



PHOTO: T. YAM, MATIN/SHUTTERSTOCK

This is one of the most anticipated and indulgent holidays you'll ever take, so naturally expectations are high. Once-in-a-lifetime experiences such as champagne picnics on uninhabited islands, diving with whale sharks and staying in over-water villas with their own chef have long lured happy couples. But now action and adventure are a top priority for newlyweds who have already taken sun, sea and sand holidays together numerous times – anything from gorilla encounters in Uganda to tandem skydiving in New Zealand. And twin-centre honeymoons – city and spa, safari and sand – are also very popular. Some things never go out of honeymoon fashion, though: a big bed, amazing views, fantastic food and top-notch service.

Animal attraction

1 Samode Safari Lodge, India
Samode has raised the bar for wilderness safaris in India. When you're not out spotting tigers in neighbouring Bandhavgarh National Park, you can chill out together in one of the 12 villas. Each has a sexy indoor/outdoor bathroom, dressing room and sitting room. The main lounge, with fireplaces and comfy

sofas, is the heart of the lodge; there is also a spa, gym and pool.

009 1 76532 80579; samode.com/safarilodge. Villas from £620, including park fees, all meals, drinks and game drives.

2 Sanctuary Gorilla Forest Camp, Uganda

Deep in the Bwindi Impenetrable Forest in western Uganda, this eco lodge of eight permanent en-suite tents offers the chance to see more than 113 species of mammal, including elephants and mountain gorillas, one of the rarest animals on the planet. After a day of adventure, relax on your raised tent's veranda then enjoy dinner à deux around the campfire.

01242 546 609; sanctuaryretreats.com. Doubles from £178 per person.

3 Pikaia Lodge, Galapagos

Hotel locations don't come more staggering than this: atop an extinct volcano on Santa Cruz Island, ringed by a marine reserve that is one of the seven underwater wonders of the world. It's the first design-led, carbon-neutral accommodation in the Galapagos. Guests are invited to hop aboard the hotel's luxury yacht to follow in Darwin's footsteps and visit islands sheltering marine

iguanas, sea lions, blue-footed boobys and giant tortoises. Back at your sustainable modernist base there is an infinity pool to enjoy. Unforgettable.

00593 4371 1670; pikalodgegalapagos.com. Doubles from £4,940 per person for a three-night minimum stay, including all meals, transfers and excursions.

4 Belmond Savute Elephant Camp, Botswana

Watch elephants drink and hippos wallow at the waterhole adjacent to Savute, a heaven-sent place in Chobe National Park. Your accommodation will be one of 12 swish en-suite tents covered by African thatch with timber deck, mosquito-net swathed bed and his-and-hers vanity units. When you're not out on game drives tracking lions and hyenas, there is an elephant-proof pool to dive into and, at night, a traditional firelit boma for dining.

0027 21 483 1600; belmondsafaris.com. Luxury tent from £1,709, including return flight from Maun, all meals and drinks, park fees and game viewing activities.

5 Ngorongoro Crater Lodge, Tanzania

This decadent lodge is set high on the rim of the vast Ngorongoro



Pikaia Lodge in the Galapagos, above left; and Pacuare Lodge, Costa Rica, right. Cover image: Pangkor Laut, on a private island off the Malaysian mainland



Crater, a Unesco World Heritage Site stretching from the Rift Valley to the Serengeti and sheltering a haven of wildlife, including the Big Five. It's not a rustic experience – we're talking personal butlers, crystal chandeliers, antiques, claw-foot bathtubs sprinkled with rose petals – but, hey, this is your honeymoon. Fun extras include picnics in the crater, Maasai cultural visits and bush walks.

0027 11 809 4300; andbeyond.com/ngorongoro-crater-lodge. Doubles from £680, including all meals, drinks and safari activities.

Hotel rates

Prices quoted are per room per night, unless otherwise stated.

Activity and adventure

6 Misibis Bay, Philippines

Segways, zip-lines and dune buggies are all exciting ways to explore Misibis Bay's eco-park and the surrounding forests on Cagranay Island. The resort also offers whale shark tours, where you can snorkel alongside the world's biggest fish, or sightseeing from the Misibis helicopter over the Mayon Volcano, Nag-Aso Lake and Legazpi City.

0063 917 599 1606; misibisbay.com. Suites from £194 per night.

7 Tierra Patagonia, Chile

On the eastern edge of the Torres del Paine National Park, this unique hotel has serious wow factor, from the 40 rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows and minimalist style to the living roof. Once you've stopped gawping at the architecture and view, it's time to choose from the 30-plus excursions. Boat journeys past icebergs, riding with gauchos, hiking to the base of the Torres and condor viewing are all available.

0056 2 2207 8861; tierra-hotels.com. Minimum three-night stay from £3,260 for two adults, all-inclusive and including two half-day excursions and transfers.

8 Huka Lodge, New Zealand

Horse riding, kayaking, white-water rafting, bungee jumping, skydiving, quad biking... However you want to get your honeymoon kicks, it can be arranged at this elegant hunting lodge on Lake Taupo and the Waikato River. Lodge rooms are elegant, but for total privacy book the Owner's Cottage, which has a view of the mighty Huka Falls with outdoor dining table, fireplace, private chef and butler.

0064 7 378 5791; hukalodge.co.nz. Doubles from £372 per night.