



GOBIERNO DE  
**MÉXICO**

**TURISMO**

SECRETARÍA DE TURISMO



# MEXICAN NATIVE WEDDINGS



**BAJA  
CALIFORNIA**  
GOBIERNO DEL ESTADO

**TURISMO**

Secretaría de Turismo

## INTRODUCTION

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Native weddings are important for destinations in Mexico as they seek to rescue the cultural identity, traditions and customs of the indigenous population and of the ethnic groups that still exist. In order to perform these ceremonies, respecting and highlighting the local culture, we need a correct integration of the entire community with vendors. In this way, the local community and companies are tied economically, adding value to the cultural resources, and seeking sustainability and a balance in social inclusion in each of the destinations.

The native people of Mexico are part of its vast cultural wealth, conveyed in its traditions, music, dance, beliefs, symbols, ancestral techniques, clothing, gastronomy, etc. The latter combined with its natural resources, and its specialized vendors, make it possible to perform different types of native weddings. This variety can satisfy the needs and desires of each couple, particularly the new generations that are eager to find, in ancestral traditions, unique experiences worthy of being remembered for a lifetime.

Therefore, the Ministry of Tourism of Mexico [SECTUR] through its General Direction of Tourism Product Innovation division, promotes local culture in Romance Tourism. The focus is not only on the indigenous weddings, but seeking the integration of tourism wedding services and experiences around that special moment. With this initiative, the incorporation of the local community contributes to raising their quality of life.

These catalogs are the result of a coordinated effort between the Destination Wedding Specialist Association (DWSA), local Tourism Boards, Ministries of Tourism of several Mexican states and specialized tourist destination vendors, together with the Ministry of Tourism of Mexico. These entities took on the concerted effort to preserve native weddings and create innovative tourism services aimed at Romance Tourism, differentiating the value that gives them a distinctive touch and identity. This included seeking the benefit to small and medium-sized companies, as well as social development with gender, inclusion and diversity perspectives.

It is important to mention that this work responds directly to the new tourism policy which seeks to have these new activities benefit and strengthen the communities, and to reach more sectors of the population, with balanced development in these regions of the country.

We hope that these documents are not only useful but interesting, and that they contribute to your experience of living, enjoying and falling in love with Mexico.

## CEREMONY

Kumiai Ceremony

## DESTINATIONS

Ensenada

Valle de Guadalupe

San José de la Zorra

San Antonio Necua

## ETHNICITY

Kumiai



The name Kumiai historically used by the Mexican population to refer to an indigenous group as well as their language. This name is the Castilianized form of the word kumeya, which comes from the Yuman languages and means those of the high ones. Kumiai speakers call their language tipai, which means people.

Kumiai, for them, also means "coastal" because they are next to the Pacific coast. Their ancestors frequently visited part of the coast because of the food, such as abalone, choro and many shellfish. There are ancient sites and indigenous settlements where mortars, metates, arrowheads and ancestral pieces of various shells have been found.

They inhabit the southwest of the United States and northwestern Mexico, predominating in the area of Tecate and Valle de Guadalupe. Evidence holds that the origins of the group lie about 1,000 years ago.

The Kumiai consist of 2 related groups: The Ipai and the Tipai. The traditional lands of the two coastal groups were separated by the San Diego River: the northern ipai (extending from Escondido to Lake Henshaw) and the southern tipai (including Laguna Mountains, Ensenada, and Tecate).

Currently it is estimated that less than 50 individuals speak the ancestral language of the group, so the majority of the ethnic group have English or Spanish as their mother tongue.

The Kumiai community lives in an area of holm oaks, as it is known that near where the holm oaks grow there is water and food. Kumiai learn to be good cowboys as children. Riding, lassoing, herding are 3 skills that are developed as they grow. They have animals like cows and sheep. They stand out for the elaboration of beautiful basketry based on natural fibers such as reed or willow. In their gastronomy the acorn atole stands out; their dance and extensive knowledge of the use of endemic plants is also important.

For their native dances, they use the rhythmic sound of rattles made with gourds that are cleaned inside and out, seeds are introduced and sealed with an oak stick.

## KUMIAI WEDDING

Traditionally, Kumiai wedding ceremonies have been reserved exclusively for members of their indigenous community, however, this community is very pacifist and currently there is an opening to celebrate weddings of couples who do not belong to their ethnic group, this in order to show their culture to the world and keep their traditions alive.

This native ceremony is celebrated using elements from nature, that is why is preferably to be held in open spaces. Either in the beautiful country landscapes of their community in Valle de Guadalupe (including San José de la Zorra or San Antonio Necua) and/or in winery spaces or in open patios facing the sea, in Ensenada. There is no "one God" or "one altar", but the shelter of a superior being.

The officiant is a highly respected older person, he is a representative of the traditional authorities that is part of the wise and older people. If she is a woman, she wears a manta skirt, a colorful hand-embroidered blouse, leather sandals, and her hair is braided with ribbons and feathers. She provides a beautiful message of love sheltered by a superior being in the Kumiai language which is simultaneously translated into Spanish by another member of the community.

The couple to be wed can wear the classic wedding attire; but they can also wear an outfit like a kumiai couple does: Women with a leather skirt / blouse and seed necklaces or other natural elements such as earrings made of handmade fabrics. The men are dressed in cowboy clothing with a special feather headdress, simple (without being a plume).

The ceremony is enlivened with harmonious songs in their own language performed by indigenous children who also play instruments such as maraca-type rattles filled with seeds, made of gourd or bule, also known as "jmal".

To seal the couple's love, the officiant gives the couple a special herbal infusion to drink (kumiai secret) which they drink in a beautiful ceremonial pot made off clay with 2 handles. The couple and their guests are blessed with natural sage incense during the celebration.

Finally, the couple gets a certificate engraved on pigskin, containing the names of the couple as well as a significant spiritual phrase, for example "The light enlightens you". As a farewell to the couple, they are given a bottle of wine prepared organically by members of the community, containing special ingredients such as honey.



### OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**Place:** Valle de Guadalupe, San José de la Zorra, San Antonio Necua o Ensenada

**Duration:** 30 minutes.

**Requirements / Formalities:** None.

**Elements used:** Sage incense, ancestral pot, herbal drink, pigskin-based certificate, organic wine.

**Dress code:** Optional of classic wedding attire or native clothing.

**Other information:**

- In support of the Kumiai Community, more bottles of wine can be purchased to give as favors for the guests. There are 5 varieties available in their cellars.
- There are members of the Kumiai community who can advise the bride and groom to choose the ethnic clothing based on leather and cowboy for the native wedding.
- The children's choir may wear more traditional attire.
- We have the service for people with intellectual disabilities.



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