Royal Baby On Board

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As the nation waits with bated breath for the now-overdue Royal Baby, it appears that the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge's pregnancy has sparked the biggest baby boom in 40 years. New figures suggest that more than 700,000 babies will be born in England this year - the highest number since 1971, according to the Royal College of Midwives.

In anticipation of the arrival of the latest addition to the Royal Family, VisitEngland rounds up some of the best holidays and experiences on offer for new families, as two become three…

Baby in Tow
His or Her Royal Highness the Prince or Princess of Cambridge will likely spend a great deal of their childhood at London's Kensington Palace where the Duke and Duchess will reside. To mark the occasion, the nearby Hilton London Kensington has created a 'Tot-ter Around Kensington' package. Guests can enjoy a two-night shopping break, ideal for mother-daughter bonding and mums-to-be. The package includes a two-night stay at the stylish Hilton London Kensington, with each guest receiving a VIP card for Westfield London Shopping Centre, situated directly opposite the hotel. The VIP card entitles shoppers to offers and discounts of up to 20% from over 80 stores and restaurants. Stylish mums-to-be can stock up on baby treats from stores including Bébé Bisou, Mamas & Papas and Atelier de Courcelles. Price dependent on availability. To book, visit www.hilton.com/kensington

Meanwhile, one of the luxury suites at the Grosvenor House Hotel on Park Lane has been transformed into a five-star nursery for jet-setting babies. The hotel has teamed up with bespoke nursery designers Dragons of Walton Street and transformed a Premium Park View Suite into a quintessentially English nursery, designed and tailored with a royal baby in mind. Dragons of Walton Street has a historic association with the Royal Family, with William and Harry, Beatrice and Eugenie all growing up in a Dragons nursery. Inspired by the suite's idyllic views of Hyde Park and the hotel's history, this latest creation is fitted with bespoke, hand crafted and painted furniture. The pièce de résistance is a beautiful dolls house toy cupboard hand painted to represent Grosvenor House's signature architecture. Select from three packages starting from £2,230 per night. To book, visit www.marriott.co.uk

Outside the capital, Cornwall's Bedruthan Steps Hotel has a 'Welcome to the World' break, offering new mums and dads a helping hand through their first year of parenting. The package encourages new parents to deepen their bond with their new arrival through baby massage, swimming and yoga classes. The break includes workshops with psychologist Dr Sarah Mundy on some approaches to the challenges that new parents face. The hotel aims to take the pressures off you and take care of your every need - no need to worry about cooking, washing, cleaning or tidying up here. If you need some time out, the expert childcare team is on hand to allow you to experience some 'me' time to stroll the spectacular coast path, relax by the pool, have a Mama Mio massage treatment or spend quality time with your partner. Available 11 - 13 October 2013. Two night breaks from £255 per person based on two adults sharing. Baby goes free (of course!). To book, visit www.bedruthan.com

Born to Rule
Fans of the growing Royal Family can take a look back at royal babies past at 'The Royal Child', a new photography exhibition at the Athenaeum. The hotel, which sits within sight of Buckingham Palace, offers an exclusive Royal photography and afternoon tea experience, available at weekends from 22 June to 31 August 2013. Guests will have the opportunity to view over 50 images whilst Curator of the exhibition, Ian Pelham-Turner provides fascinating insights into how Royal children have been brought up since Victorian times, and how the new Royal baby may be treated This exclusive event will take place over afternoon tea served in the athenaeum's Hyde Park room. The afternoon tea has been created by the same team who were awarded 'Top London Afternoon Tea 2012'. Tickets to the exhibition and afternoon tea cost £60 per person. In addition, the hotel is also offering a 'Best of British Break', including the mentioned tea, from £299 per person. To book, visit www.athenaeumhotel.com or call 0207 640 3364.

In addition, the Museum of London celebrates the momentous occasion with a new display. 'A Royal Arrival' delves deep into the Museum of London's collection to showcase baby clothes and memorabilia worn by former royal babies, from Charles I to George III and Edward VII to link the latest royal arrival to over 400 years of UK history. Objects on show include a delicately embroidered skullcap worn by an infant Charles I. Other pieces include a tiny linen vest embroidered with a crown and a small lace mitten belonging to George III. A nursing robe thought to have been used by Queen Victoria, shoes worn by her many children and a dress blazoned with the three feather insignia belonging to her eldest son, Prince Albert Edward (later Edward VII) will also go on show. Free admission. For more information, visit

www.museumoflondon.org.uk

Explore beyond the photographs by visiting some of the places baby British royals spent their childhoods. The Sandringham Estate holds many memories for the Royal Family. It is a favourite retreat of The Queen, and the late Princess Diana was born in a cottage located in the estate's extensive grounds. Prince Charles had many childhood adventures at Sandringham House, the much-loved royal retreat, which is a beautiful place to visit. It's only a short trip from King's Lynn station, itself around a two-hour train journey from London. For more information, visit www.sandringhamestate.co.uk

Windsor has a vibrant royal history, especially where young royals are concerned! Y Bwthyn Bach, also known as The Little House, is a miniature cottage in the grounds of Windsor's Royal Lodge. The Little House was presented to Queen Elizabeth (then Princess) on her sixth birthday and the Queen's children and grandchildren have played in the house over the decades, though it isn't open to the public. However, located to the south of Windsor town centre, Windsor Great Park is a well-loved and popular recreational retreat for many families, and has views of Windsor Castle. Windsor is also home to LEGOLAND, where you can see a miniature version of Buckingham Palace. For more information, visit www.windsor.gov.uk

