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### Babymoos: One Last Trip Before Baby! by Kim Green-Spangler

Picture this . . . you're experiencing swollen ankles, feeling a bit sluggish, and perhaps a little unsteady and unable to sleep comfortably. This sure wouldn't seem like the ideal time to vacation, right? In any other case that may be true, but on a babymoon, while those physical symptoms may very well come into play, they'd be balanced by the emotional feelings of happiness at being able to get away, the prospect of rejuvenation prior to familial growth, and downright bliss from a few days of self-indulgent pampering. Sounds fun doesn't it?

#### Babymoos Defined

What exactly is a babymoon? Come on, did you really expect honeymooners to have all the fun? Everyone knows that pregnancy is just the precursor to a significant change of life once the baby arrives, or if they're expecting, they soon will. To this end, "babymoos" have become *all* the rave over the last three to four years, and have had significant coverage on almost all of the major networks. However, those in the business of babymoos know that couples have been taking "last hurrah" trips before babies have been scheduled to make their arrivals for years. We're told the catchy phrase, media hype and celebrity buzz has just propelled the concept into the mainstream in recent years. The term babymoon was coined by Sheila Kitzinger, the British author of [The Year After Childbirth](#), over ten years ago in 1996.



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Although originally intended to be enjoyed by two, there are two types of babymoos, pre and post baby. Pre-babymoos were invented to provide parents-to-be with a final opportunity to enjoy their "coupledom" without the responsibility of worrying about children. Let's face it, you can have the most trusted sitter in the world watching your children, but if you're away from them you're still going to worry - even if it's just a little bit. So, a first pregnancy is indeed the last opportunity parents-to-be have to enjoy each other, relax, and rejuvenate in preparation for parenthood.

Post-babymoos are designed to provide new parents and any siblings the chance to bond with their newest addition in a glorious secluded destination, away from well-meaning, but often unannounced visitors, in an atmosphere separate from everyday demands and intrusions. In fact, that was just what British author Sheila Kitzinger, had in mind when she coined the term.

#### Babymoon Specialties and Destinations

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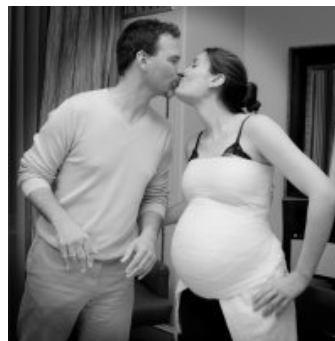
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Like honeymoons, parents can make their experience as unique to them as they like. Location be it exotic, local, by sea, short, long, or secluded, can be selected by parents-to-be. Many businesses have even taken this to a new level. Sandra Bardsley of [Joyful Birth Babymoons](#) began offering babymoon packages in 1985. Ms. Bardsley, a renowned childbirth educator, nurse and author, offers couples an atmosphere where they "can get away for a fun, romantic adventure while also learning about childbirth and early parenting--and the emotional and relationship aspect of preparation."



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Set in various romantic and exotic locations in elegant hotel rooms, a [Joyful Birth Babymoon](#) includes: art activities such as belly casting, movement and exercise activities to prepare for labor and birth, the creation of a Birth Journal, couples massage, Lamaze classes and private planning sessions with Ms. Bardsley. This is an excellent way for parents to connect with one another while preparing for childbirth, without having to schedule multiple weekly sessions, or all-day Saturday classes.

Karen Marie of [Belly Beautiful Portraits](#), is a former nurse who specializes in maternity and newborn photography. She has worked with [Joyful Birth Babymoons](#) photographing couples enjoying their babymoon activities. Located in Sacramento, California, Karen Marie feels that, "having memories from your birth is just as important as a wedding," and she is willing to travel to accompany parents in the delivery room to produce stunning, discreet and memorable photography.

Some spas even offer postpartum packages just for Moms and newborns/infants, sans dad! [The Greenhouse](#) in Arlington, Texas currently offers a "Baby & Me" package, twice a year for moms and babies eight-weeks and older. The pair are treated to chauffeur service, breakfast in bed each morning and their very own nanny! In addition, moms can learn about baby massage, food and so much more, and take classes provided by experts, all with their babies.

