

# *Frugal Dates*

and other Romantic Ideas

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## Frugal Dates

Have you been going on your weekly date with your significant other? Think it is too expensive. Well, it doesn't have to be. Here are some frugal dating ideas for you. Have fun!



- Have an indoor picnic with a blanket, food and wine. Turn on your nature CD and imagine a sunset.
- Paint together or tour a local art gallery.
- Go for a walk along the beach at sunset.
- Go on a "tour" of your city. Explore all the hidden parts of your town you miss just living there.
- Borrow a rowboat and go on an evening ride.
- Do an all-nighter, Rent some romantic movies like "Legends of the Fall" and "Last of the Mohicans." Snuggle close. Go for a walk under the stars. Dance to the radio. Then sleep in the next day.
- Have a long pillow fight.
- Fly a kite together.
- Candlelight dinner at home.
- Go visit some expensive model homes and pretend you can actually afford to buy them. "I don't know if the bathroom is big enough. Do you think it could fit the spa and the sauna?"
- Go on a hike with your honey. Take pictures of the wildlife. Cuddle when you get to your destination.
- Visit the tallest building nearby, like the Sears Tower. Absolutely breathtaking at night watching the lights.
- Lay a blanket out in the backyard and go star-gazing. Get a constellation book from the library and see how many you can find.
- Meet in a hotel lobby and pretend you are meeting for the first time as strangers.
- Visit a free zoo together. Discover each other's favorite animals.
- Take a bubble bath for two. Enjoy some soft music, candles and lots of bubbles!
- Visit a museum together on no admission day. In many places that is Tuesday. Call your local museum and see when the cheapest days are.
- Browse a bookstore together at one that includes a coffeehouse. Sip coffee and read to each other.
- Plan a dream vacation. Get brochures and have fun dreaming.
- Go to the two dollar movie theater.
- Go out for ice cream cones.
- Visit a pet store and play with the kittens.
- Listen to a concert in the park. Many have no cost at all.

- Go shopping at 2AM at an all night store. No need to buy anything. Hold hands the whole time.
- Test drive a Cadillac.
- Dress up and go to McDonald's.
- Go for an evening stroll.
- Share a chocolate shake together with two straws.
- Exchange backrubs with some fragrant oil.
- Take funny and romantic pictures of each other. Then spend another night looking at them together.
- Or go through past photos of you together.
- Go to the airport and watch the planes take off. Imagine where they might be going.
- Go dancing.
- Play poker or another game with some fun stakes.
- Trade houses with a friend for the weekend.
- Have your spouse teach you how to play pool. Get nice and close.
- See a play at the local high school or college.
- Go to the carnival when it is in town, on the ride all the rides for \$13 all night.
- Go garage saling or rummaging for antiques.
- Take a long drive and talk.
- Have a heated game of one on one basketball at the park while kids are at school.
- Go for a bicycle ride. Follow the tour signs, go on back roads, make discoveries.
- Work out at the gym together. Spot each other.
- Go bowling.
- Take a pup tent to a campground for the night. A peaceful night all to yourselves.
- Compete in computer games.
- Go roller-blading across town together.
- Go cross-country skiing, if you already own the equipment.
- Cook a meal together.

## Anniversary Ideas



Tired of the old dinner out on your anniversary? Take a look at some of these ideas to help spark that romantic creativity of yours.

- See if there are any festivals going on in your state. Hold hands, eat cotton candy, see the sights, then drive back for a romantic night at home.
- Anniversaries don't always have to be so female oriented. How about a trip to the races: cars, trucks, horses. Find something to root for and have fun. Hey, it was romantic in *Pretty Woman*.
- Check to see any special programs nearby such as a new exhibit at the museum or a unusual presentation at the planetarium.
- You can still go out to dinner at your favorite restaurant, but try dressing up to make it more romantic. Talk about your favorite memories of the past years you have been married.
- Go to the park after the kiddies have all gone home for the night. Swing on the swings, ride the slide together, play tag. And when you are all worn out find a place to make out like crazy.
- Have a fun night of miniature golfing, go carts and ice cream at an ice cream stand.
- Spend the night at a hotel with a pool or in room whirlpool. Very romantic and relaxing.
- Take out your tent and go camping, just the two of you. Take a midnight stroll in the woods. Look up at the stars. Cuddle by a fire.
- Buy two train tickets. Hop on the train and get off someplace you've never been, but sounds interesting. Spend the day there, then take a train back. This also works for driving-but make sure you have a really good map!
- If you have a whole weekend, you can kidnap your husband to a bed and breakfast in a quaint town.
- Take a hiking weekend. Get two matching backpacks and locate a state park with good hiking trails.

