

A Magical San Juan Island Babymoon

Watching the evening sky put on its colorful display above [Friday Harbor](#) as we dined on gourmet meals was not a scene my husband Casey and I imagined ourselves enjoying during my pregnancy. But alas, as luck and privilege would have it, we were able to do just that during our San Juan Island babymoon. And we enjoyed every single minute of it.

Our journey began on the last ferry out. The ferry was late but we didn't care. We'd fashioned the back of Casey's canopied truck into a very comfortable bed, so we just got cozy and relaxed until the ship came in. And of course, we got some last call [Ivar's Clam Chowder](#) from The Anacortes Terminal Café.

We rolled into town late, as planned, and proceeded to "camp" in our truck, on a friends' property. We were careful not to wake them up, as they have two kiddos who were fast asleep. The only one who noticed our presence was their not-so-vicious Great Pyrenees, Winny. We managed to win her over with pets and praise, and she let us stay. Once we found a perfect private spot under the dazzling island stars, we drifted off to sleep content.

When we woke up — we realized we'd parked in the wrong place — ha! Navigation had taken us to our friends' family's neighboring farm. After realizing our mistake, we made our way to our friends' home, which was right next door. We drank tea and snacked on homemade sourdough toast, and caught up on life, and kids.

Once we were all caught up, Casey and I went to Friday Harbor to get brunch, as toast didn't quite satiate my pregnant appetite. We stopped at the [Rocky Bay Café](#) (a local hotspot featured on Food Network [here](#)), where I had California Benedict, and Casey had chicken fried steak. It hit the spot in that magical way a classic diner breakfast does.

After brunch, we headed to the west side of the island to enjoy some beaches. The weather was perfect, in the upper 70s, so we figured we'd get as much beach time in as we could before our babymoon plans in town. First, we stopped at [San Juan County Park](#), where we marveled at the tidepools, sea life, and view of [Vancouver Island](#). There also was a gaggle of geese and goslings who were blocking the boat launch, and this soon-to-be momma could not get enough of those little cuties.



Lime Kiln Point State Park.

Next, we stopped at [Lime Kiln State Park](#), the famous [whale-watching](#) beach. While we weren't lucky enough to spot any Orcas, we did enjoy some hummingbirds, harbor seals, and some awe-inspiring scenery. We had to cut the beach trip a bit short, however, because we had big plans for Friday Harbor.

In need of a change and a shower, we checked into our babymoon suite at the [Friday Harbor House](#). Our initial impression of the local inn could not have been more positive, and it remained that way throughout our stay. The staff was super friendly and welcoming. The room itself was tastefully decorated with a stunning view of the harbor.

Oh, and did I mention the babymoon [suite](#) comes complete with sweet and savory snacks, fruit, and warm olives and nuts from the on-site restaurant? The snacks hit pretty much every pregnancy craving imaginable.

I had just enough time to shower, snack, and change before I headed to my prenatal massage at [Lavendera Massage](#). Beth Drake was my masseuse, and she was a miracle worker. She used a massage method called Structural Relief Therapy. SRT works by finding the tender points on your body and moving your corresponding joint until the tenderness dissolves. Drake found and dissolved tender spots on my body I didn't even know existed, but in hindsight were causing me serious pain especially in my ribs and hips.

She was the perfect person to give a prenatal massage. Having three kids of her own, and lots of knowledge and expertise about pregnant bodies, she knew just how to provide the gentle but effective touch needed to give an excellent massage. Pregnancy can take its toll on your body, and a prenatal massage is one way to remedy that.



Our suite at Friday Harbor House.

After the massage, Casey and I window shopped around Friday Harbor and then headed back to the hotel room to get ready for dinner.

[The Restaurant at Friday Harbor House](#) set us up with a lovely table on their newly remodeled deck. We started with a small plate, Bagna càuda. This Italian dish features an array of vegetables: rainbow carrots, broccolini, cauliflower, parsnips, oyster mushrooms, and stunning watermelon radishes. The veggies are lightly cooked, except the radishes, and served in a bed of warm olive oil, black garlic, and anchovies, with bread for dipping. It was lightly salted, and so delicious.



The Bagna càuda.

Next came the main courses, the real showstoppers. I ordered the woodstone roasted halibut. The halibut was perfectly cooked, and placed atop an heirloom carrot puree and served with smoked oysters, purple confit potatoes, with whole asparagus draped over the halibut. The plate was garnished and seasoned with leek ash, which perfectly complemented the smoky flavor from the oysters and halibut.

