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Delivering relaxation

Pre-baby vacations help soon-to-be parents indulge

Posted By **VIVIAN SONG, SUN MEDIA**

Posted 11 days ago

Sarah Simpson and Christopher Smith learned they were going to have a child while teaching and living in Japan.

It was an unexpected surprise, upending their childless, spontaneous, "fly-by-the-seat-of-the - pants" lifestyle as a young, adventure-seeking married Canuck couple.

What they needed, Smith decided, was a getaway, or "babymoon," to help his wife out of her first-trimester funk and regroup as a couple.

"We were working full time and it was hard to find that time to stop and take stock of what was happening," said Simpson. "It was important to get away during the calm before the storm."

It was to be a culinary getaway weekend for the vegetarian couple, who were finding it challenging to dine in a meat-rich Japanese culture. Smith whisked her away to Seoul, Korea, where the couple feasted on Buddhist temple cuisine, visited with friends and strolled the open-air markets.

Babymooning has become a popular vacation theme for expectant couples, said Lisa Petrocelli, who heads the website [babymoonguide.com](#), as it's the last hurrah before lives are irretrievably changed.

"It's important because it helps you reconnect as a couple, especially if you're a first-time parent. You don't know what you're heading into," Petrocelli said from Pennsylvania. "It's a chance to back up, check in on your relationship and make sure you're as strong as you can be because the first few months are going to be tough."

Babymooning packages typically include a prenatal massage for the expectant mother, a kitchen that caters to capricious cravings, and special pillows. Couples massages are also common to include the dads-to-be.

Signature Vacations has had more than 12,000 couples book a babymooning package with them this winter since they began offering it last year, said Courtney Armstrong.

Simpson's second babymoon was in stark contrast to the city-excitement of Seoul.

During her third trimester, the couple rented an isolated villa on an island off the coast of Japan, where they walked along the beach collecting stones, stayed in their pyjamas all day and were in bed by 8 p. m.

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It was during these babymoons that the couple discussed their plans to stay in Japan, where Ezra, now 21 months, would be born. They threw around baby names -- torturing their parents with the mock name of Vladimir -- developed a birthing plan, and reassured each other about their new life trajectory into unexpected parenthood.

"I think spending time together was important," Smith said. "Talking about the need to do that in the future, to get more time to ourselves and maintain our relationship."

The trips helped them feel in sync with each other as parents, said Simpson, now a writer for the Canadian parenting website [babyontheway.ca](#), as a cherubic-faced Ezra scampered around the nursery, his golden-blond locks bouncing with each excited step.

"I think it's a good example to set for your child, that you and your spouse have a life together and it's not all about the kids," she added. "It's easy to want to stay home and be with the child all the time, but I think the best thing to do is make time for yourself."

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For couples who are expecting, these vacations give the mom and dad-to-be one last hurrah before the baby comes. Try to go during your second or third trimester when morning sickness and fatigue have passed so that foods and mas-sages can be fully enjoyed.

POST-NATAL BABYMOON:

Less common than pre-natal baby moons, some couples take a baby moon after the birth to connect with the baby as a new family and escape overbearing relatives. They're family-oriented resorts which offer babysitting services as well.

PACKAGES

Signature Vacations offers baby moon packages to Mexico, Dominican Republic and Cuba. Visit signaturevacations.com for more

details.

CANADIAN BABYMOON PACKAGES:

- * Amore by the Sea, Victoria, B. C.
- * Hockley Valley Resort, Orangeville, Ont.
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- * Le Chateau Bonne Entente, Quebec City, Que.

Source: babymoonguide.com

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