The InterContinental London Park Hotel at 145 Piccadilly was once Her Majesty the Queen's childhood residence. Check out the newly-designed Royal Suite, which celebrates the Queen's signature taste with modern British design. Located between Mayfair and Knightsbridge, and in view of many of London's stunning landmarks, the InterContinental is the epitome of elegance. Afternoon tea in the Wellington Lounge is a must; you're sure to feel like royalty, sipping Champagne and overlooking the iconic Wellington Arch. For more information, visit www.ichotelsgroup.com/intercontinental/hotels/gb/en/london/lonhb/hoteldetail

Babies Go Too: Tot-ter Around England Out of Season

Anyone with babies or toddlers is in a privileged position when it comes to summer holidays. Pre-school families enjoy affordability, flexibility, and having the countryside and coastline all to themselves by travelling outside of the school holidays. Classic Cottages has a vast choice of appealing properties for young families across Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset. And by clicking on the baby-friendly button, you narrow the results to only show properties that have cots, highchairs, stair-gates, baby baths, bath mats, changing mats and socket covers. Try Coombe Barn (sleeps six + cot), situated on a working farm that's tucked into the Tamar Valley, which has an indoor heated swimming pool with views of Dartmoor, an outdoor children's play area and a soft play area for toddlers. Just up the road, The Springer Spaniel Inn is a treat with its Rick Stein-trained chef and 'Little Jack Russell' children's menu. From £141 per person, per week. To book visit, www.classic.co.uk

As The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge may well discover, the first trip away as parents of a young baby can be a daunting experience. An endless packing list and the worry of whether you'll actually be able to relax with your baby when you finally arrive can make you wonder if it's worth travelling at all. For families of any age, a stay at New Park Manor in the New Forest is a welcome relief. It even comes with Royal credentials. Originally the favourite Hunting Lodge of King Charles II, this 17th century manor house is in the heart of the Forest, just outside Brockenhurst. Having recently undergone a multi-million pound refurbishment, it is set to become the most family-friendly luxury hotel in the Forest. Alternatively, enjoy one of Luxury Family Hotels' seven other properties around the country. From The Ickworth, a grand country estate in Suffolk, to the elegant Fowey Hall in the pretty Cornish fishing town of Fowey; and from the atmospheric Moonfleet Manor overlooking Chesil Beach in Dorset to Polurrian Bay on the Lizard Pensinsula, there is plenty to be inspired by. Stay two nights from just £249 per room B&B, including a three course dinner on one night, or three nights from £349 per room, with a three course dinner on two of those nights. To book, visit www.luxuryfamilyhotels.co.uk

Just for Mum - Pre-and Post-Baby Pampering

Kate is reportedly the first ever royal to have had a baby shower, and now mothers to be can emulate the royal party style. Until 31 July, mums to be can receive the royal treatment with a 'Royal Baby Shower Afternoon' at St James's Hotel and Club. On arrival, you'll receive a luxury baby gift worth £85. You will then receive a -pregnancy treatment at Spa Illuminata, one of the finest spas in central London, before afternoon tea from award-winning executive chef, William Drabble. The package is £89 per person, with a minimum of eight people. You'll even stand to win a three-course meal for two at Michelin-starred Seven Park Place, including a glass of Champagne - if the mother-to-be delivers on the same day as Kate Middleton. For reservations, e-mail events@stjameshotelandclub.com

If it's escapism you need, book in a night away from the kids and check into The Bingham for or a 'Mums-Only Sleepover'. Every Sunday until 31 December, the hotel is offering packages for sleep deprived mums in its Queen Single Bedrooms - perfect for some well-deserved rest and relaxation. Read a book or potter around the hotel's boutique shop, have a hot bath with Abhana bath oils and scented

candles, and treat yourself with room service or dinner in the river view bar. After a night of blissful uninterrupted sleep, enjoy a peaceful breakfast before returning home a new woman. From £150. To book, visit www.thebingham.co.uk

Just for Dad - Wet the Babies Head in Royal Fashion
Following the arrival of His or Her Royal Highness the Prince or Princess of Cambridge, the Royal Household is sure to be in celebration mode. Join in the fun and celebrate by wetting the baby's head with the help of the Royal Warrant Holders...

It wouldn't be much of a party without the pop of a cork and an overflow of Champagne. And to emulate Buckingham Palace, you need look no further than your local Waitrose. The first supermarket chain to be awarded a Royal Warrant by the Queen, the branch in Windsor is a regular supplier to the Royal Household, and with shops all around England, extravagance need not be a journey too far.

For an authentic English wine tasting experience, head to Chiltern Valley Wines in Oxfordshire and try before you buy. Holding a Royal Warrant since 2007, the vineyard is located in an area of outstanding natural beauty that's the perfect spot for wine tours and tastings, £15 per person.

Complete the party by serving Fortnum & Mason cucumber sandwiches with Essex's Wilkson & Son condiments on beautiful Wedgwood China from England's capital of porcelain, Stoke-on-Trent. Have-a-go activities at the Wedgwood Centre start at just £5.

For more inspiration on family breaks and activities in England, visit www.visitengland.com/royalbaby

Ends.

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Notes to Editors:

About England
• Historic yet contemporary, traditional yet cutting-edge, metropolitan yet wild: England is truly a unique destination and a real powerhouse in global tourism.
• With ancient Hadrian's Wall straddling the wild north and the world's biggest indoor tropical rainforest nestled in the far south, England really is the ultimate mix of old and new as well as being home to some of the most iconic sites in the world, including Stonehenge, the honey-hued Georgian terraces of Bath and the towering peaks and glistening meres of the Lake District.
• Did you know that in 2010 there were 96.4 million domestic overnight trips in England, 25.5 million inbound visits and 872 million tourism day trips?

More information can be found on www.visitengland.com

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