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Top Ten Active Honeymoon Vacations

Relaxing on a beach, frozen drink in-hand, has long been the classic post-marriage getaway. But many newlyweds are bucking the trend, seeking active honeymoon vacations. Here, our ten favorite trips.

By [Kristin Luna](#)



Taktshang monastery and cliffs, Bhutan (Image Source/Getty)

There's no rule that says honeymoons have to be all private islands and sandy beaches. Sometimes all it takes is a little adrenaline—or rather, a shared life-or-death experience—to steer the beginning days of your marriage in the right direction.

If you don't mind spending time en route, an African safari is always a popular undertaking, such as an eight-day journey through Botswana with [Wildland Adventures](#). Or if you prefer to stay, play, and eat all in the same place, luxe lodge group [&Beyond](#) boasts 46 properties in Africa and India, where the safari starts at your back door.

Those who want more physicality and less nature might consider a coasteering trip in Wales, a mountain climbing journey in the Alps, a SCUBA diving excursion on one of the Caribbean's under-the-radar islands, or any of the other trips we've tracked down for our top ten active honeymoon vacations.

10. [National Parks of the Southwest U.S.](#)
9. [Biking Bhutan](#)
8. [Camel Trek in Israel](#)
7. [Surf and Yoga in Costa Rica](#)
6. [Wilderness Camping in India](#)
5. [Mountaineering in Switzerland](#)
4. [African Safari](#)
3. [Diving Montserrat in the Caribbean](#)
2. [Coasteering in Wales](#)
1. [Cruising the Arctic Circle](#)

10. Discover the [Southwest's National Parks](#)

Those who feel most at home under the wide expanse of sky and blanket of stars will love a tour of America's spectacular Southwest. Beginning in Flagstaff, Arizona, a jumping-off point for the Grand Canyon, couples can check into their hotel then head to the canyon for a day hike. The ultimate luxists will want to make their base at [Amangiri](#), the new Aman Resort on a 600-acre plot of rugged land near the Arizona-Utah border, where views from the rooms' windows are of the awe-inspiring red-rock formations from every angle. The extremely athletic honeymooners will want to contemplate taking the Bright Angel or South Kaibab trails down to the canyon floor and back out again. For a more leisurely loop, opt for the paved Rim Trail instead.

From Arizona, continue north to Utah, passing through Monument Valley and Grand Staircase along the way. Once you reach Moab, make this small but wonderful blip on the map your hub for exploring the outer lying areas. Home to two national parks and a state park, it's the perfect place for couples to kindle their passion for the outdoors and spend some time together away from the maddening crowds. Two luxury resorts located on the banks of the Colorado River are perfect for newlyweds: the Red Cliff's Lodge and the Sorrel River Ranch. Both offer restaurants and a multitude of activities including mountain biking, hiking, rafting, and horseback riding. A moonlit hike to Delicate Arch makes for a romantic end to a day in the Arches National Park, and beautiful backdrops for photographic memories can be found at every turn in Canyonlands National Park, Bryce Canyon national Park, and Dead Horse Point State Park.

9. Bike to Monasteries in [Bhutan](#)

Hit the road with biking and trekking courses that visit local villages for a slice of culture in one of the world's most remote and unexplored countries. Nestled in the eastern Himalayas, the Kingdom of Bhutan is an enigma to many Westerners, primarily due to the unknown. Its tourism cap and the high price tag help keep its authenticity in tact (a fee of around \$200 a day is required for all foreigners visiting the country). A Buddhist country steeped in religious practices, Bhutan's people lead a lifestyle rich in tradition and co-exist harmoniously with the area's nature, which includes water buffalo, blue sheep, elephants, and snow leopards.

Couples can stay in the [Uma Paro Hotel](#), which is a haven for the jetsetter who likes to amp up the adrenaline during the day and relax with five-star service at night. Mountain biking and camping trips will highlight Bhutan's cultural facets by following paths that take guests through monasteries, markets, and more. Among other biking trips, Uma Paro also offers the Chele La Freewheel Descent, where guests are dropped off at the top of Chele La (11,000 feet), Bhutan's

highest road pass. After taking in the magnificent views toward Mt. Jhomolhari, peeking over into the remote Haa Valley, you'll freewheel for 22 miles all the way back to Paro. The resort has adventure tours of 7 or 12 days in length on tap, as well, for those who desire more than mere day trips to the surrounding areas. It is said that Bhutanese measure their wealth in Gross National Happiness, so the joy and content of recently married duos reveling in its delights will only help that statistic spike.

8. Camel Trek through an [Israeli Desert](#)

And you thought the only place you could plod along sandy terrain on a dromedary was the Sahara? Think again! Israel is not only an unexpected honeymoon locale, but one chock full of adventure, too. Begin your journey with a couple of days at the [InterContinental David in Tel Aviv](#), where you can learn to surf or windsurf (or both) by day and hit the nightlife once the sun goes down.

