



FLY *or* HIKE *or* DIVE *or* SWIM *Away* *With Me*

TEXT BY LEAH STILL JOLL

When wedding planning gets a bit more overwhelming than enjoyable, switch gears to honeymoon prep. Relaxing by an infinity pool for seven days may sound good now, but don't rule out more adventurous pursuits; a healthy dose of adrenaline may be exactly what you and your new spouse need to dive into the next chapter of your relationship. The couple that plays together stays together, after all.

Paragliding

Take a leap of faith together.

Paragliding may be the most symbolic activity to start your marriage on a positive note — you'll have to take a literal leap of faith, which can be nerve wracking, but then it's smooth sailing as you fly through the clouds.

WHERE TO TRY IT

Chamonix, France

This mountain resort in the French Alps, near the border of Switzerland and Italy, offers paragliding year-round through Chamonix Sport Adventure. Admire views of Mont-Blanc, the highest mountain in the Alps, as you float effortlessly through the sky.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel Mont-Blanc

This century-old hotel has been renovated to provide modern-day comfort in an old-world setting. Located in the center of town, the hotel features king-size beds (not always offered in Europe), a spa, a pool with mountain views and a stylish bar where you can celebrate your aerial adventure with a glass of Champagne.

hotelmontblanchamonix.com

INSIDER TIP

Paragliding looks like something that takes major guts and a lot of practice, but it can actually be quite serene. Plus, you can take a tandem flight with a professional for a worry-free beginner experience.

EXTREME ALTERNATIVES

• QUEENSTOWN, NEW ZEALAND

This South Island mountain resort town is the unofficial adventure capital of the world; paragliding is just one of many extreme things to do around the shores of Lake Wakatipu.

• MAUI, HAWAII

Soar above the island on a flight with Proflyght Paragliding School, located on Mt. Haleakalā.

• CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

Enjoy views of Table Mountain and the Atlantic coast as you fly from Lion's Head with Cape Town Tandem Paragliding.





Backpacking

Discover the rugged side of romance.

A remote camping trip that takes you off the grid might be just what you need after the hoopla of your wedding day. Consider registering for gifts at REI for quality equipment and look forward to what you get in exchange for roughing it: dreamy mountain scenery, waking up to the sound of a babbling brook and serious bonding with your spouse.

WHERE TO TRY IT

Yosemite National Park, California

Known for its giant, ancient sequoia trees, this national

park offers the perfect blend of rustic relaxation and iconic views. Overnight camping in the backcountry requires a wilderness permit, which are limited to prevent overcrowding on the 750 miles of trails, so plan ahead. Waterfalls, alpine lakes and granite peaks draw major crowds; by backpacking, you can get off the beaten path to enjoy this crown jewel with an extra helping of peace and quiet.

WHERE TO STAY

Park Campgrounds

You can stay at one the whole time and hike from there

each day, or hike to different campgrounds for more variety. It depends on the trailhead where you begin and your permit; check out more information and advice on the Yosemite website. nps.gov/yose

INSIDER TIP

Backpacking is not car camping, meaning you can't bring shoes for all possible occasions and a whole case of wine. When you're hiking with your luggage on your back, every ounce matters, so prioritize the essentials and look for trails near shops if you want to replenish supplies.

EXTREME ALTERNATIVES

• PEMBROKESHIRE COAST PATH, WALES


One of Britain's National Trails, this 186-mile route traverses cliffs and coves along the Atlantic, providing a wild experience in a less-visited region of the UK.

• ROMANTIC ROAD, GERMANY

Soak up old-world European scenery and ambience on this 220-mile route through Bavaria that takes you past medieval towns and castles.

• BANFF NATIONAL PARK, ALBERTA

The Canadian Rockies wow with soaring peaks and glacial lakes, the best known of which is Lake Louise.

A person wearing a red shirt and a red helmet is seen from behind, suspended on a zip line and gliding over a dense, lush green forest canopy. The person's arms are raised, holding onto the zip line. The background is a vast expanse of green trees and foliage, with some mist or fog visible in the distance.

