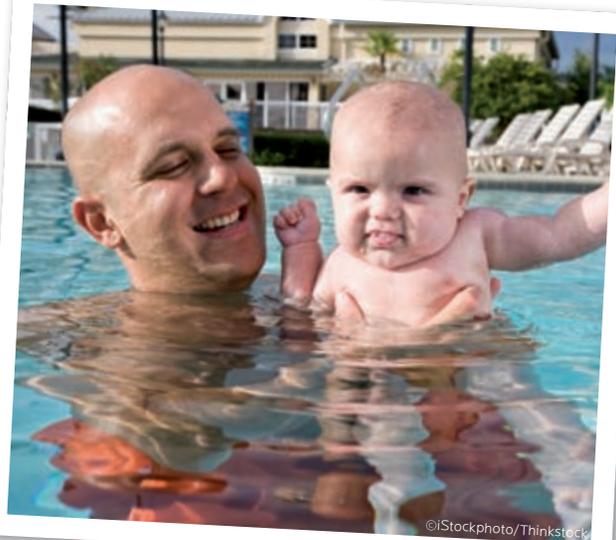


# Baby's first HOLIDAY

Author and journalist **CATHERINE COOPER** provides you with some invaluable tips on travelling with your new bundle for the very first time.



**P**lanning your first holiday with your baby can be a very exciting but also daunting time. While being a parent shouldn't stop you having the holiday you want, you can get more out of your holiday if you plan carefully. Here are some tips to help you have a holiday to remember.

**1 Your baby doesn't care where he goes.** This might sound obvious but as long as your baby is with you, well fed and comfortable, he doesn't mind where he is. So in the very early years it makes sense to choose somewhere that you want to go and save Butlins or Disneyland for when he is a bit bigger.

**2 Think about holidaying with friends or family.** If you go with friends with a baby of similar age or doting grandparents, you may be able to share childcare duties and grab the occasional bit of time to yourself.

**3 Try to book sensible travel times.** The more you can stick with your baby's usual routine, the better. It may be worth paying extra for a flight that doesn't leave in the middle of the night, for example.

**4 Consider self-catering.** Most parents agree that self-catering holidays tend to be easiest when your baby is small as you can feed him when you want to and the extra space is useful. Staying in a hotel often means

creeping around in a darkened room while your baby sleeps rather than having dinner outside on your own terrace within baby-listener reach.

**5 Choose your accommodation carefully.** Several companies specialise in baby-friendly accommodation, including [www.babyfriendlyboltholes.co.uk](http://www.babyfriendlyboltholes.co.uk) and [www.totstotravel.co.uk](http://www.totstotravel.co.uk), offering accommodation which is safe for babies and equipped with all the baby equipment you need. Whether you book through a specialist company or a mainstream operator, it is important to check exactly what equipment is provided and what you need to bring. For example, many provide cots but not bedding.

**6 Plane, train or automobile?** In some ways, taking a holiday by plane with a small baby is the ideal time to go as you don't have to pay for an extra seat and a baby doesn't want to run around in the aisle as a two-year-old does. However, the packing restrictions attached to flying can be a nuisance and, depending on where you are travelling, you may want to consider the train – where you also tend to have much more room. Travelling by car has the great advantage of being able to take as much luggage with you as you want, but do schedule rest stops during your journey.

**7 Packing for the journey.** Pack more formula and nappies than you could possibly need for

the journey – and don't forget nappy bags. It's also worth taking a spare set of clothes for your baby and a top for yourself in case of spills. If you are breastfeeding, a shawl or pashmina will give you some privacy in public places.

**8 Breastfeeding views.** If you are planning an exotic holiday, check how breastfeeding is viewed in the country you are visiting at [www.007b.com/public-breastfeeding-world.php](http://www.007b.com/public-breastfeeding-world.php). If breastfeeding in public is frowned upon you may have to plan your excursions carefully.

**9 Formula and nappies.** Check if your usual brand is available at your destination. If not, take it with you or consider getting it pre-delivered by [www.bebebel.co.uk](http://www.bebebel.co.uk). If you are arriving on a Saturday or Sunday, make sure you have enough for a few days – in many countries few shops are open on Sundays. If in doubt, check.

**10 Change your expectations.** While you will no doubt have some precious memories from your baby's first holiday, it can also be very tiring. If you accept in advance that this holiday is going to be different to your previous ones, you are more likely to be able to relax and enjoy it.

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*Catherine Cooper is author of Travelling with Children: A Parent's Guide (€11.99), published by Bonacia Press and available from bookshops and [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk).*

