



**Switzerland.**

# Market situation Destination Weddings.

Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau (SCIB).

[MySwitzerland.com/weddings](https://myswitzerland.com/weddings)





# 1 MARKET SITUATION AND OUTLOOK.

## 1.1 Economic situation

The destination wedding market size has grown exponentially in recent years. It will grow from \$27.64 billion in 2023 to \$36.49 billion in 2024 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 32.0%. The growth observed in the historical period can be attributed to a growing desire for unique experiences, enhanced affordability of travel, the influence of social media on travel trends, an increase in wedding tourism, and the allure of cultural and exotic destinations.

Anticipated growth in the forecast period is expected due to the ongoing desire for exclusivity in wedding experiences, an expanded array of destination options, a shift towards more intimate gatherings, an increased focus on sustainability within the wedding industry, and the anticipated global economic recovery.



The expanding use of social media is propelling the destination wedding market. Social platforms play a crucial role in wedding planning and communication, influencing how couples plan and document their special day.

Destination weddings often extend to honeymoon trips in the chosen country, which touristic spending records an average spending of USD8,200 on honeymoon for the US market. Majority of guests and family members attending weddings also extend their trip at the destination which contribute further to the tourist spending and overnights.





## 1.2 Situation of the wedding industry & trends

According to various wedding websites (eg. The Knot, Brides) and renowned international wedding planner Sarah Haywood, key trends in 2024-2025 are identified as below:

### **Alternative Welcome Parties & Farewell Events**

Destination experiences of a lifetime are ones you can host the week of your wedding. Alternative experiences and unconventional parties at destination weddings have seen their day (including wedding guest dress codes), but these feel-good, show-up-and-be-present events are increasingly becoming more popular at destination wedding events. Popular choices in Switzerland including welcome dinner on lake cruises and authentic cheese tasting at Swiss chalet-style restaurants.

### **Cultural Immersion**

Celebrating your destination wedding in paradise comes with many perks, like adding a bit of cultural flair to your special day. Embrace the diverse traditions and support local talent, or even surprise your guests with unique welcome gifts from vendors. Popular cultural traditions in Switzerland including having alpine horns as entertainment, cheese tasting, offering local wine as wedding giveaways.

### **Intimate Destination Wedding Guest Lists**

Destination weddings are known for their smaller guest lists; wedding couples wish to create the most intimate memories and experience with their selected guests and family members. According to SCIB record's in 2023, US couples enjoyed celebration of 30-50 guests, while Indian brides and grooms host large weddings of 150-300 guests whilst they were in Switzerland.

### **Multiple-days celebration**

As confirmed by many destination wedding planners, one can observe that every bridal couple and their guests typically stay for three nights in Switzerland. During this time, planners also help organizing various activities and accommodations, adding significant value to their overall experience. We believe that by attracting more couples and tourists, we can collectively contribute to the growth of this unique market.

### **Lead time**

While lots of research and preparation is required for the planning of a destination wedding, booking time is getting shorter and many couples want to visualise their dream within a short period of time. While 12-month booking window is still the norm, renowned



international wedding planner Sarah Haywood has executed a few weddings in Lake Como and south of France in longer lead time of only 4 months during 2022-2023.

### **Outdoor setting in the Swiss nature**

Despite of the wide range of venues and historical hotels one can find in Switzerland, destination wedding couples appreciate the most the nature and outdoor setting. Symbolic ceremonies, drinks receptions and in more cases the wedding banquets are held in the scenic outdoor environment. “Plan B” is of course needed for bad weather and constructing a transparent outdoor tent marquee is a popular solution.

### **Destination Wedding Mood Boards**

As dress codes are up to the interpretation of each guest, the aesthetics-driven generation is propelling another trend forward: wedding dress codes presented in the form of mood boards. With an amalgamation of events filling destination wedding itineraries, couples are increasingly providing creative direction for each festivity outlined throughout the wedding weekend. This allows guests to get a feel for each event while grasping how to prepare attire for the evening affair or brunch. Destination wedding celebration is also an unique moment to create the most “instagramable” events.

### **Sustainability**

Eco-friendly weddings in natural locations gain traction in the destination wedding market. The trend reflects a consumer preference for sustainable celebrations, as demonstrated by couples' choices in incorporating environment-friendly elements into their weddings. For instance, according to a 2022 real weddings survey by Theknot, one-third of the couples believed that the vendors should be more proactive in providing eco-friendly solutions (eg. vendors to use recyclable catering boxes and cutlery for their crew meals).