Zip Lining

Spread your wings and fly.

If you want to do something active but don't want to design the whole trip around one sport, zip lining is an ideal option. It's offered in major honeymoon locations like the Caribbean, Mexico and Europe and you can enjoy the thrills for a few hours without any lessons required.

WHERE TO TRY IT Costa Rica

Commonly considered the birthplace of recreational zip lining, this lush, mountainous country is home to the Monteverde Cloud Forest, a dense green reserve in the north-central part of the country known for its biodiversity. There are several zip-lining operations; one of the best is Selvatura Park, where you can explore the treetops across 15 cables and 18 platforms.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel Belmar, Monteverde

With a nine-acre property consisting mostly of cloud forest and home to a waterfall, the Hotel Belmar invites you to relax the moment you step through the door. Select a Peninsula Superior Room for a private terrace and king-size bed. No television keeps the focus on the two of you and your beautiful surroundings. Spa treatments are available. hotelbelmar.net

INSIDER TIP

Zip lining is often thought of as an extreme adventure, but unlike other outdoor activities, it's suitable for almost anyone. Facilities typically include trained guides to assist you on every cable and help you on and off each platform.

EXTREME ALTERNATIVES

- **ST. LUCIA** The rainforest interior of this Caribbean island was made for a zip-line tour.
- **OAHU, HAWAII** Kualoa Ranch on the island's east coast is a nature reserve and filming location where you can zoom down cables up to a quarter-mile long through landscapes seen in movies like *Jurassic World*.
- **PUERTO RICO** Head to Toro Verde Nature Adventure Park to experience the Monster, a 1.57-mile cable named the longest in the world by Guinness World Records.

Surfing

Hang ten with your honey.



If you know you want a beach honeymoon but prefer to explore options outside the poolside lounge chairs, head to a destination where you can surf. Depending on your skill level and tolerance for water temperatures, you have plenty of coastal options, from the western U.S. and Mexico to Europe, Australia and Asia.

WHERE TO TRY IT Bali

Though this location has become more touristy in recent history, the surfing beaches near Uluwatu, Bali, are still a prime destination to fulfill exotic vacation dreams. Dreamland, Bingin and Uluwatu surf

breaks draw talented surfers from all over the world. If you're a beginner, Padang Padang beach features smaller waves great for learning. Impossible Surf School offers lessons, as well as surf guides if you're already experienced and just looking for tips.

WHERE TO STAY Mû Bali

Perched above Bingin Beach, this small resort boasts private bungalows, a saltwater pool overlooking the ocean, open-air yoga classes, a juice bar and a spa. Tucked away along a dead-end road, it provides an exclusive yet laidback atmosphere. mu-bali.com

INSIDER TIP

Surfing is hard work, there's no denying it. The silver lining? You'll burn plenty of calories paddling so there's no need to feel guilty about all the piña coladas you'll be drinking

after your lessons. If you don't want to wear a wetsuit (go ahead and flaunt that new honeymoon bikini), make sure you choose a warm-water destination – the closer to the equator, the better.

EXTREME ALTERNATIVES

- **BYRON BAY, AUSTRALIA** This casual-cool town in New South Wales pairs its surfing beaches with good restaurants and fun bars.
- **SAYULITA, MEXICO** Just north of Puerto Vallarta, this surfing village is a favorite with travelers looking for an upscale yet eclectic vibe.
- **ESSAOUIRA, MOROCCO** About 100 miles west of Marrakech, you can experience North African culture between surf sessions.



Skiing & Snowboarding

Cozy up in a winter wonderland.

Beaches are great, but colder mountain climates give you an excuse to curl up together in front of a fire, hot chocolate in hand. Typical ski resorts offer a variety of private and group lesson options, from novice to advanced to specialized skill sessions to help you tackle those moguls. If you're not taking your honeymoon during the winter, just head to the southern hemisphere, where skiing is popular in New Zealand and Argentina.