When your jetlag is but a distant memory, continue your cross-country journey by checking into a ranch in the Golan Heights such as [Vered Hagalil](#), where you'll find Israel's very own brand of cowboys, way up in the northeastern corner. When you've had your fill of horseback riding and home cooking, trek to Yad Vashem, a commemoration of the Holocaust, and from there, hike through the Judean Hills to the birthplace of John the Baptist. You can't say you've been to Israel without a float in the Dead Sea, of course—just don't forget to bring along a waterproof camera to document your efforts. But first attempt the hike up Masada, a site of ancient fortifications, for panoramic views, then use the sea for a respite from the heat. Finish your adventure tour of Israel at the southern tip in Eilat, where you can wet your feet (and fins) with some SCUBA diving in the Red Sea.

7. Surfing and Yoga in [Costa Rica](#)

For as low as \$120 a night, you can occupy your own bungalow with your sweetie in the lap of paradise, i.e., the Costa Rican jungle. It's a bit of a trek to reach, but remember, this is an adventure honeymoon. Fly from the United States to San Jose, then hop a puddle jumper to Tambor and catch a cab, which will wind its way half an hour through the countryside to your final destination: Malpais. Check into [Hotel Tropic Latino](#), where an array of active pursuits await you.

The remote resort, nestled between the lush jungle and white-sand beaches, offers both bungalow-style rooms and houses with full kitchens. It's also home to [Pura Vida Adventures](#), which is popular for its women's retreats and now offers co-ed surf-and-yoga vacations, as well. You could also consider one of the hotel's own packages, such as its action-packed, five-day experience that includes hiking through the reserve, ziplining through the canopy, exploring the coast on horseback, and, of course, riding the surf. Or if you could do without the Om entirely, head down and hit the surf in Nosara, one of Costa Rica's meccas for those who like to hang ten.

6. Camp under the Stars in [India](#)

Every year, Aman Resorts' management team at [Aman-I-Khás](#) in Rajasthan assembles the ten canopied accommodations comprising its luxury wilderness camp. Then, at the end of the seven-month season, when the rain is headed their way, they take them all apart again until the camp

reopens in the spring. This labor of love is just a small part of what makes Aman-I-Khás so unique.

Perched on the edge of Rajasthan's Ranthambore National Park, Aman-I-Khás is the essence of tranquility—the only sounds for miles are the calls from the birds or the announcement that a tiger was spotted in the vicinity on one of the twice-a-day safaris. The tents, which are outfitted with air-conditioning, bathrooms, and luxurious linens, are situated around the camp's central outdoor fireplace among the Aravalli Hills, dotted with crumbling ruins from another age. While wilderness safaris are what draw people to this particular lodge, couples can combine stays at the camp with visits to completely preserved Moghul cities and palaces.

5. Mountain Climb in [Switzerland](#)

Fly into Zurich, the gateway to the Alps and a cosmopolitan city worth a layover, then hop on the high-speed rail with your final destination as the Engadin Valley. Where biking, hiking, and mountain climbing opportunities abound, the southeastern corner region of Maloja is nothing short of a dream for those who revel in high-altitude fun.

One of the more exhilarating activities you'll find in this nook of the Alps is the Via Ferrata, at nearby Diavolezza, a climbing route that is accessed by a cable car. Strap on your harness, throw on a helmet, and set off on the series of ladder steps and natural rock holds that span nearly 1,000 feet, ending just above 10,000 feet altitude and requiring a minimum of two hours to complete. Just don't let the creaky suspension bridge midway through your climb deter you—there's no way back down again! Instead of thinking how far above the base you are, divert your attention to the majestic Pers Glacier, which forms the marvelous backdrop for your stunt. Once you're done, hike back down and enjoy a glass of bubbly and a soak in the world's highest hot tub.

If you prefer mountain biking instead, head to the area's epicenter, the resort town of St. Moritz, and attempt the rocky runs of the Corviglia mountain via an Engadin Mountainbike Tour. Once you're well spent, indulge for a day in the new 2,000-square-meter spa and wellness center at the [Grand Hotel Kronenhof](#) in Pontresina, or take a crack at making your own cheese at the demonstration Alpine Dairy of Morteratsch.

4. Safari in [Africa](#)

First-timers to South Africa's plethora of game reserves will want to visit a safari lodge in the iconic Kruger National Park, such as &Beyond Ngala Safari Lodge or Tented Camp, a region where elephant, buffalo, rhino, and African wild dogs abound. Ngala's new "Expect the Unexpected" package offers a five-day experience where honeymooners can tailor their own itineraries with a private ranger and tracker. The pace of the day is their own choice: how much walking, the length of time on game drives, and how much relaxation time they would like to factor in by the pool.