## **1.3 The RFP situation**

Since the launching of destination wedding promotion, SCIB has prioritised long-haul markets with key focus in USA, India, southeast Asia, GCC, China, UK and Brazil.

According to destination wedding market report, North America was the largest region in the destination wedding market share in 2023. This is further confirmed by the number of enquiries and weddings (carried out) recorded in the SCIB database, of which 50% were from US couples.

While we continue to build our network and marketing effort in these prioritised markets, we support new and existing wedding enquiries across the globe. New enquiries often come via direct contact on Instagram and emails, as well as via destination wedding



planners based in both Switzerland and abroad. Enquires from expats living in Switzerland are also counted in our database.

## 1.4 Challenges

### **Mindset of Swiss venues and hoteliers**

While we recognize and applaud the efforts put forth, many Swiss-based wedding planners brought to our attention a challenge which they regularly encounter in their interactions with hotels and event managers. Unfortunately, there is a notable resistance, occasionally stemming from a competitive mindset between external event planners like wedding planners VS venue in-charge. This has led to a lack of understanding about the significant contribution event and wedding planners bring to hotels in terms of paying clients.

Resistance such as “no”, “we cannot”, “not permitted” is often answered and destination wedding planners found it extremely difficult to operate in Switzerland in comparison to working with venues in Lake Como for instance. Italian venues often offer additional commission to attract foreign bookings which further hinder the potential in growing the destination wedding segment in Switzerland.

GAEA Design which is one of the most successful destination wedding planners based in Switzerland, they highly request SCIB to sensitize and motivate Swiss hoteliers and vendors in fostering a closer relationship so that joint effort amongst all Swiss suppliers would help to enhance the overall experience for couples and their guests.

### **Shortage of skilled staff**

Since the outbreak of pandemic, many venues and high-end hotels continue to face challenges in sourcing for skilled staff. The shortage of hospitality professional also hinder the overall experience of the destination couples and their guests, and this further affects the reputation of Switzerland as a luxury wedding destinations.

### **Commission**

There are often disputes between wedding planners and hotels (plus wedding venues) on the subject of commission whereas in many venues in Italy and France, commission payment to the planners is a common practise for a successful collaborazion.

### **Sound and time limit for the celebration**

While every couples wish to extend their celebrations until late, many venues (especially outdoor) have restricted policies on sound limit and ending time of the party. We hereby recommend flexibility and understanding from both venues and wedding couples, so that comprises could be made without raising any anger during the celebrations.



## Availability and capacity of the venue

Wedding peak season for both local and international market takes place between May – September and wedding party on Saturdays is still the norm. Availability thus is limited during the peak season. In addition, capacity of some venues (especially in Ticino) limits the type of bookings they can host. Indian and Asian weddings are challenging and thus often these enquiries are declined at the early stage of enquiry.

## Catering and cultural elements for certain ethnicity

In particular for Indian weddings, authentic catering is a must and only venues where facilities are available could host this ethnic group and benefit from the growing trend of incoming weddings from India. In some cases, venue provides exterior space for a temporary kitchen and in other cases, Indian catering team are brought in from sister's hotels in India (eg. Accor/ Fairmont hotel group)

## B2B vs B2C

While the expertise of SCIB remains in B2B across sectors in meetings, incentives, associations as well as destination weddings, wedding promotion requires a more B2C focus in particular in today's world when social media plays an important role. There is a huge potential for further marketing effort should SCIB (ST) decides to continue promoting this niche sector.

Luxury wedding blogs for future brides & grooms, wedding magazines, pinterest, Instagram are few of the key channels for further promotions to B2C.

## 2 TARGETS.

- Continue building up wedding contacts with qualified wedding planners and suppliers in our database
- Represent Switzerland in luxury wedding events and find new B2B contacts (eg. DWP Congress, RSVP, Engage! Summit)
- Sales calls and local marketing activities conducted by priority markets
- Marketing campaign identified by each market (eg. social media campaign for the Indian community in GCC)
- Content creation and management on myS.com/weddings
- Inspiration images and videos sharing on Instagram @myswitzerlandweddings
- Bi-annual e-Newsletter for qualified B2B database
- Hosting of study trip for international luxury wedding planners and media
- Hosting B2B event and round table for Swiss destination wedding planners and suppliers

- Explore new sales and marketing opportunity for destination wedding promotion and showcase

### 3 DETAILED MARKETING ACTIVITIES.

Further details of past, present and future marketing activities can be found at [www.stnet.ch](http://www.stnet.ch), which can be accessed using your personal username and password.