

Five months into pregnancy: shopping for baby – zero; shopping planned for baby – zero.

Except that sometimes you can't remain ignorant despite your best efforts. So having tea with a friend who was in the last stage of pregnancy, I learned everything about co-sleeping (well... 'everything'... I learned that co-sleeping means that the baby is sleeping in your bed, or almost). I quite liked her idea of a baby bed stuck to the parents' bed, as a fit solution for lazy me: no need to get out of bed to feed during the night!

That same evening I naturally brought up the topic with my favorite Indian who managed to remain completely impassive, not at all surprised the guy. His mother, on the other hand... Culture gap: in India the baby sleeps in the parental bed until he is at least two; in France he is sent in exile to his room on the first night (we teach them life immediately, no sympathy!). Hence the (rather vehement) look of disapproval on my mother's face when I mentioned co-sleeping!

Argument in favor of the Indian tradition: practical and economical. Argument against: what about couple intimacy? The whole family concept reflects in this sleeping habit... In India the family revolves around children and parents. In France (not to say in the West), it revolves around the couple. In short. (This is why when the couple goes down the drain, so does the family...)

As in life everything is a matter of compromise, we agreed quickly (my main argument (regarding our sex life – I do hope to resume it before Junior is 5 (and I am not ashamed of it)) seems to have struck a chord) on a cradle that would be near the bed (but not stuck to it), which would be moved after 3-6 months (we keep some room!) in the guest bedroom – I would like to call it the baby's room but really, we did zero arrangement!

So this sleeping option seemed flexible... Flexible but not simple. In a country where babies sleep in their parents' bed or in pieces of fabric hanging from a rope as hammocks, it is definitely not easy to find a crib. And then, surprise, your dear husband looks into the issue in depth and come out an expert in cribs. So after he explained the benefits of gliding versus rocking, of strengthened protection to avoid the baby eating wood when chewing his bars and elected the cradle of his dreams (the perfect bed that goes from 0 to 24 months, which rocks but can also roll) you have to buy it right?? Except that the 'Da Vinci rocking mini-crib' is not sold in India. Not even in France. Actually it is nowhere to be found but in North America. And without any possible delivery to other countries. So what do you do then eh? How to reward such an amazing male effort??

No problem, only solution! You call your Indian friend on holidays in Los Angeles; you have THE mini-crib delivered to her by Amazon (and you get ready to put the same amount in the luggage supplement as you have put in the cradle)! And just before making the transfer on the airline website, you ask her to take measurements, just to be sure... And boom, it is just above the maximum oversized dimensions... You still want to check if the airline would not adjust for a few inches here and there but obviously it's midnight and the offices in India are closed. So your friend, some 15 time zones away, offers to call them in the US, only to be redirected to... a call center in India. Of course. In short, the Indian staff repeats word for word what is written on the site, and the parcel is returned to the sender. As for us, we go back to our local solutions.

Which boil down to two Mother Care cribs, 0-6 months (and the Indian rocking ones which are just ugly, either in plastic or metal). We visit the store for the first time – we are now less than two months away from delivery, it is never too late! – to see the last piece on sale. Then we visit a British friend in one of the most beautiful towers in Mumbai to check out the other model that she is selling as second hand. Both options seem acceptable to me – let's make a decision, how much energy can we spend for a bed??

BUT NO!!! Once your dear husband has found the crib of his dreams, he is not going to compromise for second-class options: "don't you think this crib is gliding a little too fast? and it's annoying, you can't dismantle it easily no? and it will not even last for a year!". Back to square one...

It briefly crosses our minds to get the mini-crib done locally. Indians are masters of it. But for questions of security and patience, we quickly drop the idea. On top of that our recent experiences in this field have not been conclusive, to say the least (cf his tailor-made wedding suit and alliance he never wore (not even on the wedding day)).

This is when your dear husband finds the website that specializes in getting stuff from the US (transportation and customs). Cost: at least the price of what you are buying. But anyway we were ready to spend that much from the beginning – and when you buy from Mother Care in India, it is much more expensive than in England. Since he is at it he buys a mattress on this site, because who says unique crib says unique size of mattress (not found in India nor in France). And there, incredible but true, in one week the crib was in our living room! And assembled in less than ten minutes! And meeting the expectations of the dear husband! (this was far from given) And he got to try the do-it-yourself American-style (he could build his baby's bed!!) Pfffiou...

Let's see now what use we will make of our beautiful cradle and how we will manage sleep with Junior! Because it is very easy to talk, we don't know what we will really do!! So we will just do our best... And hope that the baby will not suffer from a "lack of love", or "sense of insecurity" if he/she does not sleep with the mother for at least twelve months (after all I and my brothers are quite balanced despite sleeping methods judged barbaric)!