A truly unique element of the specialist safari is the opportunity to track big game on foot before an optional night spent sleeping under the stars in the middle of the bush—all followed by a helicopter pick-up the next morning for an aerial tour of the Blyde River Canyon.

If you've been there, done that, when it comes to South Africa, &Beyond owns more than 40 lodges scattered about the continent from Mnemba Island Lodge off the coast of Zanzibar to Ngorongoro Crater Lodge and Lake Manyara Tree Lodge on mainland Tanzania to properties in Botswana, Kenya, and Namibia—all of which promote sustainable, responsible travel and community empowerment, employing many of the villagers as a way to give back to the land and local economy. If you still can't decide which safari to choose, www.andbeyondafrica.com has an excellent, comprehensive planning tool where you can plug in your budget, length of visit, and likes and dislikes, and it will spit out sample customized itineraries for your every need.

3. Scuba Dive [Montserrat](#)

One of the Caribbean's best-kept secrets, Montserrat is situated in an unspoiled and less-visited pocket of the sea, where the marine life is better preserved than in more touristy areas like the Dominican Republic. Home to the Soufrière Hills Volcano and the Montserrat Volcano Observatory, this island nation's dive life has been directly impacted by its volcanic activity, which created an interesting array of pyroclastic flows into the sea, drawing large boulders into the water along with it. Additionally, colorful coral, copper sweepers, and sponges of all shapes and sizes decorate the ocean floor.

Couples can explore dive sites that cover more than 13 miles of coastline with the island's two dive facilities, Green Monkey Dive Shop and Scuba Montserrat. Haven't gone diving before but always dreamed of it? No problem. You can take your certification course, which will take a full weekend, at any PADI or SSI center in your home city, before completing your four checkout dives through the aforementioned centers while on your honeymoon. Once you've reached your underwater limit, indulge in everything else the destination has to offer. The diverse landscape allows travelers to explore curvy slopes and mountainous vistas on the many hiking trails with guided tours available through the Montserrat National Trust and the Montserrat Tourist Board. Or hop on an equestrian adventure with Zekie's Horseback Riding Tours.

2. Coasteer in [Wales](#)

A stark and somewhat bleak landscape with craggy sea cliffs that jut out over the Atlantic, Wales is romanticized for its Celtic history, unique language, and dramatic coastline. Home to the extreme sport of coasteering, the British entity is also well acquainted with adrenaline. Similar to Switzerland's famed activity, canyoning, coasteering is a combination of climbing, traversing, cliff jumping, and swimming. Imagine flinging yourself 100 feet off a cliff into the crashing waves below, scrambling up a gushing waterfall, or squeezing yourself through caves so small that the sheer thought would send a claustrophobe into shock. You'll be outfitted in protective gear, of course, such as a helmet, wetsuit, lifejacket, and harness.

First developed in Pembrokeshire, coasteering is still most popular in this southwest region, though it's also offered on the northern coast and Gower Peninsula. Additionally, Wales boasts some of the best rock climbing and abseiling in Britain, with mountain fun available in Snowdonia and Mid-Wales, and dramatic sea cliffs in North Wales, Pembrokeshire, and the Gower.

1. Cruise the [Arctic Circle](#)

If you've already seen Alaska and have done the South Sea, there's one great mass of ice you've

probably yet to conquer: Svalbard. A Norwegian archipelago in the Arctic Circle, Svalbard's main island is Spitsbergen, which you can circumnavigate by way of expedition cruise. Before you turn up your nose at the thought of a cruise for your honeymoon, this isn't your granny's kitschy Caribbean carnival. While the food is tasty, there aren't endless buffets; while the scenery and occasional BBC documentary provide entertainment, you won't find casinos and musical productions either. [Hurtigruten](#) operates under the belief that Mother Nature should occupy center stage. You'll spy a host of wildlife as you jut in and out of fjords along the coast, from seals and minke whales to Arctic skua and puffins. And even though "expedition" is the concept, your comfort certainly won't suffer: The rooms are as nice (maybe more so) as you'll find on any cruise ship worldwide.

Trek through arctic tundra and desert, "oohing" and "ahhing" at the reindeer and foxes you'll see along the way; make zodiac landings at many a glacier; explore a near ghost town in the mining station of Barentsburg and the world's northernmost settlement of Ny-Alesund; visit the walrus and bird sanctuary, Møffen Island, at 80 degrees north; and strip down to your skivvies for a dip in the Arctic Ocean and your official "Polar Bear" certificate. Speaking of polar bears, keep your eyes peeled at all times for the King of the Arctic, as 3,000 of the white beasts roam Svalbard. Along with a week on the ship, you can spend a day or two in Longyearbyen, from where you'll fly in and out, and ride aboard a real-live working dog sled, or tack on some extra time along coastal Norway, where the outdoors opportunities among the fjords are endless.