- Pack a picnic basket with cheese, french bread and grape juice with wine glasses. Spread out a cozy blanket and enjoy the day together. Bring along a frisbee, kite or water guns for fun.
- Go to the beach, just the two of you. Did you forget how much fun it is without the kids to watch?
- Go on a bike riding adventure. Practice bike riding together for a few weeks before so you get your stamina. Then take a long bike ride, camp or get a motel, then ride your bikes back.
- Buy a couple pairs of rollerblades and try them out together. Be sure to buy knee pads, wrist pads, too.
- Find out if the local college is holding an event, concert or play.
- For the competitive spirits, hold a board game tournament. Spend the night beating each other at scrabble and trivial pursuit.
- Make a candle light dinner at home. Rent a movie you both love, put flower petals on the bed, take a bubble bath together and enjoy each other's company.
- Go to the farmer's market together. Get pretty flowers and some delicious fruit. Make a fruit salad together and eat out on the porch. Or go berry picking together and make strawberry shortcake or something else delicious.
- Go out dancing or if hubby is shy, buy some great new CD's and dance the night away at home.

## Romancing the Bedroom

Is your bedroom a place for romance and relaxation or is it a heap of clutter you close the door to so no one can see it? Picture your bedroom as a **serene place** that lulls you to sleep and makes you feel relaxed with your partner. If your bedroom isn't there yet, maybe it is time to create that nurturing atmosphere.

1. Start by standing in your doorway and examining your room with a pad of **paper and a pen**. On your pad, list anything that annoys you, how you visualize your ideal bedroom, and any organizing ideas that pop into your head.

2. Now **gather your giveaway, put away, and throw away** boxes or bags. The first place to go is the bed. Have someone little take out all that stuff from **under your bed**. Then vacuum it. Now start sorting the shoes, memorabilia and dirty clothes. Storing things under the bed is a good idea if you have one or two labeled under- the-bed storage boxes to keep things dust free. Everything else needs to find another home.

3. How about your **bed**? Do you need to change the sheets? Do you need new ones? What shape are your comforter and pillows in? List it any dream purchases on your paper.



4. Let's look at the **end table(s)**. Empty the drawers. Get rid of the clutter and sort and rearrange what is left. Does what is in your end tables help to give a sense of peace to your room? Now clear off the top of the end tables and dust or polish them. Now what are you going to put back that you really want? I like to keep a couple books, a notebook and a pen, a light (if you don't have those wonderful lights that go above your bed attached to the wall), and a little glass bowl to put my earrings in that I always forget to take off till I'm snuggled under the covers.

5. OK **break time**, have a drink of water, read a chapter in your novel and come back in a bit. Once you are back it is time to take care of those piles on the floor. Put the clothes in a hamper. Put the papers on your desk. Throw out the trash. Maybe you can have a little discreet wastebasket. Are all your piles cleaned up?

6. Onto the **dresser**. Take out the drawers one at a time and sort through the clothes. You know what to do with the ones that you no longer wear, don't you? Any out of season clothes should be in a storage box to be put in a less convenient place. You might think of getting drawer dividers for your socks, underwear, jewelry or makeup. Put the rest of your clothes back in your dresser, it is best if you use one drawer per item so all your clothes aren't jumbled together.

7. Now clear off the dresser, all the way off. Dust and polish it. You can spray the mirror too while you are there. Sort through the things **on the dresser**. If you have a lot of knick knacks maybe you could put some in storage and take them out seasonally. After awhile you don't notice the pretty things in your house but if you switch things around your house can be fresher. You might also consider a tray for makeup, knick knacks or hair care. When you need to dust you just lift the tray and you are all done. What is on your dresser that helps make the bedroom a refuge? I have a little fountain, a picture of my husband and I from a college dance, a jewelry box, my alarm clock/CD player and some candles.

8. Do you have any **bookcases or entertainment centers** that needs to be cleared out. You might even consider having them all the way out of your room. Personally we like our entertainment center in the bedroom that way we can watch a movie in there while the kids are watching a movie in the living room. It also gives me space for my many books, hidden behind the door. On top of it are tons of candles.

9. Do you have a **desk** in your room? Is there anyway to get it out of your room? Your room will be so much more relaxing if you don't see paperwork all the time when you are trying to rest. If not, maybe you can block it off with a pretty screen or a quilt on a clothesline.

10. Now to **set the mood**. Pretty flowers on the dresser. Meaningful pictures on the wall. Candles for romantic nights. A radio/CD player for playing soulful music. Handmade blankets. Lovely pillows piled high on the bed. Whatever your taste is, you can make your bedroom into a peaceful haven. Especially without the clutter.

*How can you make your bedroom a romantic haven?*



# Planning Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is a great day to brighten up a rather dull month and to show people how much you love them!

