Best Beaches

All that planning, entertaining, and air-kissing long-lost aunts can be exhausting. If you want to recharge in the sun and sand, choose one of these shorelines—each is honeymoon-worthy in its own way.

Catch Some Waves ➔ Poipu Beach, on Kauai, is a renowned surf spot, but you don’t have to be Laird Hamilton to hang ten. The resident surf instructor at the oceanfront Ko‘a Kea Hotel & Resort will get beginners up on their feet after just one lesson. Plus, the snorkeling, scuba diving, and paddle-boarding are also top-notch (from $369, koakea.com).

Hide Away ➔ While the British Virgin Islands have many worthy strips of sand, the aptly named Honeymoon Beach, on über-chic Peter Island Resort & Spa, is the standout. One lucky couple at a time can reserve the idyll for a picnic lunch or tropical cocktails, or for just hanging out far from civilization (from $430, peterisland.com).

Go Barefoot ➔ Matemwe Beach, on the eastern shore of Zanzibar, is so soft and powdery, you’ll be tempted to take endless hand-in-hand strolls. But make time to kayak or dive off the famed Mnemba Atoll coral reefs, accessible from the quietly luxurious Matemwe Lodge (from $360, matemwe-lodge.asiliaafrica.com).

Sail Into the Past ➔ If you’re more lake lovers than ocean buffs, find a home away from home at Lake Placid Lodge, in upstate New York. Built as a summer house, it was transformed into one of the Adirondacks’ most beloved hotels in 1946 and exudes the glamour of a bygone era. Dress up for supper in the Arts and Crafts dining room (from $499, lakeplacidlodge.com).

Float in Place ➔ There are overwater bungalows—and then there are those at The St. Regis Bora Bora, in French Polynesia. The spacious one-bedroom villas are set right in a bright turquoise lagoon, and some come with whirlpools. Even indoors, that water is never far from sight, with walls of windows and glass panels in the floor (from $1,248, stregis.com).

Book a Room With a View ➔ Spread along 2,700 acres on an isthmus perched between Lake Nicaragua and the Pacific Ocean, Nicaragua’s new The Inn at Rancho Santana has two miles of shoreline and five beaches—not to mention its own art gallery, café, and organic garden. Each of its 17 light and airy rooms grants the bride and groom a Pacific Ocean vista (from $249, ranchosantana.com).
Tasty Delights

Foodies take all forms, from simple gourmands to Anthony Bourdain-style culinary anthropologists. If the two of you live to eat (or drink, or cook, or crush grapes), one of these trips will be a recipe for delight.

Eat Your Way Through Tuscany ➫ To sample the bounty that is Tuscan cuisine, stay at the 10-room hilltop hotel Monteverti Tuscany and do just about anything. (Options include truffle hunting and wine tasting.) Don’t worry about over-indulging: The new spa offers ways to detox ($425, montevertituscany.com).

Shuck It All ➫ Your shellfish, that is. At the 46-room Old Wauwinet, on Nantucket, Massachusetts, guests can experience ocean-to-table firsthand. You’ll watch as the captain of the Wauwinet Lady pulls up from a nearby oyster bed, and learn how to shuck the bad and shock the good—then pair them with wine ($125, wauwinet.com).

Dine a Deux ➫ The City of Light is in the midst of a bistro renaissance, and at our current faves, French classics are getting a 21st-century twist. Try Septime (septime-charline.fr), Clown Bar (clown-bar-paris.fr), La Dauphine (restaurantledauphine.net), or L’Ami Jean (lamiyan.fr). The best part: They all take reservations.

Barbecue Blow-Out ➫ Everything’s bigger in Texas—and that includes Austin’s cuisine scene. The waists are worth it at Franklin Barbecue (franklinbarbecue.com) and La Barbecue (labarbecue.com). Give it the inevitable food coma at the new South Congress (sco)te, home to a restaurant by beloved local chef Paul Qui ($285, southcongresshotel.com).

Bottle It! ➫ At The Vines Resort & Spa, at the foot of the Argentinean Aconcagua in Mendoza’s malbec country, offers the ultimate souvenir: At the property’s vineyard, you can learn how to blend wine with master vintners and create your own barrel of toast future anniversaries. After you’ve worked up an appetite, hit the on-site restaurant run by famed chef Francis Mallmann ($250, vineresortandspa.com).

Wine and Dine ➫ We all know Napa Valley is famous for its vineyards (and for good reason), but the restaurants are equally world-class—from the special-occasion Restaurant at Meadowood (therestaurantatmeadowood.com) to the more casual AtBa Sea (atbasociatalocal.com), a newbie right downtown. Plan a (Beach) Shack Attack ➫ Forget fancy restaurants. In Negril, Jamaica, the more casual AtBa Sea offers guests to pluck fruit right from the trees. Book one of the Belle Mont Farm villas, where you can make your own meal with fresh produce delivered to your door (from $150, kittitianhill.com).

Cast a Line ➫ On an excursion available at Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, you’ll spend the day angling with local fishermen before taking your haul to a cooking class. That night, enjoy your masterpiece in the ultimate romantic setting: The Wine Cave, a hillsides rock cavern (from $660, sixsenses.com).

Epic Adventures

Surf, sail, heli-ski, golf ... there are plenty of ways to get your heart rate going. These high-energy activities will challenge your sporty side—without neglecting the romantic in you.

Climb the Ruins ➫ The Sian Ka’an Biosphere Reserve in Tulum, Mexico, provides a welcome break from the beaches of the Riviera Maya with its Nature Biocenter, a boat ride through a mangrove forest (Mayan canal) with stops to spot manatees and sunbathing crocodiles and float through mangrove-lined caves (sixsenses.com).

Ski the Friendly Skies ➫ Telluride Helitrax, at almost 6,000 feet in the Colorado Rockies (helitrax.com), is a newbie right downtown. Off-piste with Telluride Helitrax, a company that specializes in heli-skiing in the Colorado Rockies (helitrax.com). Then book a couple’s massage at Telluride’s Madeira Hotel & Residences—your pampering will definitely thank you from $329, madelinetelluride.com).

Golf on High ➫ At almost 6,000 feet above sea level, Golf Club Aravaca, in the Swiss Alps’ rugged Schanfigg Valley, is one of Europe’s highest-altitude greens (aravacagolf.com). The Tschuggen Grand Hotel, whose showstopping spa resembles a series of sails, provides free rides to the 18-hole course (from $300, tschuggen.ch).

Paddle by Moonlight (and LED, too) ➫ The adventure center at Punta Mita’s Reef & Morning Star Marlin Beach Resort, on St. Thomas, U.S.V.I., rental clear-bottom kayaks illuminated with LED lights. After dark, the glow attracts sea turtles, tarpons, stingrays, and other magnificent marine life (from $150, marriott.com).

Roam the Rain Forest ➫ It takes three days to explore Costa Rica’s pristine Osa Peninsula during a hotel-to-hotel hike, but the effort is worth it. On a custom itinerary from Costa Rican Vacations, a guide will lead you through Corcovado National Park, pointing out big cats along the way (from $2,400 for four nights, vacationscostarica.com).