

FAMILYMOON: Your ultimate guide



The Ultimate Guide to a Familymoon

Move over Honeymoon, the latest travel trend to hit the headlines is the 'Familymoon.' As the name suggests, the 'Familymoon' is a holiday that new parents take after the birth of their child, allowing for quality time to bond as a new family and create life-long memories.

Our own research shows that over a third of families have already taken an exciting holiday like this and a quarter say they or someone they know has previously been travelling for over a month with their young family. One of the drivers for this trend is parents' taking advantage of Shared Parental Leave (SPL) to explore the world.

Of course, travelling with a young child can be a daunting prospect. There are multiple things to consider, from what baby gear to pack, to finding child-friendly accommodation as well as ensuring that you and your family have the right insurance in place.

But there's no need to panic – we've put together this handy pack including travelling tips and tricks, popular questions, top dream destinations and stories from parents that have done it before, to ensure you have the best time possible!

What is Shared Parental Leave?

Shared Parental Leave is a government initiative that came into force in April 2015. Under the new rules, eligible parents can share up to 50 weeks of leave – 37 of which is paid. Parents can take leave in their child's first year at different times, or double up by taking leave at the same time.

The rights apply to parents in work; including those who are adopting, same-sex couples, co-habiting parents, and couples bringing up a child together even if the baby is from a previous relationship.

Am I eligible for Shared Parental Leave?

To take shared leave, one parent must have been an employee with at least 26 weeks of service with the same employer by the end of the 15th week before the baby is due, or when matched with an adopted child.

The other must have worked for at least 26 weeks in the 66 weeks leading up to the due date and have earned at least £30 a week in 13 of the 66 weeks.

If you'd like more information please visit, <https://www.gov.uk/shared-parental-leave-and-pay>

Most popular dream destinations for a Familymoon



Families who have been there and done it...

MICHELLE & HER HUSBAND DAN FROM SUFFOLK

"My husband Dan and I met whilst travelling so to take off and see the world when Ella came into our lives made total sense. We always knew even when we had kids we'd continue with our adventures and we've created memories that will last forever.

"Ella was 18 months when we left to explore New Zealand and Hong Kong for six weeks. It was a daunting prospect, but Dan and I were so used to travelling as a couple that Ella just slotted in with us, albeit we took things a little slower! In New Zealand we ventured around and stayed in a campervan, which was great fun! Plus it made it much easier as we had everything we needed with us and we didn't need to worry.

"we've created memories that will last forever"

"My advice would be to plan as much as you can in advance, particularly when it comes to checking on which jobs you might need and things like that. But honestly the memories you'll make and the time you have together will make up for any stresses and worries beforehand.

"We didn't know much about Shared Parental Leave at the time, if we had we definitely would have applied to use it. It's such a great opportunity for both parents to have the chance to spend time with the little one – how often is it that both of you can get six months off work together!"



HONG KONG



NEW ZEALAND



NEW ZEALAND

Michelle, Dan and daughter Ella

LEE & HIS WIFE ERICA FROM LONDON

"Using our Shared Parental Leave to go travelling was a great decision, it's unlikely we'll ever get time off together like that again and seeing our little boy in the sea at such a young age was amazing. Even before we realised we were lucky to have a happy child we booked our flights, thinking that the sunshine would help. I would say travelling with a new-born is a lot easier than having a toddler – at least a new-born can't run around!

"I was lucky, my work were really supportive of my decision. I always knew

"it's unlikely we'll ever get time off together like that again"

I wanted to take time off when we had children and my work and friends were even more excited for me when I told them about our coming adventure."



CROATIA

Top 10 tips for travelling with a little one



PLAN AHEAD – planning really is everything when it comes to travelling with babies. Make sure you properly research the hotel and area you're staying in to ensure it really is child friendly. Read all the reviews you can find! Take care to check with your GP, making sure your baby has all the necessary vaccinations for the country or countries you're travelling to and that any country-specific vaccinations are safe to be administered alongside the standard ante-natal vaccinations. Planning as a family is also a great way to get everyone excited and helps any older siblings feel part of the decision making process.



