

BRIDES

HONEYMOONS

Honeymoon in José Ignacio for a Super Stunning South American Retreat

José Ignacio combines some of the best things in life.

By Kathryn Romeyn Published on February 27, 2019

Endless sand, epic sunsets, phenomenal wines, and mouthwatering food are a winning combination for any honeymoon, but add a beguiling fishing village turned beach resort town in South America and one-of-a-kind art-filled digs, and you have a recipe for the trip of a lifetime. This too-good-to-be-true destination? José Ignacio, Uruguay, about two hours' drive from the capital of Montevideo. The good news is, it's real—at least some of the time.

In reality the under-the-radar place is not a total year-round option. Its **peak season** is summer: **mid-December to late February**, one of the shortest around, and during that time it's jammed with Brazilians and Argentines, plus other global jet-setters in on the secret. The months that constitute their fall and spring—September to November and March to April or May—are also quite pleasant weather-wise, and hotels are still open, along with favorite restaurants (most shops are closed), but the winter is inadvisable, as things are less lively.

If a southern hemisphere summer honeymoon sounds intriguing, it is. Expect an unspoiled landscape comprising long stretches of sandy shores—surfing and kitesurfing are popular pursuits here—on one side and pastoral scenes on the other. The latter leads to a true paradise for **vinophiles** and **culinary enthusiasts** that goes by the name **Bodega Garzón**. It's a fantasy of a sustainable winery in the most picturesque of settings, with not only stellar sips—think everything from bubbly to dry rosé to a unique blend of red grapes that creates the bold and delectable Balasto—but also a celebrity chef, Francis Mallmann (he recently cooked at **Gwyneth Paltrow's wedding**), overseeing the outrageously good food.

It's the ultimate place to spend a day eating and drinking, soaking up the views from large balconies and wandering the green grounds, as well as learning about and tasting olive oil at their state-of-the-art facility. For those who just can't get enough, Bodega Garzón also just debuted its private-members club, The Garzón Club, and membership includes the opportunity to personally blend (and choose the aging length and barrel, plus bottle labels) a barrel of vino. (Access to a world-class private golf course is another major perk.) For some that might be the ultimate way to commemorate your **wedding anniversary**—imagine opening a fresh bottle year after year to see how it's evolved with time.



For a famed gaucho-love classic there are carne-filled *asado* barbecues at [Estancia Vik](#), one of the most original boutique hotels anywhere. The weekly communal dinners represent an explosion of flavor from the Uruguayan grill and bottles of Vik wine (the owners have a vineyard in Chile) but also an opportunity to experience magical touches in [one-of-a-kind guest rooms](#) and suites—each conceived by a different South American artist with a stimulating amount of creativity. Even the pool is special, featuring lights on the bottom that reflect the constellations above. The subterranean wine cellar is an incredible place for a super-romantic dinner for two, while their extensive verdant grounds are a fairytale backdrop for a beautiful horseback ride.



For beach landscapes as opposed to pastoral vistas, Estancia has two sister properties in town, [Playa Vik](#), which doubles as the ultimate architectural [buyout venue for a small destination wedding](#), and [Bahia Vik](#), whose bungalow-like rooms and suites are dotted along sand dunes, with perfect views of the sun setting over the Atlantic Ocean and larger town of Punta del Este in the distance (there art lovers should visit the magical [Museo-Taller de Casapueblo](#)). There, too, each displays singular art, a theme that carries into the restaurant and lobby's Technicolor ceiling murals. There, relaxation is a no-brainer at one of three pools or on the beach itself, just steps away, while there's always a drink and game of billiards waiting, too. In high season beach parties are the nightly ritual, whereas the rest of the time a fantastically chill atmosphere pervades, thanks to mellow locals who appreciate the good life.