WHERE TO TRY IT

Beaver Creek, Colorado

Often overshadowed by sister

resort Vail and celebrity-studded Aspen, Beaver Creek offers understated luxury and world-class terrain. No matter your skill level, you'll find something to ski or ride across the 1,832 skiable acres and 150 trails. Off the mountain, enjoy complimentary cookies before heading to dinner at Beano's Cabin, reached via snowcat.

WHERE TO STAY

Westin Riverfront Resort & Spa

From sun up to sun down, this Starwood property has everything you'll need for a luxurious ski or snowboard experience. Put on your

dry boots (stored overnight at the ski valet), hop on the Riverfront Express Gondola just outside the door, then soak your muscles at the end of the day in the infinity hot tub and sit by the firepit before falling asleep on the Westin's beloved Heavenly mattress.

westinriverfrontbeavercreek.com

INSIDER TIP

Learning how to ski or snowboard can lead to sore legs and altitude sickness. So if you're a beginner, give yourself plenty of time to enjoy the finer points of a honeymoon in the mountains—cocktails by a fire, cozying up in a horse-drawn sleigh and time spent playing in the snow.

EXTREME ALTERNATIVES

- **SOUTHERN ALPS, NEW ZEALAND** The mountains on the South Island are home to ski areas like The Remarkables and Coronet Peak that are suitable for all levels.
- **MONT-TREMBLANT, QUEBEC** Enjoy a French vibe without leaving North America at this ski resort in the Laurentian Mountains in southeastern Canada.
- **VERBIER, SWITZERLAND** Instead of settling for the ubiquitous Swiss-inspired village found at resorts across the U.S., experience the real thing at one of Switzerland's top ski destinations.



Swimming with Whale Sharks

An up-close look at the biggest fish in the sea.

Take a typical snorkeling experience up a notch by going in search of whale sharks, the gentle giants of the sea. Found in just a handful of locations around the world—mostly the waters between Australia, Asia and Africa, as well as parts of the Caribbean—whale shark sightings make for a pretty memorable honeymoon activity.

WHERE TO TRY IT Maldives

Specifically, the South Ari Atoll, where these magnificent creatures can be seen year-round. On a snorkeling tour,

you'll be transported by boat, but once you spot a whale shark you can jump in for a swim alongside it. To learn about conservation, check out the Maldives Whale Shark Research Program, which works to protect and study the sharks and their environment.

WHERE TO STAY LUX* South Ari Atoll

This luxury island resort made up of private villas operates its own whale shark experience with a resident marine biologist. Perfect for honeymooners, part of the resort is designated as adults only, so your romantic vacation won't be interrupted

by little ones playing tag poolside. luxresorts.com

INSIDER TIP

Swimming with whale sharks is a must-do experience but usually comes with a few rules:

Most tour operators insist you stay a certain distance away from the shark and forbid flash photography. No touching is allowed and tours are often limited as a conservation measure, so book in advance.

EXTREME ALTERNATIVES

- **EXMOUTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA** The Ningaloo Coast off the northwest tip of Australia is home to a UNESCO World Heritage-listed reef where whale sharks feed from March to June.
- **TOFU BEACH, MOZAMBIQUE** This coastal town in southeastern Africa draws whale sharks mostly from September to February.
- **ISLA HOLBOX, MEXICO** Off the northern coast of the Yucatán Peninsula, this island offers an experience away from the Cancun and Riviera Maya crowds.



Kitesurfing

Let the wind take you away.

Kitesurfing, also known as kiteboarding, is often done on white-sand beaches with turquoise water nearby – a big part of its appeal for honeymooners. It is a blend of windsurfing and wakeboarding, so if you already have experience with a board sport, you'll be a step ahead.

WHERE TO TRY IT

Barbados

This coral island on the

southeastern edge of the Caribbean Sea receives trade winds that provide excellent conditions for kitesurfing. Endless Kiteboarding on the southern end of the island offers lessons with International Kiteboarding Organization-certified instructors, as well as equipment rental if you want to forgo instruction.

