

Date Your Spouse

Prepared by Grace Baxter for
Mind Your Marriage

Dating is not about how much money you spend. It's ALL about making memories and remembering why you married each other in the first place. But first...

Remember When...

A young man jumps into his car, stops at the closest gas station to fuel up and tops up the tires with more air. Getting in the car, he catches the smell of his own after shave and wonders if he should've gone with a dash of cologne instead. A quick glance in his mirror tells him he's ready. Before leaving home, he made one last phone call to the girl he is on his way to meet now. He wonders if she is as nervous as he is.

On the other side of town, a young woman stares at three different lip glosses. Which one should she go with on tonight's date? She fluffs her hair for the one-hundredth time, and checks her freshly polished nails. A quick look in her full-length mirror tells her she's ready. Now, the waiting begins to make her more nervous. She already knows she loves the sound of his voice. And oh... those blue eyes! From her seat on the sofa she can see every car that winds its way on the road to her parent's home. And then, a car turns into the driveway. The headlights go out and a door opens. The young woman feels her heart pounding a little stronger. Then there's a knock at the door.

Can you recall your first date with the person you eventually married? Do you remember that feeling when you realized for the first time that you wanted to spend every moment with that special person? This is the ONE you've been waiting for and all others are quickly fading into the background like a fuzzy dream. Intrigued, you hung on their every word, trying to remember every little detail they shared about their family or dog, or favourite Christmas or best childhood memory. SO much to learn about him or her, and you can't get enough of it.

Fast forward to the day you married. Nervous again, but not about your love. You KNOW this is the one you want to spend the rest of your life with. Your sweaty palms are because of the guests, and oh yes, your new parents-in-law. What are they thinking about you?

Your beautiful wedding is over and you awake, still tired from the emotional excitement of your wedding day. And there, lying next to you is the love of your life. As a new bride, it hits you that you are now a "Mrs." Or, as a new husband, you are so proud that this lovely young woman said "yes" you can't believe it! It feels so good to belong to one another, and you are happier than you have ever been!

From THEN to NOW

Days and weeks turned into months, then years. And with the addition of children your lives have become much more hectic. It kind of snuck up on you. After ten years of marriage, you scarcely have time to relax in between juggling jobs, household duties, the meals, home fix-ups, family get-togethers, and the crazy routine you and your spouse try to maintain.

Somehow, in your worn-down moments you wonder if that strong love is still there. Yes, you both are faithful but... one (or both) of you is not “feeling the love” in the same way. It happens. During your early married years you may have taken time for an occasional date with your honey. There were probably lots of times you ate out at your regular favourite restaurants, mostly because that’s what people do now. They eat out. But usually the children are with you, so you are busy trying to keep them amused and happy while waiting for the food to arrive. You don’t even have time to glance at one another, much less stare longingly into one another’s eyes!

So, how can you recapture that spark you once had in your relationship?

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It’s not about how much money you spend. This is about deliberately scheduling – and KEEPING a date with the love of your life. And before I give you my list of date ideas, I want to suggest you take this seriously. Part of strengthening your relationship is in proving to your spouse that they are the most important person in your life. You want to set everything else aside and do not change your date plans for anything other than a real emergency.

Here we go! These date ideas are a guide to get you going. Some are borrowed from couples who have come up with a great date idea. Others are my own concoctions. You will think of more as you go along. Commit to having 3 dates in 3 weeks. After that, one date per month should keep you on track.

Getting Ready

In the “Two In One” series by Focus on the Family, we find some helpful tips on preparing for your date:

Remember, always *act like you're trying to get a second date!* Sometimes in marriage we forget that we need to pursue and "woo" our spouse. So dress up a bit. Be polite and open doors. Compliment one another. Be affectionate – hold hands, cuddle, and steal kisses. Remember to protect your date night from conflict by cutting off any arguments and agreeing to talk about the issue at a later time.

Happy Tip:

Weekday surprises

On the days between your dates, think of ways to add a little bit of sugar to your spouse’s day.

Write a love note and tuck it into their jacket pocket. You might choose a jacket that you know s/he will be wearing for a particular outing. At some point, their hand will feel that small note in the pocket. It’s sure to bring a smile to their face!

Date Ideas

#1 Coffee Q&A

Here's how one husband got his wife's attention and created laughter and fun for both of them. Emily Peterson explains her story.

One evening my husband took me out on a surprise date. My wheels were turning trying to think of what he was up to when we pulled into Starbucks, ordered coffee and grabbed a table.