INVEST IN BABY GEAR – it's worth investing in a decent travel pushchair that's easily collapsed when out and about. Likewise, a lightweight car seat that can also be used as a carry cot can be useful when travelling with babies, as you'll be less likely to disturb them when moving them from the car and into a hotel room if they're asleep. If you're going to be travelling off the beaten track, baby slings can also be a useful alternative to buggies. Find more details on what to look for in a travel pushchair via:

<https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/pushchairs/article/travel-systems/best-travel-systems>

<http://www.madeformums.com/reviews-and-shopping/10-of-the-best-lightweight-buggies-under-6kg/1504.html>



INVESTIGATE ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS – whilst a family hotel should have all the necessary amenities for children and may even be kitted out with a baby crèche, there are alternatives that may offer better value for money. An **Airbnb** for example, gives you a sense of stability of coming home to something that is truly your 'own' space after a day's exploring and offers more privacy to spend time truly 'en famille.' The ability to cook for yourself is also great for cost-cutting when on holiday, and helps placate any fussier eaters in the family.



LOOK INTO CHEAPER AIRFARE OPTIONS – most airlines will offer some kind of discount for little ones aged 2 and under. This tends to be a 90% discount on fares pre-tax for children under 2 who do not have their own seat. Be sure to check what your airline can offer you as it could save you a considerable amount.



GET A MEDICAL PLAN IN PLACE – babies' health is notoriously unpredictable and what may seem like an innocent cold can potentially develop into something more serious. This can be scary if you're away from a medical system you know and a language you understand. With Columbus Direct Travel Insurance, you'll always have access to a UK doctor as part of your standard travel insurance package via **Babylon**, meaning you can focus on getting out and about with your little ones and be confident help is at hand should you need it.



DON'T MISS OUT ON EXPERIENCES – there's no reason why travelling with a small child should dampen your spirit of adventure. You can always take it in turns doing things like diving and snorkelling while one of you watches the baby, and Columbus Direct Travel Insurance covers **most activities as standard** so there's no excuse not to do all the things you've always been too busy to do.



PICK UP PASSPORT – your baby will need their own so make sure this is arranged in plenty of time as they can take 3-4 weeks to arrive, but can be applied for as soon as they're born. In terms of the photo used, your baby will have to be alone in the picture but doesn't have to be awake so try and catch baby when asleep. If your baby doesn't share your surname, you may also need to take along proof that you're related, such as a birth certificate and a letter from his/her other parent.



CHECK BAGGAGE ALLOWANCES BEFORE BOARDING – most airlines will allow a stroller or car seat on board at no extra cost and many provide an infant allowance too (such as a changing bag), some for both cabin and hold baggage. However, make sure you know if this is something your airline allows to avoid last minute panic, as adding on luggage on the day will significantly increase the cost of your trip.



FEED DURING TAKE-OFF AND LANDING – air pressure changes can be harder on small ears and lots of babies will start crying as the air pressure starts to affect them (generally at around a few hundred meters). The swallowing action from feeding should help alleviate this and helps to keep them calm and quiet.



PLAN FOR A COMFY FLIGHT – remember babies don't qualify for their own seat until the age of two so make sure you pack everything to keep you both comfortable throughout the flight. This may be blankets, cushions, or your little one's favourite toy to keep them happy for the duration of the flight. If your flight is delayed, remember that with Columbus Direct, you can make use of the **airport lounge** for free to ensure the whole family is comfortable.

Popular questions

For parents taking their little ones away on holiday for the first time, undoubtedly there will be numerous questions that need answering. From wondering how you and your partner ask for Shared Parental Leave to which travel injections your child will need before jetting off, find answers to the most pressing and frequently asked questions here:

▶ What is Shared Parental Leave?

Shared Parental Leave (SPL) enables eligible mothers, fathers and adoptive parents to share leave, which can be taken at the same time, following the birth or adoption of their child. Parents can take up to 50 weeks of leave between them, 37 of which is paid.

▶ How do I ask for Shared Parental Leave?

To make use of Shared Parental Leave you must give your employer at least 8 weeks written notice of your leave date and you must have been working for your employer for at least 26 weeks. Note that SPL can only start once the child has been born or adopted. You can find out more [here](#), or check out Mummy bloggers such as Mother Pukka and Pregnant Then Screwed that discuss SPL in their blogs, offering advice and sharing their personal experiences to other parents.

