

NOVEMBER 2018

**BONNY, BONNY
SCOTLAND**

**THE CARIBBEAN'S
BEST-KEPT SECRET**

**WHY WE LOVE
CHICAGO**

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

TRIPS OF A LIFETIME

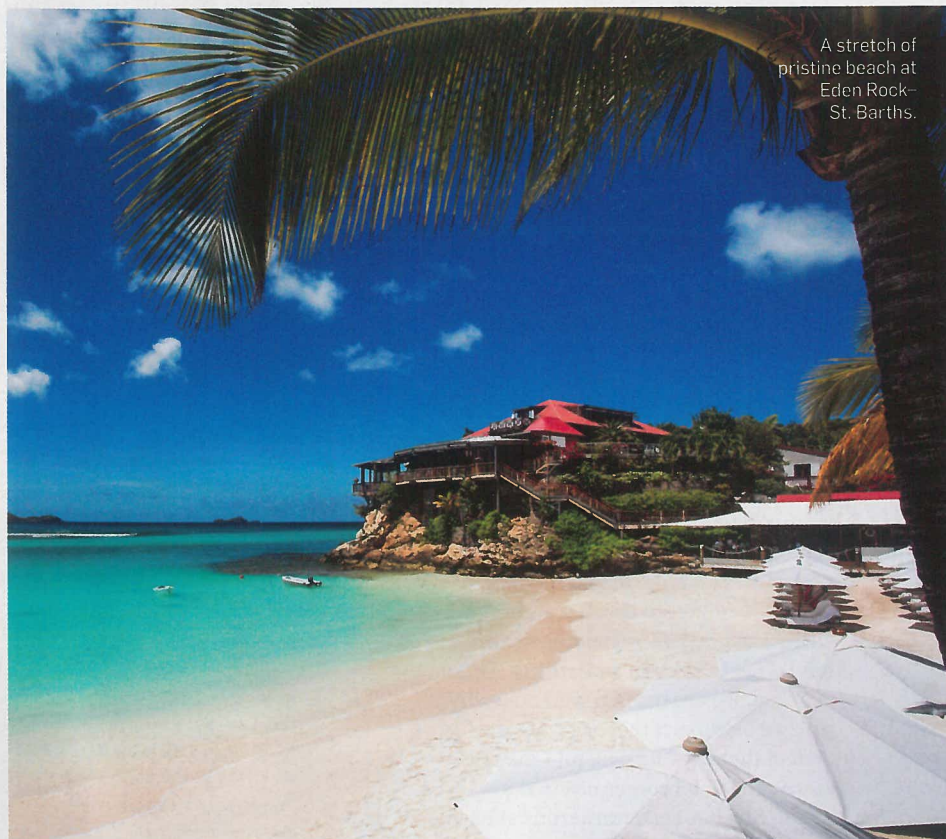
34 PERFECT VACATIONS FOR EVERY MOMENT IN LIFE



Alladale, a
wilderness
reserve in the
Scottish Highlands.

ONE LAST ROMANTIC GETAWAY

At seven months pregnant, **Jacqueline Gifford** heads to St. Bart's with her husband to savor their last few weeks before baby makes three.



A stretch of pristine beach at Eden Rock—St. Barth's.

FIRST HEARD the word *babymoon* in 2010, soon after I started working for a bridal magazine. I'd heard of all sorts of "trends" in the world of destination weddings and honeymoons, so I was skeptical that this type of trip was anything more than marketing spin. Did normal people really travel just to celebrate a pregnancy?

Indeed they did. Seemingly overnight, every hotel under the sun began offering a couples-friendly package (prenatal massages for her, booze for him!), and my expectant friends were constantly asking me where they should travel ahead of their due dates.

Flash-forward a few years: I had moved on to *Travel + Leisure*, and my husband, Rob, and I were eagerly anticipating the arrival of our son. We realized that once diapers and bottles became crucial items on our packing lists, our vacation routines would shift dramatically. Suddenly, all I wanted was to sit in the sun, eat lots of bacon, and be ridiculously pregnant in a bikini—and not be judged for it.

Since women are advised to stop flying at around 32 weeks, we traveled in my 30th and chose St. Bart's, a place relatively close to home. Following our honeymoon in Paris, it felt like a nice complement: the French-influenced island has beautiful beaches, great

Three More Babymoon Escapes

Where to unwind and reconnect before the new arrival.

NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS

Thanks to its waterfront location on two manicured acres, the casually elegant **White Elephant** resort feels secluded, but its proximity to downtown puts local favorites (the Juice Bar ice cream shop, the Brant Point lighthouse) within walking distance. When guests book the two-night babymoon package, they're treated to spa time (an hour-long prenatal massage for mom and a spa credit for her partner), plus a stuffed elephant toy for baby. whiteelephanthotel.com; babymoon package from \$635.

FLORENCE, ITALY

Though there's no official babymoon package at the **Four Seasons Hotel Firenze**, a perk reserved exclusively for the hotel's guests is plenty enticing for parents-to-be: access to the romantic open-air terrace on the Ponte Vecchio overlooking the Arno River, where a private four-course dinner is available May through October. Or, for another type of indulgence, couples can book side-by-side treatments in the private spa suite hidden in the property's botanical gardens. fourseasons.com; doubles from \$404.

