

Winter Wedding GUIDE



All About Entertainment

Your wedding should not be just a day for you to remember. Traditionally, a wedding reception is a party thrown in honor of the bridal couple, but is hosted for the wedding guests as a thank you for their presence at the nuptials and for their gifts.

With the right planning, your reception can be just as memorable for your guests as it is for you and your family. Do research and think about what you've enjoyed (and haven't enjoyed) as a guest at weddings.

Here are a few suggestions to get you started.

HIRE A CARICATURIST

Caricaturists always add a playful dose of entertainment, and their popularity at weddings in recent years has grown significantly.

Not only are they entertaining to watch during your reception, but they can offer your guests a unique, personalized item — which you can use as a wedding favor — to take home with them at the end of the evening.

HIRE DANCE INSTRUCTORS

Sometimes enticing guests out on the dance floor can be a struggle. Offering up some entertainment on the dance floor could be just the ticket to get guests into the groove of things.

Instructors can frequently be hired by the hour, so you can easily limit your costs. Your guests will never forget that your wedding is where they learned (or relearned) how to swing, waltz or salsa.



OFFER A PHOTO BOOTH

A photo booth is quickly becoming an icon at contemporary weddings. Remember, while many professional photographers offer a photo

booth as an add-on option to most packages, a photo booth does not need to be professionally installed or wreck your budget.

Consider crafting your own

backdrop. Pick up fun props at a party store or thrift store, and use an iPad on a tripod to capture the mischief. If you've got young cousins itching to be involved, have one of them

man the camera.

You don't need to spend a fortune. But whatever you choose, you need to enjoy it. If you are happy and having fun, your guests will, too.

Keeping Everyone Cozy



ing area, or could be incorporated fully into your decor by lining the aisle with colorful ribbons attached to each.

FOR THE RECEPTION

1. Stoke open fireplaces (where possible). Is there a fireplace at your venue? Ask if lighting a fire is an option. Or if your venue allows, create a bonfire outside. There is nothing like the crackle of a fire to keep things toasty.

2. Let your guests enjoy a coffee or hot cocoa bar. Nothing makes people feel warm like a hot beverage. You can offer add-ons, such as shaved chocolate sprinkles, marshmallows, whipped cream, cinnamon sticks and vanilla beans. Don't forget about other toasty drink options, such as mulled wine or cider.

3. Start the meal with something seasonal. Nothing beats a winter soup, soft cheese plate or roasted root vegetables.

4. Serve a warm dessert. While wedding cake is always a winner — and classic choice — consider adding something warm to your dessert menu. A fruit crisp or warm bread pudding with a bourbon-butter glaze is sure to chase the chill away.

5. Gift warm wedding favors. Everything from mittens, pocket warmers and shawls to mixes of hot cocoa or jars of salted caramel will delight guests and are sure to be used.

Hosting a wedding in the winter months offers up a lot of fun ways to embellish your nuptials — and keep your guests warm.

Even if you aren't hosting an outdoor affair, the chill has

a way of sneaking inside like an unwanted guest.

Chase the chill away with one (or more) of the following ideas.

FOR THE CEREMONY

1. Have cozy blankets on hand for guests to wrap up. Think soft flannels and warm fleece in rich colors. Place them in baskets near the back of the aisle with a chalkboard sign reading, "To have and to

hold, in case you get cold."

2. Offer hand warmers.

This is a great addition to any outdoor ceremony, and your guests will thank you for it.

3. Prepare seat-side snacking. Offer roasted chestnuts to guests as they take their seats. They not only keep the munchies at bay but create classy hand warmers for guests who would rather "hold" than "have."

4. Add some cushion — to

your guest seating, that is.

Sitting on a cushioned pad instead of a cold chair can make a world of difference, and your guests will appreciate you thinking of the small creature comforts.

