

# AFAR

## 13 Tips for Pulling off a Romantic Getaway, According to Romance Concierges



Want to whisk away your honey for a flawless romantic weekend away? We asked 9 experts for their tips.

From planning a private dinner on the beach to executing an elaborate sky-writing proposal, romance concierges make it their personal mission to impress guests, inspire intimacy, and create sweet, sweet memories. But there are more behind-the-scenes machinations that go into making sparks fly than you might think. We asked nine experts from some of the world's most romantic hotels for their tips on how to make it happen—and how to stir up some butterflies in even the longest relationships.

### **1. Smart timing is key**

**[Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort](#)** in Aruba is wildly popular with honeymooners, due in part to the efforts of in-house romance concierge Madeline Fernandez. She starts by quizzing incoming couples about their likes and dislikes and getting to know them on a granular level. Once she has a grasp of their interests, she irons out the logistics. “If they’re doing a late-night tasting menu, don’t plan a private sail first thing the next morning,” advises Fernandez. “Book the spa *after* the horseback riding, not before, so the spa team can soothe away aches.”

### **2. Keep all five senses in mind**

Cassandra Cherney, romance director at the **[Royal Palms Resort and Spa](#)** in Phoenix, Arizona, echoes this attention to detail. “From the type of music playing to the colors of the dinner menu, auditory and visual senses trigger memories and emotion,” says Cherney, who suggests placing your partner’s favorite beverage (champagne, red wine, even a miniature gin & tonic bar) in the room upon check-in. “This way, from the moment the escape begins, they’ll know it’s special.”

### **3. Throwbacks are welcome**

Dr. Pepper Schwartz, romance concierge at **[Salish Lodge & Spa](#)** in Snoqualmie, Washington, seconds the idea of pre-arranging gifts or other personal items to be placed in the room ahead of your arrival: “Surprise your loved one with the song you first danced to at your wedding playing in your guest room when you walk in. Or have the teddy bear you won for them at the fair during your first date to be placed on the bed. Whatever means the most to your special someone, have it waiting to welcome you.”

### **4. Don’t be afraid to be fancy**

As with most thoughtful gestures, personalization is key. Why settle for a generic candlelit dinner or rose petals sprinkled on the bed when you can, as Schwartz suggests, “grab a bottle of champagne and hop in a helicopter ride at dusk”? She’s even helped guests rent out Salish’s entire spa so they can have the steam room, sauna, and therapeutic pools all to themselves. (Hey, it never hurts to ask!)

### **5. Book everything directly through your hotel**

Brittany Lopez, guest services manager and romance concierge at **[Perdido Beach Resort](#)** in Orange Beach, Alabama, recommends making your reservation directly through a hotel rather than a third-party booking site. “Call ahead and let them know it’s a special occasion, then remind them again upon arrival,” advises Lopez. “Often, you’ll get upgraded to a nicer room or even a suite.”

### **6. Skip the romance-focused holidays**

Although it might be surprising to hear with Valentine’s Day just around the corner, Jeanne Alvis, a concierge and romance connoisseur at **Fairmont Hotels’ [Claremont Club & Spa](#)** in Berkeley, California, doesn’t advise waiting for an anniversary or holiday to plan a trip. “Sometimes a romantic getaway for no reason at all is the best kind,” she says. “Plus, you’ll have a better chance of taking advantage of good deals and fewer crowds. Weekdays are a great option, too.”

### **7. Dress to impress**

If the trip is a surprise, you’ll have to do the packing for your partner—or at least drop hints about what they should bring. “Have a fancy dinner planned? Going for a boat ride on the Bay? Make sure your partner packs appropriate attire,” says Alvis. “There is nothing like feeling underdressed to kill the romance. Better yet, surprise him or her with a new outfit or bathing suit they can wear on your romantic outing.”

### **8. Get in touch with your concierge early**

Need help pulling it off? That’s why concierges exist. “We can do our best work when you call us early and tell us how we can help to wow your sweetheart,” says Alvis, who recommends phoning four to six weeks ahead of your arrival. “You don’t have to know exactly what you want to do, either. We can work through it together and come up with something really special, even at the last minute. That’s our job!”

## **9. Proposing? Make it unforgettable**

For guests thinking of getting engaged on their big getaway, the stakes are even higher. Debora Salas, romance specialist on the concierge team at the [Andaz Peninsula Papagayo](#)

in Costa Rica, is charged with organizing proposals. Although she has arranged her fair share of dinners on the beach, she encourages couples who are allergic to more conventional romantic gestures to think outside the box and try an activity they've never done before. "Imagine you hiked an active volcano, like the beautiful Rincón de la Vieja Volcano National Park, and you come back to your hotel room to find it decorated with pictures of that day's hike and a banner that reads, 'Will you join me on a lifetime of adventures?' Or say you booked a sunset cruise that takes you to snorkel coral reefs and caves and when you get back on board, the boat crew holds up a sign that says, 'Out of all the fish in the sea, you are the only one for me. Will you marry me?'" Salas can think of 100 other examples. Point being: Whatever it is you're into, there's a way to make it special.

## **10. Give back**

At boutique hotel [Casa Legado](#) in Bogotá, Colombia, owner and love guru Helena Davila takes this mission very seriously. Depending on an incoming couple's interests, she might book a visit to a craft chocolatier, followed by a wine pairing back at the hotel. Or maybe she'll arrange a private screening of a classic movie in the Casa garden, chased by a warm bath with Colombian salts and native roses. But one of the most romantic and rewarding things a couple can do together, says Davila, is giving back by sharing their love with others in need. "Whether couples want to spend time reading books to children, cleaning up a park, or playing games with the elderly, there is a bond that happens between two people when you make a difference together," says Davila. "Some couples are surprised by just how connecting it can be." In Bogotá, she recommends couples volunteer with 123xmi, an organization that builds parks in impoverished neighborhoods.

## **11. Get deep into the culture you're visiting**

Fully embracing a destination and immersing yourself in the local culture is another path to romantic bliss, says Nowdla Keefe, general manager of [Namale Resort and Spa](#) in Fiji. She recalls an example of a bride wanting traditional Fijian warriors to pose in her wedding photos, but the party was too large to fit everyone in one frame. "The warriors climbed a 30-foot waterfall barefoot to stand atop it and make the shot for her," says Keefe, who adds that the island vibes surfaced again when warriors in traditional dress carried the bride down the aisle on a wooden chariot.

## **12. Keep some free time in your schedule**

The most important piece of advice, however: "Don't overplan your stay," warns Emily Bearman, guest services coordinator for [The American Club Resort](#) in Kohler, Wisconsin, and the go-to staffer for proposal planning and other amorous requests. "People come in with a million ideas of what they want to do during their romantic getaway, but if you're jumping from one activity to the next, you're so worried about keeping your schedule that you're no longer enjoying the moment." One of the loveliest outings she ever helped a guest plan was also one of the simplest: She set up the couple with a loaner BMW through [The American Club Resort's test-drive program](#), tapped a hotel chef to pack them a lunch, and sent them down to scenic Kohler-Andrae State Park for a picnic on the beach at Lake Michigan. It was the perfect gesture.

## **13. Put away your phones**

And here's one final tip we could all stand to follow: Put away your damn phone. If you want to document the trip, try using a disposable camera instead. "Unplugging and focusing on each other is important and will help with reconnecting," says Lopez of Perdido Beach Resort. "And getting the film developed together allows you to relive the weekend all over again."