According to Mike Vegis of [The Sanctuary](#) resort at Kiawah Island, South Carolina, they "were one of the first hotels to have a babymoon package when the trend started almost 3 years ago." With a doctor on premises, directly across from [The Sanctuary](#), this resort will provide babymooners with a sense of medical security complete in luxurious surroundings. The [Bliss Before Baby](#)" package is available starting \$1,450 for a two-night stay.

These are just the tip of the iceberg! An online search for babymoons, babymoon packages, babymoon destinations, and babymoon spas will get provide parents with oodles of information on both traditional and specialty offerings.

### Planning for Your Babymoon

Planning a pre-babymoon can be a little tricky. Many expecting moms deal with morning sickness and excessive fatigue during the first trimester, so travel during this time could be draining, or at the very least, less enjoyable than during the second trimester. However, it should also be noted most doctors limit travel at about 32 weeks, airlines require doctor permission for expecting moms, and cruise lines stop moms from boarding their vessels at 24 weeks. Thus, a woman with a typical pregnancy has a window from about 13 weeks through 24 weeks, though the American College of Obstetricians recommends weeks 18 through 24 as the safest time for a pregnant woman to travel.

In addition, below are a few of the factors pregnant women should take into consideration before planning their babymoons:

- **Health wise:**  
Make sure all immunizations are up to date when traveling, even if staying state-side. Discuss all travel plans with your doctor/midwife prior to making them, and get his/her opinion. Note, that it is also a good idea to receive written permission from a doctor to have on-hand while traveling. Verify insurance coverage prior to leaving home and make sure your destination has medical care available at all times. Also, be sure to research your destination to determine if their medical practices are what your doctor would consider safe.
- **Comfort wise:**  
Don't be afraid to ask and/or scope out bathroom locations in advance, wherever you are. Avoid excessive walking and prior to leaving, you may want to inquire about support hose and/or a prenatal cradle to fend off back and leg pain. Pack comfortable shoes with arch support. Pack plenty of sunblock, and spend as much time in the water as possible. There's nothing better than water while pregnant as it will provide a welcome relief from the extra baby bump weight. If possible, put room-service on the menu as a must-do. There's nothing worse than being hungry in the middle of the night and either having to wait until morning, or make dad get up to go get you something. Take frequent rest stops if you're exploring, keep feet elevated as much as possible and

to avoid stress and unnecessary walking. The objective is to relax, distress, and enjoy each other's company.

Lisa Petrocelli, owner and publisher of [www.babymoonguide.com](http://www.babymoonguide.com), offers parents-to-be the following advice when considering babymoon planning due to recent economic conditions, "With the current state of the economy, some expectant couples may feel they can't afford a babymoon or shouldn't spend the money on one. I would tell these couples to view the babymoon as an investment in their relationship as a couple - a relationship that will undoubtedly undergo some stressful times as they enter the world of parenthood."



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In order to stretch travel dollars, Lisa suggests that couples:

1. Travel out of season - If the timing works, consider taking a babymoon out of season. By traveling to seasonal destinations such as Florida and the Caribbean during non-peak times, couples can save anywhere from 15%-50% on the cost of a babymoon vacation package.
2. Have a flexible schedule - Many resorts and inns offer deep discounts for mid-week stays. Couples can save anywhere from 25%-50% on the price of a babymoon packages by simply arranging for a mid-week getaway.
3. Stay close - Babymoon at a destination that is within a 1-2 hour drive to cut down on transportation costs.
4. Consider an Inn or B&B - Typically (but not always), you'll pay more at large resorts with lots of onsite amenities versus small inns or B&Bs.

In addition, if you have your heart set on a specific resort, location, or package, don't be afraid to go right to the source and ask for a discount, package, etc. Neither Disney nor Royal Caribbean cruises offer specific babymoon packages, but each offer services that will make parents-to-be feel pampered all the same. You'll be surprised how many specials are never advertised, but are available for the asking. Also, as babymoons continue to gain in popularity and become a mainstay in travel options, more and more facilities will offer packages. Who knows, your request at a facility unfamiliar with babymoons, may help pave the way for future parents-to-be.

Babymoons have been around for years, but it's nice to see that a catchy name has brought this practice to the forefront. Parenting is the toughest job around, and parents deserve this time alone before baby arrives, or time together as a family after baby arrives to get things off to a more relaxed start.

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