5. Rent portable heaters. If you are set on having an outdoor ceremony, you might look into renting portable heaters. The tall, sleek variety can be elegantly arranged to line the outer-rim of the seat-



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Embrace the Season

Your colors and decor will set the tone of your wedding. This is the time to fully embrace the season and glean inspiration from your surroundings.

WINTER GREENS

Wreaths of pine and berries are perfect for adorning the

bride and groom's chairs, church doors or buffet tables.

A sprig of pine and stick of cinnamon tied with twine around each guest's napkin offers a striking table display and nod to the season.

Look for unexpected ways to sneak in a little green to really make a statement.

GO COTTON

Cotton is a great — and inexpensive — way to decorate a winter wedding. It makes an elegant wreath or centerpiece, and can add wonderful texture to any brid-

al bouquet.

SEASONAL PRINTS

Nothing is quite as cozy as flannel. While a colorful plaid is not a typical wedding choice, it packs a punch next to a white wedding gown or cranberry bridesmaid's dress.

Bold stripes also are great for larger items, such as table runners, down to the details, like the print on ribbon around a bouquet.

LUXE FABRICS

To add some serious glamour to your winter affair, consider punching up your fab-

rics. A white velvet aisle runner, for example, will take your ceremony from chic to tres chic in an instant.

HOLIDAY INSPIRATIONS

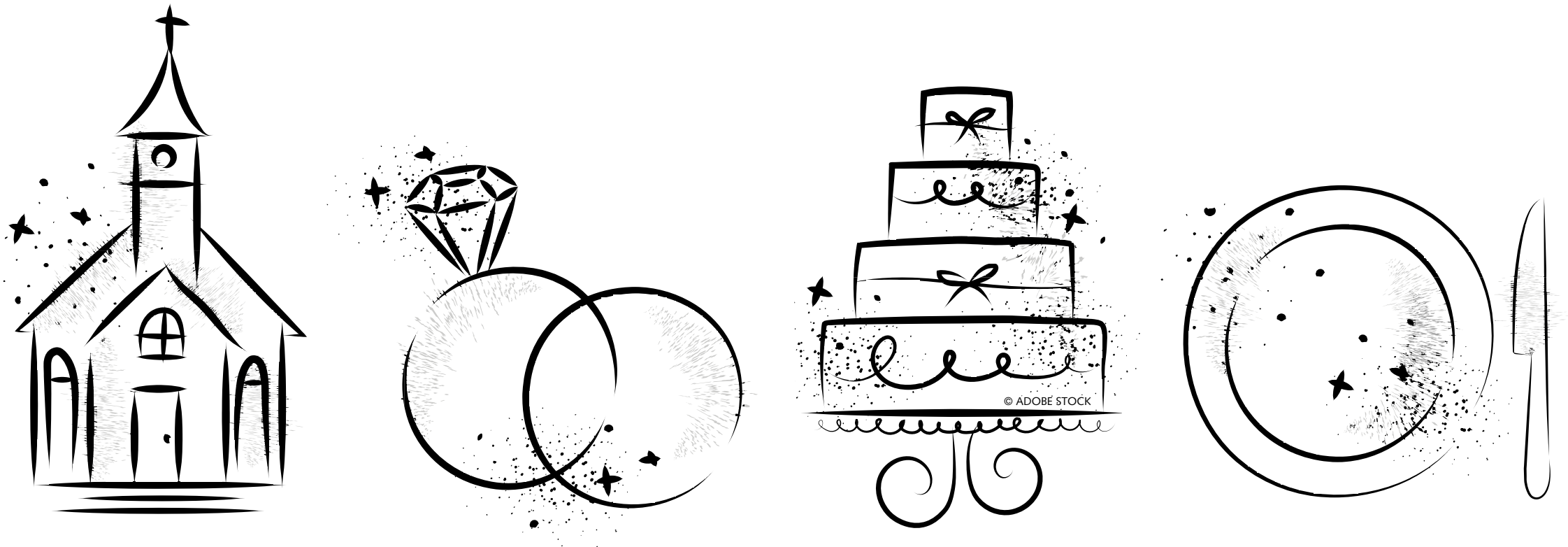
If you really want to give a nod to the holidays, consider incorporating more traditional Christmas decorations. Instead of a traditional guest book, have guests sign clear glass bulb ornaments and have a tree set up for them to hang them on.