To prevent getting into a Valentine's Day rut, you can do a little creative planning.

## Valentine Countdown

To get you ready for the big day, here is a checklist for every day.

### Feb. 1

- Write a love note to your honey, detailing what you love about him or her.
- Make your bedroom romantic by getting things out of the room that have nothing to do with getting dressed, loving or sleeping.

### Feb. 2

- Light candles around the house for Candlemas day.
- Decide if you want to spend Valentine's Day with friends, significant other or family.

### Feb. 3

- Rent a sappy movie for your self to get in the mood or shop for some sexy outfit for Valentine's Day with or without friends.
- Try your hand at a love poem.
- Put on a Valentine Screen Savor

### Feb. 4

- Do three nice things for your significant other today.
- Plan where to spend Valentine's Day and make reservations or start picking up the house.

### Feb. 5

- Have a nice long talk with your honey, even if it is only on the phone.
- If you are having dinner at home, decide on the menu. If not, think of a fun way to get to your destination.

**Feb. 6**

- Find some romantic music to play at home or in the car for the big day. Start listening to it now.
- If you have snow, freeze some snowballs for some fun this summer.

**Feb. 7**

- Compliment your love at least three times today.
- Get your haircut and/or a makeover.
- Take a Marriage Quiz

**Feb. 8**

- Get some extra exercise in today; try some yoga moves.
- Give yourself a facial- steam your face, wash, exfoliate, put on a mask, rinse off, and then apply moisturizer.

**Feb. 9**

- Set out candles and massage oil for an early romantic time.
- Order flowers.

**Feb. 10**

- Do a random act of kindness for your sweetie and don't get found out.
- Buy a present and make a card.

**Feb. 11**

- Reread some old love letters and go through some pictures of the two of you.
- Figure out or confirm any details of what you are going to be doing for Valentine's Day.

**Feb. 12**

- Make fudge.
- Give yourself or go out for a manicure and pedicure.

**Feb. 13**

- Pick up a movie, flowers, or anything else you need for

tomorrow.

- ❑ Take a nice, long bath. Defuzz, exfoliate your skin, and slather on some heavenly smelling lotion.

**Feb. 14**

- ❑ Make sure house is clean in morning, including fresh sheets.
- ❑ Send a virtual valentine.
- ❑ Enjoy your day!

# Build Connecting Relationships

"The human contribution is the essential ingredient. It is only in the giving of oneself to others that we truly live." ~ Ethel Percy Andrus

## Honesty

Our relationships can be one of the most complicated parts of our lives. But, we make them more complicated when we don't say what we mean, try to read their thoughts instead of asking questions and worry more about appearances than intimacy.

## Simplifying Connecting

- ❖ Have a regular time to call or write. Call your parents every Sunday. There will be less phone tag, if you call people on a certain day and they are expecting it. Have a regular monthly date with a friend. That way you don't have to constantly try to schedule meeting with your friends.
- ❖ Be direct with people. So much time is wasted from misunderstanding just because people are not saying exactly what is on their minds. Tell people what you want, what you need, what you are feeling. Don't expect people to read your mind and don't assume you know what other people are thinking.
- ❖ Be there in the moment with people. Listen to them. Connect. Don't be thinking about your to do list. Don't spend your time worrying about what you will say next. Enjoy who they are now.
- ❖ Don't give out your cell phone to everyone. You do not need to be available 24 hours a day.
- ❖ Put people first. As Victoria Moran says, "Things with a heartbeat come first".
- ❖ Once a week on desk day, write all your letters and once a week a catch up on e-mails.
- ❖ Don't talk to people about how "busy" you are. Think if you are trying to get your self-worth from busyness.
- ❖ Often a complicated life stems from not being yourself consistently. It can be tiring to dress to impress, to be Lil Miss Perfect, to remember which "white" lie you told. To live with integrity means to live your life outwardly the same as you are inside. It means what you show to others is who you really are. You are consistently honest.
- ❖ Admit when you make a mistake. Then fix it. How many times have you stretched the truth a bit to get out of looking bad? You know that dishonesty drains energy, while admitting mistakes yields closer relationships and the ability to make things right.
- ❖ Don't make excuses to yourself or others.

“If I could give you one thought, it would be to lift someone up. Lift a stranger up -- lift her up. I would ask you, mother and father, brother and sister, lovers, mother and daughter, father and son, lift someone. The very idea of lifting someone up will lift you, as well.” ~Maya Angelou

For ideas on creating a saner, simpler life so you can have more time for romance please visit:

<http://www.mysimplerlife.com>

For any comments or additional suggestions for this book, please email me at [beth@mysimplerlife.com](mailto:beth@mysimplerlife.com)

I hope you have enjoyed these tips.

*Warmly,*

*Beth Dargis*