▶ What access to healthcare do I have whilst travelling?

Most travel insurers provide cover for emergency medical treatment as standard. While this is a great perk, describing the illness to a doctor who speaks a different language may prove difficult with the possibility of a language barrier. If you're travelling to a remote area the nearest doctor's surgery could be miles away from you and your family.

If you take out a policy with Columbus Direct Travel Insurance you get the luxury of having access to a UK based doctor via video consultation, within minutes, anytime day or night. This is via Columbus' partnership with **Babylon**, the UK's leading digital healthcare service, giving you reassurance that you can get excellent healthcare and advice for you and your little ones around the world. Babylon GPs can prescribe medications but you will be required to pay for the cost of medicine when you receive it from the pharmacy which can be claimed back on your travel insurance.

▶ Will my EHIC card protect us?

An EHIC card can be useful when travelling, as it offers discounted healthcare in the EU or EEA countries. The card is only effective if you have it on you when you have the accident, so make sure you're carrying the card with you at all times in case of an emergency – to use it simply present to staff before receiving treatment. Each EHIC card only covers one person, so it's important that everyone (including baby) has their own card before travelling to Europe.

It's less than a year until Brexit and understandably many travellers are confused about whether they can still make use of EHIC, the European Health Card that gives UK residents free or discounted healthcare in the EU and EEA countries. In short, no decision has been made as yet so those travelling to Europe should keep using their card as usual until the EU and the UK resolve their ongoing discussions.

Always remember however that the EHIC is not a substitute for travel insurance, even when travelling in Europe. You will still need to take out separate insurance to ensure you are fully covered if something goes wrong.

▶ Do I need special travel insurance for travelling with a new born?

New born babies require the same travel insurance as you and need the same security should anything happen. For example, if you experience flight delays or cancellations, or your little one falls ill whilst you're away, it ensures they are covered in the same way as you. Just remember that most insurers will only cover for any treatment needed for illnesses that started after going away, and any medicine you purchase will need to be prescribed by a doctor in order for you to claim. Columbus Direct has insurance policies specifically for families and all policies come with 24/7 access to a UK GP via the medical app Babylon so you'll always have a reassuring professional on hand.

▶ How many people can I put on a single trip policy?

You can take out a single trip policy to cover an individual, a couple or a family by purchasing a policy before each trip. The insurance will cover every individual named on the single trip policy.

▶ How much does it cost to add kids to a policy?

You can add your child to your insurance policy but it may be cheaper to either insure them separately or take out a family policy to ensure everyone has the same protection. The price to insure your child will depend on the destination, the duration and the types of activities you're planning when you're out there. But as a guide, one week's cover for a family of four, depending on the level of cover and locations you're visiting will vary from little more than £10 to £50 as a rough average, not a lot of money for the peace of mind that family travel insurance offers.

▶ Does my baby need their own passport?

Yes, under new rules babies must have their own passport or they will be unable to travel abroad. You can apply for your babies' passport as soon as they're born and it will take 4-6 weeks to arrive with standard postal service. Babies must be on their own in the picture, though they don't have to be looking directly at the camera or have a plain expression. The passport will last for 5 years.

▶ Does my baby need travel injections?

This depends on where you're travelling. If you're staying in the UK your baby won't need travel injections, nor if you're staying in Europe. If you're going to countries further afield you should check which injections you need for protection against diseases common to the local area - listed on the **NHS website**, or you can ask your GP.

▶ From what age is my baby safe to fly?

Some airlines will permit babies who are two days old to fly, whereas others will only allow babies who are at least two weeks old on board. Unfortunately there are no specific regulations regarding this matter, so it's best to check with your chosen airline before booking. In some cases if your baby is less than two weeks old, you may be asked to provide a letter from your GP stating they are fit to fly. If you're unsure or want more advice then check in with your GP who will be able to advise you.

▶ How soon after birth can mum fly?

There's no official NHS stance on this – the general rule is to listen to your body... and your doctor! Airlines won't have a limit on how soon after birth you can fly but it's always best to check it's safe with your doctor to do so.