

TRAVEL

# The Best Honeymoon Hotels in Asia (That Aren't in the Maldives)

BY CHRIS SCHALKX

October 4, 2023



Courtesy of Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts

 SAVE

If a honeymoon in Asia conjures up images of crystalline waters and swaying palms on a pretty beach somewhere in the Maldives, you're not alone. As one of the world's most popular honeymoon destinations, its overwater villas and underwater restaurants draw

in shoals of newlyweds. But while this honeymoon hot spot has an undeniable appeal, endless beach-lolling isn't every couple's bag.

Some might crave more adventure: Mountain hikes and rainforest trails, or ramshackle markets brimming with exotic fruits. Others, perhaps, look for inspiration in the continent's cultural tapestry, whether incense-swirled shrines or temples wrapped in prayer flags. From action-packed adventures in Bhutan to a toes-in-the-sand Indonesian escape, below are nine alternative ideas for a non-standard honeymoon in Asia—and the best honeymoon hotels to stay at along the way.

## Go local in Tokyo

Hidden in the higgledy-piggledy lanes of Tokyo's Kagurazaka district (also known as 'Little Kyoto'), Trunk(House), helps its guests experience the city in a way few other hotels can. As an offshoot from homegrown hotel brand Trunk, this hush-hush hideaway takes over a former geisha house and melds the building's classic Japanese trimmings with eye-popping artworks and mid-century modern furnishing. The surrounding lantern-lined alleys dotted with *izakayas* and sake bars beg for exploration, and Trunk's team of clued-in locals can guide you to the best spots. That said, it's dangerously easy to simply stay in: the house's bathroom feels like a private *sentō* (bathhouse) with a tub crafted from hinoki cypress wood and tongue-in-cheek erotic tilework by artist Masumi Ishikawa. There's also a closet-sized disco with a karaoke kit and cocktail bar, and butlers on call to arrange tea ceremonies and private chef meals. The best part? There's only one tatami-floored bedroom with a cloud-soft futon bed, which means you have the house all to yourselves.

**Location:** 3 Kagurazaka, Shinjuku City, Tokyo 162-0825

BOOK NOW

## Forest-bathe in Langkawi

Courtesy of The Datai Langkawi

Howling macaques and tree-rustling hornbills deliver the soul-soothing soundtrack for a night in the steamy rainforest of Malaysia's Langkawi Island, where The Datai has welcomed adventure-seeking honeymooners since opening in the early '90s. But despite its age, this tropic-tinged retreat has aged gracefully (helped by a multi-million dollar facelift just before the pandemic), and to this day remains one of Southeast Asia's finest. Don't be deterred by the resort's family-friendly label. Couples will find plenty of alone time in the private pooled villas along the babbling stream that snakes through the resort, or during the candlelit dinners their butlers will happily set up on its semi-private beach. Meanwhile, its ancient jungle setting is said to harbor restorative powers—channel them during an early-morning walk with resident naturalist Irshad Mobarak, who can guide you through the healing benefits of 'Mandi Embun' forest bathing.

**Location:** 07000 Pulau Langkawi, Kedah Darul Aman, Malaysia

[BOOK NOW](#)

## Sleep under the stars in Sumba

Courtesy of Nihi Sumba

Indonesia's Sumba island is just a short flight from Bali, but this rugged area can feel like a wholly different country. With tourism in its infancy, locals still outnumber visitors on its powder-white beaches, and you're more likely to bump into grazing water buffaloes than devil-may-care backpackers on rented motorbikes. A crop of smart new hotels have popped up along the island's southwestern coast in the past few years, but Nihi Sumba, which opened in 2001, remains a firm favorite. From behind a sign that reads 'welcome to the edge of wildness,' the resort rolls down a jungled hillside onto a 1.5-mile-long beach, where surfers bob in the waves and sandalwood ponies bathe in the shallows. Each villa is set up as a mini-estate, with a private pool and gardens frothy with bougainvillea. Its ultimate honeymoon hidey-hole, though, is

Villa Rahasia, an off-grid retreat on a secret cove reached via a 90-minute trek from the resort, where couples only have the stars in the sky for company.