SEDONA, ARIZONA

A baby journal, sparkling cider, and chocolate-covered strawberries welcome expectant parents who book a two-night stay at **L'Auberge de Sedona**. Take a gentle hike on one of the property's picturesque trails, then refuel with a refined American meal at the alfresco Cress on Oak Creek restaurant, where chefs often incorporate foraged seasonal ingredients. It's also worth carving out time for treatments at the L'Apothecary Spa, where the staff can help customize soaks and scrubs using local botanicals. lauberge.com; two-night package from \$1,364.

luxury hotels, and a food scene that emphasizes butter, fresh fish, and rosé. (We traveled just before Zika broke out and, thankfully, it's no longer a concern on St. Bart's. You can find updates on all the islands at cdc.gov.)

We stayed at **Le Guanahani** (leguanahani.com), a hillside hotel with petite, colorful gingerbread cottages overlooking gardens and the ocean. Mercifully for my swollen feet, it was just a short walk to the shore, and we could easily drive to Flamands Beach, where my parents vacationed in the 1970s before the island became known for its boisterous nightlife. I paired my buffet-breakfast bacon with a croissant and three chocolate chip cookies every morning, and the staff never batted an eye.

Maybe it was the simple change of scenery, but being in St. Bart's—away from the crib we still needed to assemble and the stroller we had yet to buy—turned out to be exactly what Rob and I needed to recharge with this monumental life change on the horizon. Yes, we read books and slept in, but we also discussed our anxieties about becoming parents over three-hour dinners at places like Jean-Georges Vongerichten's Sand Bar at the luxe **Eden Rock–St. Barths** (oetker.collection.com; doubles from \$1,050).

Now, having come out the other side as the happy mother of a

rambunctious three-year-old boy, Bobby, I can confidently say that a babymoon should be a requirement for all first-time parents. We still go on beach vacations as a family, though our meals are nowhere near as leisurely. Instead of sitting in the sun for hours on end, Rob and I take turns watching Bobby splash around the pool. We wouldn't have it any other way, but we're grateful we took that last opportunity to travel when it was still just the two of us.

Le Guanahani and Eden Rock–St. Barths are both closed for rebuilding after Hurricanes Irma and Maria; they are projected to reopen in late 2019. Margie Hand (hand@andavotravel.com; 888-234-0046), a Caribbean specialist on the A-List, T+L's collection of the world's top travel advisors, can coordinate babymoons in the region.

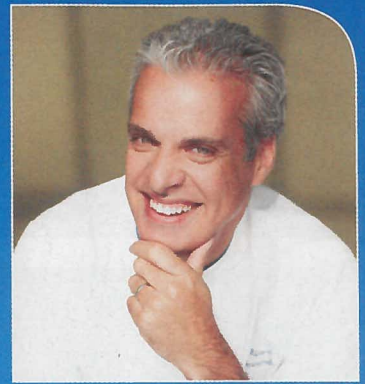
because "there's tons of onboard programming and parents will appreciate the ease of unpacking only once." Disney covers a wide range of age-appropriate destinations, including the Caribbean and Europe, but many family-friendly companies present opportunities to introduce kids to soft-adventure activities, such as hiking and snorkeling.

"Middle school is a prime time to build on early adventure activities with slightly more challenging options," says Griscavage, who suggests trips that highlight the natural beauty of the United States. Among her favorite options for preteens: Alaska excursions with longer hikes or helicopter tours.

As kids enter high school, they often begin to study history more in depth and can be quite vocal about what topics they find interesting, Griscavage says. This would be a great time to take an American-history buff to Normandy and sites related to World War II, or a student who's eager to learn more about Roman culture to Italy.

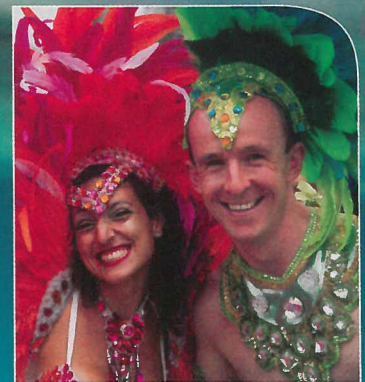
MILESTONE MOMENT EDUCATIONAL TRIPS

The world can be a classroom for travelers of all ages. Certain destinations will resonate more with kids based upon their developmental stage and the subjects they're covering in school, explains **Jessica Griscavage** (jessica@mccabeworld.com; 703-762-5056), a family-travel specialist on the A-List, T+L's collection of the world's top travel advisors. Cruising works well for elementary school vacations—in part



Cayman Cookout
January 16-20, 2019

Eric Ripert is joined by celebrated chefs for a medley of demonstrations and tastings that tout our status as the Culinary Capital of the Caribbean.



Batabano
May 4, 2019

Named for the tracks turtles make as they come to nest, our annual carnival is a vibrant tapestry of Caymanian culture.



Flowers Sea Swim
June 15, 2019

Whether you're an Olympian or a first-timer, here's an open-water competition for all strokes of life. What started as a one-mile, open-water swim now also includes a 5K and a 10K swim.

CAYMAN ISLANDS
visitcaymanislands.com