Babymoon on board

Chances are your next few holidays will revolve around travel cots rather than cocktails. ALEX DAVIES recommends you make the most of quality couple time before bub comes along by going on a romantic babymoon

The two of you are road-testing prams like you're on an episode of *Top Gear*, debating sunshine versus buttercup yellow for the nursery, and are blurry-eyed from browsing baby name books. Yep, pregnancy definitely introduces a whole new set of relationship milestones as you and your partner get ready for two to become three... or four... or even five.

But while the practical preparation for a new baby is important, it's also a good idea to take some quality couple time before your bub comes along, especially as so much is about to change in your lives. That's why booking yourselves a babymoon (otherwise known as an excuse for a romantic getaway during pregnancy) could be a great move.

"It gives you time and space to reconnect, reinforce that strong, stable foundation, and just feel fab as a couple. Which is important as relationships can go on the backburner when a baby first arrives and is the priority," says clinical psychologist Jo Lamble.

"Think back to when you first got together and were in that new love bubble you both put all your emphasis on. This eventually pops as your relationship matures and takes normal life into account, but now this babymoon is a great chance to re-create another little protective cocoon around you both." Convinced? Thought so. Not sure where to start organising a holiday with a bump? Don't worry, we've got you covered. Suitcases at the ready, mama. ›

Pick your location

"This holiday is like a second honeymoon, and for most this means pampering, good food and relaxation, whether it's nearby or abroad," says Layla Roberts, founder of Concierge Connections, a PA company with a focus on travel. "Venues offer packages for expectant couples, including spa treatments and late check-outs but, if you do it safely, now can also be a good opportunity to try something a bit different – walking in New Zealand will be harder with a baby!" Layla recommends narrowing down your options by asking yourselves questions. How far do you want to travel, and are you happy with more than one journey? What's your budget? What about the destination's weather, especially if you're contending with pregnancy hot flushes? Going on a babymoon doesn't have to mean sweltering under a parasol on the sand – Scotland's Balmoral Castle was the destination for Prince William and second-time mum-to-be Kate!

Above all, be sure your destination isn't too remote and that you'll have access to good medical care, especially if your pregnancy is high-risk (in which case your doctor may recommend staying closer to home). Seek medical advice just to be safe. "Also remember that travel vaccinations aren't recommended while you're expecting, often because they haven't been tested on pregnant women," explains Dr Ronald McCoy, spokesperson for The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. "Some medicines, including certain anti-malarial drugs, aren't suitable either."

Time it right

Every pregnancy is different but, as a rule of thumb, the safest time to travel is during your second trimester, so between 13 and 28 weeks. Nausea or sickness has often eased by that stage (thank goodness!) and energy levels can improve, which is perfect if you've got sightseeing or moonlit walks in mind. Wanting to take a flight can also govern when you go on your break. "Check with the airline as to how late in pregnancy they'll allow you to travel as, for most, it's around 35 weeks, and some require a signed certificate from your doctor," says Dr McCoy. "This is in case of complications, and also because flying up to six weeks before full-term has been associated with triggering premature labour. If you have certain medical conditions or are carrying multiples, your doctor may also advise against flying as there is generally a greater chance of babies coming early in those instances." In that case, it may be better to book your babymoon somewhere you can take a car to.

Do the practical prep

If a last-minute scramble around for the passports is your usual pre-holiday style (us, too), now's the time to get a bit more organised. "Travel insurance is especially important when you're expecting," explains Layla. "Check what the medical cover includes with regards to your pregnancy, as well as cancellation policies." It's also smart to take any medical notes and important information about your pregnancy with you, as well as a scanned copy saved on your phone, iPad, or in an email in case your luggage is lost. "I always register a trip outside of Australia with www.smartraveller.gov.au," says Dr McCoy. "It's free to fill in your travel itinerary and emergency contacts, which the government then has access to in case you need to be contacted or helped while away. I then email a copy to friends or family, too."

Boost couple time

This break is all about reconnecting with your partner before the new addition to your family arrives and things inevitably get hectic, so make the most of the time together by looking back as well as forwards. "I think it's great to reminisce and go over your time as a couple," says Jo. "Have a laugh over the funny moments in your past and talk about your favourite memories. It's why you're together in the first place and you're about to add to that story." And if you haven't discussed it already, this babymoon can also be a good chance to work out what Jo calls your 'parenting recipe'. Over a three-course dinner or round of delicious mocktails, of course. "Talk about your childhoods and upbringings, what you'd love to replicate in how you raise your own little one, and what you'd like to leave behind and do differently," she suggests. "Bring in elements from both of your experiences so you're on the same page."

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF

Get the most out of your babymoon by staying comfortable and safe while away.

FLY SMART

Go for an aisle seat to make toilet trips easier. Also talk to your doctor if your flight is long-haul. "The risk of DVT increases in pregnancy, especially if you've had it before, there's a family history or you're carrying multiples," explains Dr McCoy.

DRIVE CAREFULLY

Before you head off in that taxi, make sure your seatbelt is positioned around your bump with the sash below and shoulder strap over, not across it.

BE SUN SAFE

"Your body has an extra source of heat with your baby, but it still has the same mechanisms to keep up with and offload this warmth, so you may struggle to tolerate hot climates," explains Dr McCoy. "Stay hydrated, use sun cream, avoid the hottest part of the day, rest and be careful sunbathing."

ENJOY PAMPERING

If you'll be racing to the spa after check-in, tell your therapist you're expecting so she can tailor your treatment. And steer clear of anywhere you might overheat, including steam rooms, saunas and hot tubs..

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