

Happy Travels

LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR FIRST TRIP WITH YOUR HONEY THIS SUMMER? DON'T MAKE RESERVATIONS BEFORE YOU READ THIS.

By Dorkys Ramos



When it comes to relationship milestones, a couple's first trip together is big. It's the perfect opportunity to get to know each other on a deeper level, far away from the stresses of daily life, and determine whether it's meant to be or not. After all, when you're basking in someone's presence 24/7, not much is left to the imagination. All of their quirks—from the adorable to the annoying—are on display, and so are yours. To help you minimize any bumps in the road, we consulted with Los Angeles-based relationship expert and psychologist Ana Nogales, Ph.D., about how to make it a vacation to remember.

1 DISCUSS EXPECTATIONS

If he's dreaming of a wilderness camping adventure while you're fantasizing about an all-inclusive beach getaway, you both have to be willing to compromise. Plan the vacation together so that you avoid any miscommunication. "And be clear on what you expect from the trip, what you expect the other person to do with you and what you expect from each other," Nogales says.

2 BE HONEST ABOUT BUDGET

You can't afford to ignore money matters in this economy. "Talk about how much each person is going to contribute to the vacation," Nogales

says. "Are both going to share the costs equally or is one inviting the other?" Factor in how you'll split the hotel, meals, activities and any other expenses. You'll be able to relax while sipping margaritas by the pool if you know whose turn it is to foot the bill.

3 DIVVY UP TASKS

Working together is key. Are you a whiz at staying on budget and he's the expert navigator? Then offer to handle the finances while he takes over the map. If your partner insists on having final say, just explain how that makes you feel. "But know that the person who's trying to make [all] the decisions is not always a manipulator. Men sometimes do that because they want to impress," Nogales says.

PLAN FOR SOME ALONE TIME

4 When you're sharing a cramped hotel room, you're bound to discover little things that irk you about your partner. Maybe he snores like a bear after a few drinks, or leaves his dirty clothes all over the place. It's okay to take a break and go for a walk or check out an exhibition solo. "Sometimes people feel overwhelmed because they have to spend twenty-four-seven with this person, so taking a little time for yourself is healthy," Nogales says.

FOCUS ON THE RELATIONSHIP

5 The time you spend actively nurturing your relationship is as important (or more so) than everything else on your itinerary. To bump up the romance, treat yourselves to a couple's massage or make reservations for a fancy candlelit dinner. "Tell him how important he is in your life, share what this relationship means to you and what you appreciate about each other," Nogales suggests. "If the relationship continues, this vacation will be a highlight."

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