay. Gold Medal combines three nights here with five in Phuket from £1,689, including daily breakfast, private transfers and flights.

6

PICNIC ON A DESERTED SANDBANK IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

If sailing out to their own private, white-sand paradise in the heart of the Indian Ocean sounds like your clients' idea of a dream, suggest a stay at Kandolhu Maldives. The resort offers a private boat trip to a deserted sandbank with a champagne reception and private picnic on the beach, with ample time for snorkelling and swimming in the clear turquoise waters. "This is an amazing trip," says Sheena Paton, senior product and purchasing manager for Kuoni. "Guests can snorkel over the coral reef and laze on the sand as they enjoy having this little piece of paradise entirely to themselves."

Book it: Kuoni offers a week's all-inclusive from £3,999 per person, including flights from Gatwick in September. A three-hour sandbank excursion costs from \$119. kuoni.co.uk



PICTURES: Jason Gordon Photography, kandolhu.com, Shutterstock