**Location:** Hoba Wawi, Wanokaka, West Sumba Regency East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia, 87272

BOOK NOW

## Valley-hop around Bhutan

Courtesy of Six Senses Hotels and Resorts

Few trips feel as meaningful and awe-inspiring as a journey to Bhutan, a mystery-cloaked kingdom high up in the Himalayas. The country only opened to tourists as recently as 1974, and many of its mountaintop villages and gold-roofed monasteries still feel as if they've been frozen in time. Leave the logistics to [Six Senses Bhutan](#),

whose five lodges are pitched up on prime spots around the country's prettiest valleys. Doubling as a tour operator, they can put together everything from long weekends to tick off a bucket list hike to Paro's Tiger's Nest monastery to two-week jaunts filled with hot stone baths, riverside picnics, and temple blessings around its full lodge circuit. Those looking to start a family shouldn't miss the Chimi Lhakhang fertility temple in Punakha, where women wishing for a baby come to be blessed with a strike on the head by a 10-inch wooden phallus.

**Location:** Chunimeding, Babesa, Chang Gewog, Thimphu, Bhutan

BOOK NOW

## Zip through the jungle in Cambodia

Courtesy of Shinta Mani Wild

There's a Jeep to whisk you to the lobby, of course, but daredevils opt for the zip-line arrival to Shinta Mani Wild. Only by zooming for more than 400 meters above the forest canopy—and the roaring river that cuts through it—will you realize just how wild this corner of southern Cambodia's Cardamom Mountains truly is. Spun from the eccentric mind of architect Bill Bensley, this green gem threads lightly on its land, a swathe of hardwood forest once destined for logging but saved just in time. Only 15 luxurious tents—all vintage leather trunks, patchwork-clad furniture, and fully stocked cocktail bars—have been pitched up along the river, and not a single hardwood tree has been chopped down in the process. Days here fill with ranger-guided jungle treks and anti-poaching patrols on the back of rattling motorbikes, which are part of the resort's partnership with the local Wildlife Alliance NGO to protect the forest's endangered species. Afterwards, the spa treatments (included in the rate) and the lounge-lined cistern pool deliver welcome relief to aching muscles. When weather allows, take the resort's pontoon-style exhibition boat for a spin—sundowners on its roof while floating down the little-visited Srey Ambel Estuary make for magical memories.

**Location:** Prey Praseth Village, Ou Bak Rothed Commune, Kampong Seila District  
Preah Sihanouk Province, Cambodia

BOOK NOW

## Go beach-hopping in India

Courtesy of Kahani Paradise

From its kaleidoscopic temples to its caramel-colored, palm-pinned bays, western India's little-visited Gokarna province feels like the Goa (India's erstwhile hippie hub one province to its north) of 30 years ago. You won't find any mega resorts here (yet), and bass-thumping beach clubs are still few and far between. Instead, its coastline offers a seemingly endless chain of quiet beaches, where women in colorful saris sell fresh fruit and intrepid bohèmes—seemingly time-warped from the area's hippie heyday—still camp in the jungle fringe. But with Kahani Paradise as your base, there's no need to rough it. Set on a sprawling hillside estate overlooking the confluence of the Aghanashini River and the Arabian Sea, this private villa retreat features breezy bedrooms studded with antiques and a dreamy pool wrapped in tropical gardens. While the candlelit restaurant is a lovely spot, it's the destination dinners, with flower-flecked tables and fairy lights set up on the estate's most enchanting corners (the clifftop cabin, or the private step well among them) that bring romance to a whole new level.

**Location:** Belekan, Kumta, Karnataka, 581326



[BOOK NOW](#)

## Be one with nature in Bali

Courtesy of Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts

Bali has no shortage of back-to-nature retreats, but no other resort takes that promise quite so literally as Buahan, a Banyan Tree Escape. Fanning out over a jungle-covered valley some 30 minutes north of Ubud, the resort's pavilion-style villas blur the line between inside and out. They have outdoor plunge pools and bathtubs from hand-hammered copper on their balcony, and a terrace where guests can order Indonesian-inspired meals created from ingredients sourced and foraged from surrounding farms. More grounding, though, is the fact that they don't have any walls. At night, only a gauzy curtain around the bed separates you from the valley unfurling at your feet. Each villa's location, ensconced in palms and tropical jungle, ensures total privacy, and

with not a single building visible on the horizon, the hubbub of Bali's touristy corners could not feel farther away.

