

No honeymoon replays: People don't want to taint special memories

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That unforgettable honeymoon has a special place in your memory -- so special that you might be reluctant to try to repeat it. A new study in the *Journal of Consumer Research* says people tend to treat their memories of previous special experiences as assets to be protected.

"When asked if they would like to return to a place where they had a 'particularly special' versus 'pleasant but not particularly special' vacation or evening out, people were more interested in returning to the place where the initial event that they experienced was simply pleasant rather than truly special," write authors Gal Zauberman (University of Pennsylvania), Rebecca K. Ratner (University of Maryland), and B. Kyu Kim (University of Pennsylvania).

The researchers say that participants did not want to taint their memories of earlier special times. Unless researchers reassured the participants that the second experiences would be very similar to the initial experiences, they were apprehensive about repeating them.

The study also looked at the motivations behind acquiring souvenirs, known in the study as "memory pointers." For example, more participants said they would rather own a CD of their favorite band than a Mayan sculpture, unless they had taken a particularly meaningful trip to Mayan ruins. "Those considering a trip that was simply pleasant—for

instance, with sunny weather and lots of time to read on the beach but no meaningful experiences—did not feel the need to acquire those items that they thought would help them remember the experience later."

"This desire to protect memories of meaningful experiences emerged even though participants thought that these experiences would be more memorable than mundane experiences would be," conclude the authors.

Source: University of Chicago

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