

Variety *the spice of life*

1 *A Traditional Date.* This is the old standby: dinner and a movie. But that doesn't mean it can't be great fun. Afterwards talk about the movie--what did you like the most, what didn't you like, who was your favorite character, what was your favorite line, what was the most romantic part. Just don't make this tried and true classic your only option. There are so many other fun and exciting dates to try.

2 *A Neighborhood Date.* Walk around your neighborhood to see what new and exciting things you can discover. Take your time and use your senses to soak up all the sights and sounds and smells around you. Talk about what's going on as you are walking and be sure to hold hands. You might even put your arms around each other or stop to give each other a long, romantic kiss.

3 *A 20 Minute Date.* Life is busy and sometimes there appears to be no time to squeeze in quality time together. WRONG! There is always time for a quick connection. You just have to recognize how important it is. So go on a short walk or share a cup coffee together or tell them how much you appreciate them. You might even slip in time for a "quickie".

4 *A Home Date.* Sometimes because of lack of money or childcare you just can't get away from the house. Don't let this stop you from having a great date. Light candles and turn on some

romantic music. Dance together in the kitchen or cuddle on the couch and watch a romantic comedy.

5 *A Backyard Date.* Sit on your deck or patio and enjoy a glass of wine together. Relax and share a dessert with each other as you appreciate the ambiance. Absorb the beauty of nature and watch the day progress at its own pace. After the sun sets snuggle around a campfire and roast marshmallows or just marvel at a star studded sky.

6 *A Road Date.* Go on an adventure. Drive to the beach or the mountains or some romantic place. Take the back roads and enjoy the journey. Stop and explore anything that looks interesting or fun. Find places you've never been before. Head out on the road with no specific destination in mind and find out where you end up.

7 *A Social Date.* Find another couple or two that both of you enjoy and go on a date together. Sometimes it is a lot of fun to do things with other people.

It can add variety and excitement and pull you out of a potential rut. Find out what the other couple enjoys and let them set up the date.

8 *A Hike or Bike Date.* Research the trails and bike paths nearby (there are probably a lot more

than you realize). Prepare properly and head out. It is amazing how peaceful and beautiful nature can be. And how nature can bring you closer together. Check the weather and difficulty level to make sure that you are both in agreement.

9 *A Game Date.* Pull out your favorite games (cards, checkers, monopoly, scrabble or whatever) and have great time. Fix a treat and get comfortable. Don't let a strong competitive spirit spoil our fun. Play in different rooms or even outside. Try something totally new or play a "strip" version to add a little spice.

10 *A Photo Date.* Document your date with a lot of pictures or videos. Go to unique or different places and click away. Pose all you want, but also try to catch each other in spontaneous spots. Afterwards create a sideshow of your date with your favorite romantic or fun music.



11 *A Sports Date.* Keep active! Jog, golf, bowl, ice skate, roller skate, ski, snow shoe, paintball, workout or play tennis. Keep yourself moving! Either do this with just the two of you or invite friends to join you. It also can be fun to go to sporting

events such as basketball, baseball, football, soccer, hockey or whatever you both enjoy.

12 *An Educational Date.* Stretch your brain. Take a class together on anything that you are both interested in. Try astronomy, cooking, history, geology, landscaping, languages, literature, calligraphy, creative writing, first aid, and psychology or photography classes. You might also try library, lecture or museum dates.

13 *A Memory Date.* Visit various places where significant things in your relationship have happened, such as first date, first kiss, where proposal happened, where married, most romantic restaurant or whatever other place holds great memories. When there share your positives memories about the place.

14 *A Shopping Date.* These can be fun even for those who can't stand shopping. But you must remember that it's all about the experience and the togetherness, not what you happen to get. Visit the local mall or your favorite shopping area and make it fun for both of you, looking for clothing, books, furniture, gifts or specialty items.

15 *A 24 Hour Date.* Create an overnight date at a hotel or bed-and-breakfast or even at a local campsite. Get away from all the stress of everyday life and totally relax. Forget all the problems, frustrations and difficulties that surround you. Enjoy dinner and breakfast together. Do something special to let your partner know how much you love them.

16 *A Sunset Date.* Sunsets are each unique and amazingly beautiful. Most couples view sunsets as very romantic. Find a good place to watch. Hold hands or kiss while the sun goes down. Then go and enjoy a dessert together. Afterwards you might want to go on a midnight stroll and talk about your most amazing sunsets.



17 *An Early Morning Date.* Go to a coffee shop or breakfast place together and have your favorite morning drink and breakfast food. Start your morning off by sharing your love. Hang out and chat. Talk about your plans (or dreams) for the day. If you are highly motivated, watch a sunrise or go for a brisk walk.

18 *A Music Date.* Music has incredible power-- it holds memories and emotions, it can pull you close and remind you of why you fell in love with each other. Go to a concert together. Or just listen to a local group. During the summer many communities have free concerts. Put together your own set of romantic songs and choose one that you can call "our song".

19 *A Gift Date.* On this date you give a gift for every year you have been married (for example: 6 years = 6 gifts, 20 years = 20 gifts). Try to

make each gift somehow symbolic of each year. Don't give big gifts, but rather ones that bring to mind positive memories-- a card, a song, a movie, a picture, a coupon for a restaurant.

20 *A Sexy Date.* Drive to a romantic place and make out. Wear whatever clothing your spouse thinks is the sexiest and put on their favorite perfume/cologne. Hold hands. Kiss a lot. Go dancing or do whatever your partner thinks is the most romantic. Wear the sexiest undergarments you have (if you decide to wear any at all). Then go home and please them in their favorite way until you drive them totally crazy.

21 *A Surprise Date.* Totally surprise your spouse by blindfolding them and taking them on a date in which they don't what you are doing or where you are going. Fill it full of all sorts of smaller surprises. Be creative and think outside of the box, but make sure you don't do things that would make them anxious or uncomfortable. All your surprises must be fun, exciting and positive.



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Dr. Steve Stephens is a licensed psychologist, marriage and family therapist, and popular seminar speaker. He has counseled thousands of couples over the past twenty-five years, and he loves it. Dr. Stephens is the author of more than twenty books, with more than one million copies sold. He is the president of Every Marriage Matters. He and his wife live in Happy Valley, Oregon with their three children.

Find additional resources for your relationship at www.everymarriagematters.org

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