**Location:** Jl. Banjar Selat, Buahian Kaja, Payangan, Bali, 80572

BOOK NOW

## Hit the surf in Siargao

Courtesy of Nay Palad Hideaway

For surfing couples, palm-fringed Siargao in the southeastern Philippines is hard to beat. Glassy barrels roll reliably from its eastern coastline and deliver wave breaks for beginning boarders and seasoned professionals. As with every surf hub, the waves have spawned a whole ecosystem of hostels, smoothie-bowl cafes, and yoga shalas, but its tight-knit community of Filipino and expatriate surfers have so far managed to make sure that the island clings to the unfussy, on-the-cusp-of-discovery vibe you hope to

find in a place like this. Nay Palad Hideaway, which reopened in 2023 after a top-to-bottom renovation, channels the surfer-cool look but is anything but scrappy. Its jungle-fringed villas come with breezy bedrooms and heaps of space and open to outdoor showers and sling chair-strung verandahs. The poolside lounge and restaurant follow an anything-goes approach: the team can whip up drinks wherever and whenever you want it, and the menuless restaurant is happy to pitch up a dinner table on the beach or in one of the bird nest-like nooks that dot the property. Another plus: the concept is all-inclusive, so there's no need to fret about the bill.

**Location:** Malinao, General Luna, Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte, 8419, Philippines

BOOK NOW

## Find an ethical island idyll in Cambodia

Courtesy of Song Saa Private Island

If the weather is right and you squint your eyes, [Song Saa Private Island](#), a 40-minute speedboat hop from southern Cambodia's mainland, feels almost Maldivian. It has all the trappings of a typical Indian Ocean hideaway, including the gin-clear waters teeming with rainbows of tropical fish and thatch-roofed overwater villas connected by swirling stilted walkways from reclaimed timber. The pools—both the crescent-shaped communal one and the private ones attached to each villa—are just as pretty, but what sets this retreat apart is its proximity and commitment to the local culture and community. A stilted fishing village sits just across the water, and every sunset, boats sputter past with their wooden bellies full of fish. The resort's Song Saa Foundation, which guests can join on village tours and expeditions around the area's ecosystems, founded the country's first marine reserve and makes sure that the local community reaps the benefits.

**Location:** Song Saa, Koh Rong Archipelago, Near Sihanoukville, Cambodia

BOOK NOW



WATCH

## Watch the Full Vogue World: London 2023 Show

MOST POPULAR VIDEOS

1 / 69



Watch the Full Vogue World:  
London 2023 Sho...

Vogue World: London Red  
Carpet Arrivals

Return of the Supers: See  
Behind the Scenes...

The Biggest Red Carpet  
Moments from the 202...

---

## More Great Living Stories From *Vogue*

---

- [Naomi Biden on Her White House Wedding](#)
- Prince Harry and Meghan Markle Hold Hands in Two [Never-Before-Seen Portraits](#)
- Kim Kardashian Gives a Tour of [Her Most-Cherished Home Objects](#)
- The [Best Celebrity Wedding Moments](#) in *Vogue*
- The [Most Unusual Celebrity Baby Names](#): Y, Gravity, Pilot Inspektor, and More
- Sign up for [Vogue's wedding newsletter](#), an all-access invitation to the exceptional and inspirational, plus planning tips and advice

# Vogue Daily

All the essentials: top fashion stories, editor's picks, and celebrity style.

SIGN UP NOW

By signing up you agree to our [User Agreement](#) and [Privacy Policy & Cookie Statement](#).

Sponsored Links by Taboola

**If you own a mouse, you will never turn off your computer again.**

Combat Siege

**Add Baking Soda To Your Grey Hairs And Watch What Happens**

StreetInsider.com

**If you own a mouse, you have to play this game. No Install. Play for free.**

PanzerRush

**Incredible: New slimming product that the English are snapping up**

well-being-review DietDrops

**At 86, This Is Where Jack Nicholson Lives**

investing.com

**If You Need To Relax On Your Computer, You Have To Play This Game. No Install**

Elvenar