Oftentimes churches decorate heavily for holiday services with white fabrics and

cheery poinsettias. If you incorporate these elements, you might not have to decorate your ceremony space much at all — translating into big savings.

WINTER WHITEOUT

This might be the only season when going all out with all white is not only appropriate but stunning. Create your own winter wonderland by embracing the snow-like hue and pairing it with a deep color that will allow the white to truly shine, such as evergreen or cranberry.



The Disaster Plan

Winter weddings are tinged with a special touch of magic that the other seasons just lack. Maybe it's the nip of the cold, or perhaps winter nuptials play off of holiday excitement, but winter can be one of the most exciting times to get married.

Winter weddings also come with their particular brand of perils. Especially with a winter wedding, things happen outside of the typical wedding disasters of lost vows/dresses/rings, issues with vendors and sporadic breakout acne.

Taking the time to plan ahead can ward off feelings of stress and anxiety, should any of these wedding disasters happen.

DISASTER: A FREAK BLIZZARD

How to Plan: You cannot control the weather, but you can control your response to it. Even if you live in a warmer climate, the winter season normally brings its fair share of rain

that can lead to unsafe road conditions and flight delays.

Remind guests and vendors to pad their travel time as much as possible. Talk with your wedding planner about the quickest way to condense tables if several guests are unable to show.

DISASTER: A FLAME GETS OUT OF HAND

How to Plan: Candles are beautiful, and fire pits are fun, but with lax supervision or an over-zealous wedding guest, they can easily get out of control.

Plan to keep a small fire extinguisher within reach of every lit fireplace or

fire pit, and in a location convenient to any candle flame gone rogue.

DISASTER: YOUR VENUE LOSES POWER

How to plan: Winter storms have the potential to cause a power outage. Ask your venue if it has a back-up generator before you book, and how it handles power outages.

If your venue is without a generator, plan on keeping plenty of extra candles on-hand — which will provide much-needed light and create a romantic vibe.

DISASTER: A MASSIVE COLD

How to plan: This is not an unlikely

scenario. Winter is cold and flu season after all. This is not the year to skip your flu shot.

Wash your hands regularly and drink plenty of water. It would surprise you how much these activities help ward off unwanted colds.

CONSIDER WEDDING INSURANCE

Purchasing wedding insurance can be one of the best investments you make on your winter wedding.

Many policies protect couples from losing deposit money and help them acquire full refunds from vendors who cancel for a variety of reasons — including the weather.

Love in Layers

Getting married in the colder months doesn't mean you have to be cold. Use the season as an excuse to add stylish — and essential — accessories to your bridal look.

Here are a few elegant and on-trend suggestions to keep you and the entire bridal party nice and toasty.

FOR THE BRIDE

Snow drifting down softly over your shoulders — and a chilly winter breeze at your back — is the perfect reason to partake in the latest bridal fashion trend: the cape.

Bridal capes have hit the runways in every style, length and fabric, but all are chic, classic, and most importantly, warm. If you have your heart set on a stole, consider going vintage; you will likely find a quality fur at an affordable price and won't be contributing to the current fur industry, as you will be reusing a vintage piece.

AND HER LADIES

Pretty shawls, soft pashminas and cute mittens keep bridesmaids warm and offer a stylish accessory that a bride can gift to her girls.

If you are getting hitched in a seriously snowy location, don't forget about a set of colorful Wellies to keep everyone's toes nice and dry. These accessories also can add some serious punch to any bridal photo shoot.

