



Your no-cost babymoon

By Jonathon Reynolds

She wants a weekend away before the baby comes. You'd rather put the cash toward that growing credit-card bill. Show her you can take care of it all with a super-deluxe, whatever-her-heart-desires babymoon—all from the comfort of your own home.

THE SPECIFICS

If you're not familiar this word yet, you probably will be soon: "babymoon." It's a chance for the two of you to reconnect before baby comes. After all, it may be the last time for a few years that you're actually alone in your house, never mind have the luxury to finish a sentence or savour a meal.

But times are tough, and hotels and spas got cut out of the budget back in early '08. What's a guy to do? As expectant fathers we feel that there's nothing we can do during the pregnancy—after all, she's doing all the hard work growing the baby.

It's all about the "P" word, gentlemen. That's right, pampering. And if we roll up our sleeves and do it ourselves, she'll appreciate both the act and the thought that we've put into it—and it hardly costs a thing!

FIRST, A COUPLE OF RULES

This is not about you—it's all about her. And for her, it is all about the baby growing inside. Even if the mother of your child is a base-jumping, free-climbing adventure diva, chances are this will change during pregnancy. Whether it's a walk in the woods or a cuddle on the couch, be aware of her limits right now. These are different for everyone. Some women don't feel comfortable in a bath while pregnant and others relax in bubbles regularly. Once again, it is not about you, so don't plan something she's not into.

It's also not about how much it costs, it's about how you do it. If there is ever a time for a man to learn how to be sensitive, it is now. Not only is your loved one going through huge hormonal fluctuations while watching and feeling her whole body change, she is also unsure about how *you* feel about how she looks now. This is the time to make sure your partner knows that she is the most important woman in the world and that she is beautiful—even more beautiful—when she is pregnant. Make sure you let her know how you feel. Yeah, I know feelings are not your strong point, but suck it up.

Breakfast in bed: Although morning sickness strikes many women, there's still something wonderful about not having to get up to eat. So let her sleep in and prepare her breakfast for her. Yes, this means you need to get a clue what she likes. If someone brought me oatmeal, prunes, plain yoghurt, and tea with milk, I would have just rolled back over, but my wife loved it! Don't forget: Doing the dishes is also part of the deal.



Tip: If you have no idea what your wife would enjoy, ask her friends! You'll earn points for doing your research *and* making them jealous.

Treat her to a light massage: Carrying an extra 20 to 30 pounds around gives an mom-to-be plenty of aches and pains, but you can help. Have her lie on her side and make sure she's comfortable. Focus on those lower back muscles and the muscles around her neck. Avoid the abdomen and make sure your strokes are light, especially on the legs and thighs. Use a nice massage oil that will be safe to use on the baby in a few months.

Give her a foot massage and paint her toenails: While you're busy working, talk about your future plans, baby names, and make sure you take time to enjoy the parental anticipation. Sharing these thoughts often gets lost in the preparation for the new family addition.

Watch a favorite movie together—lady's choice: This is a time for chick flicks, even if she's a fan of *Alien*. Ask her what she wants to watch, or choose a light comedy with a baby as part of the plot. Some pregnancy winners—*Juno*, *Angie*, *Father of the Bride*, and *Junior*. And if you really want to up the ante, read to her instead!



Lafe's Organic Baby Oil, \$16, lafes.com



Burt's Bees Mama Bee Leg & Foot Creme, \$9, burtsbees.com



OPI Sahara Sapphire and Venus di Violet nail color



TIP: Get all the fixin's: Popcorn, her favorite candy, and a bubbly lemonade



When you're feelin' so money

Consider "The Ultimate Babymoon Package" at The Westin Resort & Spa, Los Cabos (westinloscabos.com). For \$328 per night you get:

- Sparkling cider and chocolate-covered strawberries when you arrive
- Breakfast for bed for two each morning
- A prenatal massage and pedicure for mom
- An in-room dessert for two each evening



BONUS POINTS

Bring the spa to her by splurging on Mama Mio's Supermama Kit (shower cream, body buff, body cream, and balm), \$100, mamamio.com

Create some ambiance: No, I'm not talking about cleaning up your dirty laundry, or even repainting! I'm just suggesting adding flowers or scented candles to each room or bringing in special accents to make it feel special and different. A string of Christmas lights (even in June) can add a festive, happy atmosphere to any room. Be creative!

Make her a nice dinner: If you're no chef, then call a great restaurant that offers takeout and delivery. There are also some prepared gourmet dishes available at most grocers.

Draw her a bath: Fill the tub with warm water—not hot—which will help relax her body. For a special treat, sprinkle rose petals in the bath water and leave a trail from the bath to the bed. These can be found at most local florists or online at petalgar-den.com.

And instead of heavily scented bubble baths, try bath salts. You can get regular Epsom salts at most drug stores. Turn down the lights, add candles, and put on her favorite music. Don't forget to set out fresh, clean towels and her robe and slippers.



Spa Moments candles in Tranquil Oasis, \$14 for 3, skin-spa.com.



TIP: Feel like playing it safe? Try gourmetgroceryonline.com.



Verikira Naturals Aroma Bath Fizzies in Lavender, \$1k, verikira.com.

IT'S NOW OR NEVER

You'll create perfect babymoon for the mother of your child with these basic guidelines. Actions do speak louder than words, and I promise that your efforts will be appreciated. Heck—you might even get some! The added bonus is that you get to spend quality

time with your partner before she forgets your name altogether. ● **Jonathon Reynolds** writes about adventure travel around the world as well as food and wine. His latest trip has been being a father—it is the most challenging and most rewarding adventure of all.