WHERE TO STAY

The Crane

A sandy beach, sea views and

plenty of palm trees make for a picture-perfect honeymoon stay. Some of the rooms have plunge pools and the honeymoon package includes flowers, wine and a couple's massage. thecrane.com

INSIDER TIP

Kitesurfing is a sport that takes a lot of practice to master, but if you have patience and energy, you can still have fun trying it for a few days. Just don't expect to be showing off any tricks right away.

EXTREME ALTERNATIVES

- **TARIFA, SPAIN** Europe's kitesurfing capital sits at the southern tip of Spain, just across the Strait of Gibraltar from Morocco.
- **JERICOACOARA BEACH, BRAZIL** Known as Jeri for short, this small fishing village on Brazil's northern coast is home to sandy roads lined with colorful bars and restaurants.
- **NEW CALEDONIA** Because of its more remote location, this French territory in the South Pacific provides an idyllic island locale away from the bigger kitesurfing crowds.



Scuba Diving

Take the plunge into a colorful underwater world.

There's no better time to check scuba diving off your bucket list than on your honeymoon, a once-in-a-lifetime trip. You can make the trek to major dive spots like the Great Barrier Reef,

but the Caribbean offers a rainbow of marine life much closer to home.

WHERE TO TRY IT **Belize**

Tucked in between Mexico and Guatemala, tiny Belize

boasts a wealth of dive sites along its Caribbean coastline, including a barrier reef and several atolls. You can explore dozens of types of coral and spot marine life like turtles, reef sharks, rays and barracuda.

WHERE TO STAY

Hamanasi Adventure & Dive Resort

Specifically catering to divers, this beachfront property features a honeymoon package that includes a canopied king-size bed, private hammock, bottle of sparkling wine and a massage. hamanasi.com.

INSIDER TIP

Many dive operators require you already be certified, most likely by PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors), the leading scuba divers' organization. If you're not certified and want to learn, look for a tour operator that does beginner lessons.

EXTREME ALTERNATIVES

- **SEYCHELLES** This archipelago in the Indian Ocean is big on environmental conservation and nature reserves, so you can expect to see plenty of tropical fish, coral, sharks and rays.
- **GREAT BARRIER REEF, AUSTRALIA** The most iconic of all natural marine wonders, this World Heritage site off the coast of Queensland is the world's largest coral reef.
- **BONAIRE** A Dutch island in the Leeward Antilles, just north of Venezuela, Bonaire's clear Caribbean waters are home to nearly 500 species of fish.

Mountain Biking

Enjoy the ride of a lifetime.



If you prefer dirt to saltwater and aren't afraid of a few bumps and bruises, hop on two wheels for a mountain biking honeymoon. You can geek out with your spouse over bike gear as you take turns leading the way on off-road trails. This hardcore sport set within stunning scenery is perfect for relieving lingering wedding stress.

WHERE TO TRY IT Finale Ligure, Italy

This Mediterranean destination along the Italian Riviera allows you to combine mountain

biking and the allure of Europe for a honeymoon that balances ruggedness and romance. Finale Ligure Bike Resort encompasses local businesses that provide bike repairs, shuttles, tour guides and bike-friendly accommodations.

WHERE TO STAY Hotel Rosita

Finale Ligure isn't known for luxury resorts, but you can find family-run charm at this villa located just outside of town. Rooms are basic, but the terrace with views of the sparkling sea makes up for it. hotelrosita.it

INSIDER TIP

The technical skills, local etiquette and rules of the road can seem like daunting requisites to master, but the

experience is worth the effort. Talk to a local guide or get advice at a bike shop to make sure you find trails suitable for your level.

EXTREME ALTERNATIVES

- **WHISTLER, BRITISH COLUMBIA** At one of the world's premier mountain biking destinations you can enjoy luxurious amenities at the ski resort and proximity to Vancouver.
- **PARK CITY, UTAH** On the western edge of the Rocky Mountains just outside of Salt Lake City, Park City offers a large network of trails plus an upscale village for good food and drinks.
- **ROTORUA, NEW ZEALAND** This North Island destination is set on Lake Rotorua and is known for its hot springs, perfect for soaking those tired muscles.