Casey ordered the frilled ribeye, which was served on a bed of chevre and horseradish, with mustard greens, mixed greens, and fingerling potatoes. Both meals were as scrumptious as they were beautiful to look at.

The Restaurant at Friday Harbor House also had an excellent wine menu, which Casey enjoyed. The server provided very helpful pairing suggestions.

For dessert, Casey and I shared a piece of moist, delectable chocolate cake with a scoop of vanilla ice cream, topped with a sweet cream sauce. Okay, we didn't really share. I ate it all.



The roasted halibut dish.

Both the dessert and the ribeye were served on dishware handmade on the island by [Paula West Pottery](#). Not only did the dishes provide a lovely, minimal, and elegant aesthetic, they were practical in that they insulate hot and cold items exceptionally well.

After such a mind-blowingly incredible meal, Casey and I headed back to our room. Feeling a bit sore from my massage (Drake warned that I would be), and tired from our big day, I headed straight for the babymoon suite's Jacuzzi tub. The suite came complete with lovely eucalyptus scented bath salts, and other goodies to help get a restful night's sleep. The bath salts were perfect for a warm soak after a massage and a long, wonderful, day.

We both slept soundly, as the bed was heavenly.

The next morning we woke up, got ready, and headed straight to brunch at The Restaurant at Friday Harbor House. Once again, the meal was excellent. I had smoked salmon benedict, with a side of pea greens and Yukon gold potatoes. The Yukon gold potatoes were exceptional — and the server explained why. The cooks boil the potatoes to soften them and then pulls them apart by hand which brings the starches to the surface. The potatoes are then lightly pan-fried, and the result is a perfectly crisp coating.

Casey had the steak skillet, which featured sliced flank steak, Yukon gold potatoes, chile-onion marmalade, cilantro chimichurri, white cheddar, and egg. It was a visual and flavor masterpiece.

After our hearty brunch, we headed over to Kings Market, just across the street, to stock up on supplies for our glamping trip that night. Then we packed up, checked out of our beloved room, and were off to enjoy the island.

We spent the day at [Westcott Bay Shellfish Co.](#), Casey sampled their raw Pacific oysters, and I just took in the scenery. From there, we took a little walk to English Camp, a lovely state park you can access from the shellfish farm. Parking at the farm just to go to English Camp usually isn't allowed. There are signs advising against it. Since we were there in the off-season, and it wasn't too busy, they didn't mind us making the trek. We were also paying customers, so I'm sure that helped.

After our walk, we bought some oysters to grill and were on our way to [Lakedale Resort](#) for our night of glamping.

Lakedale is a vacation destination in and of itself, even if it weren't on San Juan Island. A resort on two swimmable lakes, the amenities include a ten-room Pacific Northwest-style lodge, log cabins, canvas glamping cabins, and regular campsites galore. You can rent paddle boats, fish in their fully-stocked lake, swim, or just relax and enjoy yourself.



Our glamping setup at Lakedale Resort.

We chose the latter, as it wasn't quite warm enough for a swim. We built a fire and grilled up some oysters, potatoes, and veggies. The adorable little store had all the little things for camping we forgot, and some extras. Including Mad Libs, which Casey and I had a blast playing until we fell asleep on our ultra-comfy glamping bed.

Unfortunately for us, real life was calling. We had to leave early the next morning to catch a ferry and therefore missed the complimentary breakfast in the mess hall. We had one last ferry ride together before hopping on the road back to reality. We reflected on the unbelievable fortune of being able to enjoy such a wonderful babymoon getaway, as we took in the views from the boat.



It was a treat to enjoy San Juan Island just before the busy season, and I fully recommend taking a trip out there during the off-season. The fall is a lovely time on the island; it has more deciduous trees than we do on the Sound, and the foliage is worth the trip alone. Plus, you'll miss the larger crowds, and have more time to spend with the locals, who will

happily and readily accommodate off-season travelers.

Parenthood is going to change everything, so taking one last trip as a kid-free couple was such a delight. If you can take a babymoon, or if you know some expecting parents and want to treat them to one, do. And no matter the time of year, San Juan Island is a magical place to do it. Next time we visit, we will likely have a baby in tow.