FOR THE GROOM

There is nothing more dapper than a groom in a well-tailored overcoat. Keep to classic accessories, such as butter-soft gloves and a thick woolen scarf in a subdued hue.

Keep fabric in mind and choose a suit or tux in a wool blend. If your wedding is more rustic or informal, consider having the groom wear a rich sweater in luxe cashmere. Don't be afraid to think outside the box.

AND HIS FELLAS

Gifting the groomsmen bright scarves can make for a stunning scene. Think of a row of groomsmen in navy suits and white scarves, or black suits and red scarves, or brown with burgundy.



Ring In the New Year

Choosing your wedding date is at the very top of the wedding to-do list. The date of your wedding helps make decisions about other wedding-related choices that have to be made — including venue, dress and decor.

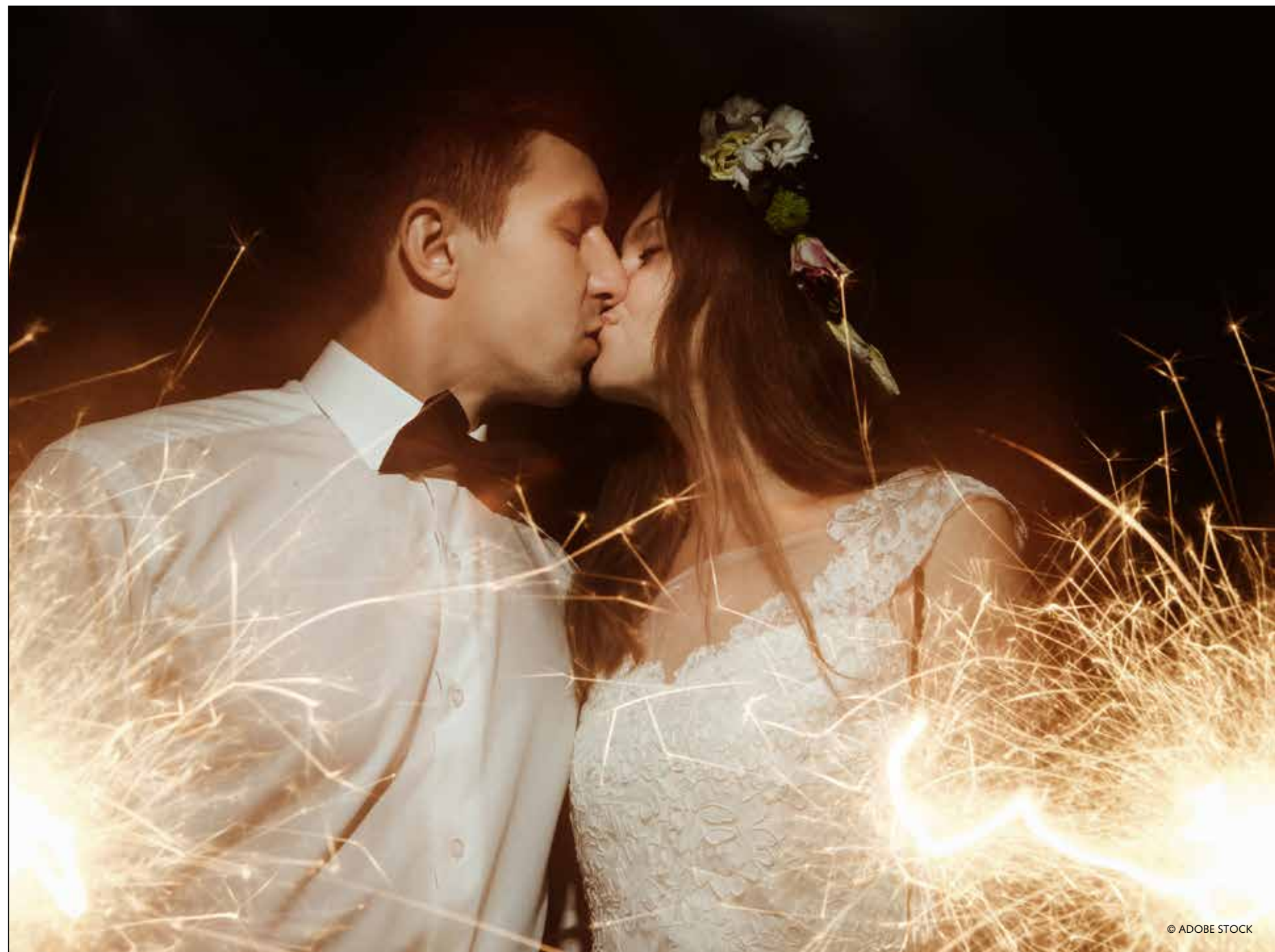
Getting married on New Year's Eve has several great advantages: Pairing your wedding with a major holiday means most people already have time off work, will be available to travel and are in the mood for a celebration.

