

Recession Romance

25 Free or Nearly Free Ideas for Great Dates

1. Have a candlelit picnic in an unusual location, like your rooftop, a park bench, or overlooking the ocean.
2. Go on a photo date where you snap pictures of each other all over the city. If finances permit it, take them to a one-hour developing location. You may want to frame your favorite and give it to your spouse with a note. The others can be sent as postcards or emails to each other all through the year.
3. Walk or bicycle to an inexpensive ice cream shop or a fancy coffeehouse.
4. Drive in the mountains, arriving in time for a sunset or moonlit stroll.
5. Go to a park, push one another in the swings, and talk. Take turns listing A to Z the reasons you love your mate.
6. Walk the mall. The goal is not to buy, but to test perfume and cologne along the way.
7. Pull out the kids' toys, Fly a kite or have a squirt gun fight.
8. Write clues on dime-store Valentines and place them around town, then take your love on a car rally or treasure hunt. The date consists of gathering clues and small romantic treasures like poems, chocolates, and other small treats.
9. Go to the library and check out a poetry book, find a romantic spot, like at the beach at sunset, or by the fireplace, and take turns reading them out loud to one another.
10. Write a song or a poem and perform it for the one you love. Even an original version of "Roses are Red..." can be a treasure when it's from the heart.
11. Reenact a portion of a timeless romantic drama. Shake-speare's *Romeo and Juliet* is a great place to begin.
12. Celebrate your married romance. Spend the day in bed. Prepare ahead and have breakfast in bed. Bring piles of magazines and play soft music. Rest in your love.
13. Reminisce over old photo albums or your wedding album. Set the mood by relaxing together and talking by firelight or candlelight. Another option is to have your children play waiter and waitress and serve a romantic dinner, then tell them the story of how you fell in love. After they are in bed, choose one other idea on this list to enjoy.
14. Go to a local Christian bookstore and buy a book on marriage and read it together. [Red Hot Monogamy](#) is a 8 week guide to fan the flame on your love. [Men are Like Waffles, Women are like Spaghetti](#) has 10 weeks of date nights (and you can download videos to watch at www.Lifeway.com) [10 Best Decisions a Couple Can Make](#) has 10 weeks of dinner and dialogue questions.

15. Have a living room luau. Often local music stores have island music at rock bottom prices. Put on your bathing suit, toss down some beach towels and enjoy island cuisine.

16. Borrow plants from all your friends and neighbors and turn your patio into a private garden retreat and enjoy a quiet dinner. Bake something extravagant together. Bonus points for cooking the dinner and doing the clean up together.

17. Rent an old-fashioned romantic movie. The movies made in the '30s through the '50s are a good place to start.

18. Work out together. Go for a jog, do aerobics to a video, or visit a gym. Enjoy sitting in the Jacuzzi to recover.

19. Play a board game together. Classics like Scrabble or the Ungame are good conversation starters. Share hopes, dreams and goals as you play.

20. Put on your special song and waltz around the living room.

21. Or go on a walk and find a quiet romantic place to dance under the moonlit or in the sunset.

22. Play 20 questions. Each of you think of ten questions you'd love to know the answer to. Try questions like, "If you introduced me to a stranger today, what one thing would you say I do that you *really* appreciate about me?" or "If money was not a factor, where would you like to go on a romantic getaway?"

23. Anticipate the future. All marriages go through seasons. Consider buying a book to help prepare for the next season of love.

24. Watch a movie about a place you'd love to travel together. Create a theme date by eating food from that location, scan the internet together and plan where you might go away together in the future.

25. Renew your vows (or write personal vows, if you didn't do that in your original ceremony). This can be a private affair or you can invite the children or friends and celebrate.

Remember, it's not the expense of the gift but the thought that counts!