

CAN THIS BE LOVE?

ARE YOU A VACATION-COMPATIBLE COUPLE?

How to find out

As the time rolls around to plan your summer vacation, keep one thing in mind: Just because you want to travel through life with someone doesn't necessarily mean you want to travel through California with him.

Couples go wrong in thinking that because they leave for work together every morning, they are ideally suited to leave for parts unknown together every summer. For instance, after taking a car trip through the Southwest last July, my friend Annie and her husband decided that for them, traveling together was as appealing as being buried alive together. This conclusion was occasioned by her discovery that Peter was serious when he said he wanted to sleep under the stars, a statement that Annie (who sleeps best in \$200-a-night hotel rooms) thought referred to his sexual fantasies concerning Cher and Daryl Hannah.

Even the best-matched of couples may have very different attitudes toward travel. Before you assume that vacationing together will be as much fun as showering together, consider *your* differences. For instance, suppose that:

1. Your idea of a perfect trip is a leisurely drive through whatever region of Italy has the densest concentration of three-star restaurants and hotels, while your partner's idea of a perfect trip is a) following Rommel's route through North Africa; b) spending a week at his parent's retirement community in Boca Raton; or c) reading a biography of Marco Polo.

2. You're ready to go anywhere at the drop of a hat, easily cramming everything you need into one suitcase, while your partner a) needs three suitcases and a hair-dryer just to get across town; b) needs two weeks to pack for an overnight business trip; or c) has a passport that expired in 1980.

3. You like to consume the local food and wine wherever you visit, while your partner prefers to consume a) the local beer, period; b) a Big Mac, whenever possible; or c) his neatly packed supply of high-energy, freeze-dried food packets developed by NASA for extended travel in outer space.

4. You're more interested in having a good time when you travel than worrying about every nickel you spend, while your partner a) prefers the room that overlooks the parking lot to the one that overlooks the Rockies and costs \$20 more a night; b) spends at least fifteen minutes every day computing how much you can spend on dinner and still have enough money left for the rest of the trip; or c) continually warns you to watch your bag.

5. You always assume that people in a foreign country will be friendly and accommodating, while your partner always assumes that everybody's a) trying to cheat him; b) trying to kill him with their cars; or c) making fun of his French.

6. You like to get off the beaten path and search out the unexpected, while your partner a) prefers to stick as close to an American Express office as possible; b) thinks that off the beaten track means anything less than a four-lane highway; or c) gets a tick in his left eye if asked to read a map.

7. You don't mind roughing it a little, staying in places that have more charm than hot water, eating picnic lunches instead of going to a restaurant, while your partner a) believes that going without a shower for a night is as unimaginable as going without gravity; b) says that picnics are for gypsies; or c) thinks the term "roughing it" refers to something you do to furniture to make it look old.

8. You like strenuous travel, hiking up a mountain of a morning or trekking across the countryside from one town to another, while your partner a) considers packing the car as strenuous an activity as anybody should ever have to do in life; b) doesn't own a pair of sneakers; or c) last worked out in June 1981.

9. You're very good at quickly picking up a few necessary words and the lilt of most languages, while your partner a) believes that everybody will understand him if he shouts loudly enough; b) believes everybody should—and secretly does—speak English; or c) assumes it is universally understood that pointing a finger at one's open mouth means "where is the nearest restaurant?"

If an appraisal of your own and your mate's attitudes indicates that taking a trip together might be your last act as a couple, don't worry. This is no disgrace, and does not reflect badly on your devotion to one another. Being willing to go to the ends of the earth *for* your mate doesn't necessarily mean you'd be willing to go there *with* him. Simply look around for another traveling companion—preferably someone whom it wouldn't break your heart to dump unceremoniously in Zagreb, should the going get rough.

by Bette-Jane Raphael