Best of all, you can begin a new year as husband and wife. Here are a few things to consider before booking your date.

HOLIDAY ETIQUETTE

Choosing a holiday — any holiday — for your wedding, might seem perfect for you, but a lot of people plan vacations around holidays. Make sure you send save-the-dates out as early as possible. Be prepared for some unlikely declines.

Even if you have your fair share of people responding “no,” you should prepare a proper fete for those guests who come. Guests attending a



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New Year's Eve affair will most likely expect an exciting reception.

GREAT EXCUSE TO GO GLAM

Champagne is practically mandatory at both wedding and New Year's celebrations, and the holiday also is a great

excuse to go wild with confetti and party poppers.

Embrace a glitzy theme and go black, white and gold with your colors. Make sure everything sparkles — including the bridesmaids dresses.

SPECIAL DETAILS

Hosting your wedding on an

evening when people are used to staying up past midnight offers the perfect excuse to dress up wedding details to make them extra special.

Think mini-bottles of champagne with your wedding date printed on the label for a splurge of a party favor. You also can fill the envelopes with

gold confetti. When it comes to the big day, end the night with a proper send off.

If you are hosting your wedding in a major metropolis, you might be lucky enough to be near a free midnight fireworks show. Or consider a sparkler send-off — they aren't just for summer brides.



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Romantic Winter Getaways

Warm and sandy locations are popular, but consider escaping somewhere snowy instead. Think of cuddling in front of a roaring fireplace while snow drifts softly outside, falling across a picturesque landscape — a perfect backdrop for staying inside together.

Are you a more active couple? Skiing down a snowy mountain or ice-skating together in a perfectly lit town square offers the perfect mix of activity and romance.

While other couples hit all-inclusive beach paradises, book a honeymoon on the road less traveled by, considering one of the following romantic winter getaways.

LOG CABIN IN LAKE PLACID

Lake Placid, New York

Nothing screams romance in the dead of winter like a cozy lodge nestled in the breath-taking Adirondack Mountains. The village of Lake Placid boasts a crystal-clear lake to boot.

Enjoy candlelit dinners served fireside, sunsets on the deck wrapped in soft, thick

blankets or ice-skating on Mirror Lake. No matter your pleasure, you are sure to enjoy the winter wonderland

SKIING IN ASPEN

Aspen, Colorado

Think glamorous hotel room, snowy Rockies, and fresh powder.

Aspen offers a plethora of ski and resort packages to suit

every type of couple, from those who are eager for the sunrise-to-sunset lift pass to the couples who would rather pass altogether on the skiing and hit the spas instead.

WOLF SAFARI IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

Wyoming, Montana and Idaho
There is no place for mixing

adventure with the great outdoors like a visit to Yellowstone National Park. Because it usually sees a majority of its 3.5 million visitors in the spring and summer, winter offers a completely different — and breath-taking experience.

Visiting the Mammoth Hot Springs is a must, and for the truly adventurous couple, a wolf safari is not to be missed.