I figured we would just sit and chat, catching up on each other's day. To my surprise, he pulled out a stack of 3x5 cards and said we were going to play a little game. He had written a question on each card: What is something your spouse does very well but doesn't know he does well? What is your favorite joke? What's a childhood memory you'll never forget?

One of us would pull a card and read the question. Then the other would answer. We took turns reading and answering until we were at the bottom of the stack. We laughed. We dreamed. We reminisced.

A cup of coffee, some 3x5 cards, and I can honestly say it was our best date ever!

—Emily Peterson, Virginia
Provided by Greg Smalley
Focus on the Family

Now it's YOUR turn. Spend some time writing out your questions on small cards. Have them ready to share with your spouse during your next coffee outing!

#2 At-Home Spa Day

Men love this as much as women. It's all about the pampering. Take an afternoon when the kids are with their grandparents. Wives, I suggest YOU be the one to administer the spa treatments to your man. After all, you are the expert with cleansers, toners and moisturizers.

First, put on some calming music. Have all your products lined up and ready to use, along with facecloth and towel. Invite your man to join you in your "Spa". Have him sit, remove his shirt and wrap a towel around his shoulders. This would probably take place in the bathroom where you have easy access to water.

Talk to him as you begin opening bottles and applying cleanser. Speak quietly and say things like, "I've always loved your shoulders/neck/dimples", and "you're going to feel so refreshed when I'm done". Watch him smile. Try this kind of chatter, pretending he is your spa client:

You: So, John (insert your hubby's name), have you been to our spa before?

Him: No, this is my first time.

You: Well, I hope you'll enjoy the experience and come back often!

Him: I'm sure I will! (laugh)

What follows will be you cleansing his face, neck, ears, etc. Smoothing and soothing his cares away. While applying moisturizer, massage with little circles around his temples, forehead and cheeks. Go through the entire cleansing routine you would normally do on yourself. Finish up with a little kiss and guess what? He will be GLOWING, inside and out!

Post-spa you could share a light lunch or special dessert and coffee. Now that you both are relaxed, do whatever the two of you decide would be fun before picking up the kids. Hold hands in the car and exchange loving looks. The after-glow of this date could continue for hours.

#3 Backyard Star Gazing

Plan an evening under the stars. Of course, you'll need to check the weather report for the possibility of clear skies. Turn on your favourite music in the house. Turn off all cell phones during your date.

Then, bring a blanket out to the lawn or deck. Add toss pillows to lounge on. Have a selection of snacks with you, for example, bite-sized fruit, cheese, crackers. See the side-bar Happy Tip on star gazing.

Discuss stars, planets, God's amazing creation and how much He loves you both. This will lead to your love for one another and the way God brought you two together. Relax and snuggle for as long as you wish, munching on snacks and kissing now and then. When you go back inside, keep the momentum going with conversation that reaffirms your love.

#4 Liking the Biking

If you both have or can borrow bikes, this is a casual yet fun date. You will need to get to a place where there is a lake, river, stream or brook of some kind. If you're blessed enough to live near water, take advantage of the setting. Ride your bikes to the end of a pathway where few people go. Get off your bikes and take selfies and pics of each other with water and nature in the background.

mine to skip). Now, here is the important part. To make this date memorable, you need to pick up something from the area... a keepsake, a pretty stone for example. Look for the nicest, flat stone you can find. You're going to create something with it after your ride.

Happy Tip: Star Gazing

August is the best month for star gazing. Mid-August there are meteor showers that happen for a few nights in a row.


Check online weather networks for weather and Google "meteors" for information on best nights to view them.

Total darkness is best for star gazing. If it is too bright where you live, drive to a dark place outside the city and have your star gazing date in the car.

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Continue the bike ride. Try to find an ice cream shop or bakery where you can get a special treat. Enjoy eating them on a park bench or sitting on the beach or rocks before heading home. During your time OFF the bikes, reminisce about childhood biking experiences. Share stories about how you first learned to ride a bike. How old were you? The idea on this date is to get close to nature and your honey. Water is calming and reflective... making you reflective also.

Back home, take out your smooth rock. With a sharpie marker draw a heart with your both of your initials inside the heart. Give it to your spouse as a token of your biking date. He can keep it as a paperweight, or just carry it in his pocket as a reminder of your day biking date.



NOW THAT YOU SEE HOW EASY IT IS TO COME UP
WITH INEXPENSIVE AND FUN DATES... TRY
MAKING UP SOME OF YOUR OWN.
YOUR HONEY WILL LOVE YOU FOR IT!

-Grace Baxter

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