



Things to Think About!



By Brandan Atkin

For more ideas on fun date ideas visit some of the sites below:

<http://www.sixsistersstuff.com/2012/01/50-fun-and-cheap-date-ideas.html>

<http://thoughtcatalog.com/claudia-st-clair/2014/04/50-fun-date-ideas-for-when-youre-sick-of-just-going-out-to-eat/>

<http://www.specialparentsupport.org>

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Making Time for Dating

By Linda Jorgensen

One of the most important things my husband and I do for each other is to make time every week to reconnect with each other. We make time for date nights. Early in our marriage we decided to make one night a week for each other.

“With your crazy schedule how do you manage date time with your husband?” This is a question I get asked a lot. And my answer is always the same. “I make it a priority and I put it on the calendar at the same day and time every week. NOTHING replaces date nights”. It is a permanent fixture on our calendar that we guard ferociously and everyone knows we are busy that night. Don’t ask us to change the night to “some other day”, the answer will ALWAYS be “no”.

Taking quality time out to spend with your spouse or significant other is important in every family regardless of the makeup. It’s even more so for a family that includes family members with special needs. If the heads of the household aren’t getting along the rest of the family suffers. Date night is a time set aside for just the two of you to reset your bond and simply enjoy each other’s company. Only a medical emergency can interrupt our date nights.

A date doesn’t need to be fancy or cost a lot of money to be fun and effective. In fact, a lot of our most favorite dates are pretty inexpensive. The goal is to spend time with each other doing something interesting and fun with plenty of opportunity for talking. We can talk about any subject under the sun EXCEPT family business! We save that for family council time. The point behind date night is keeping in tune with each other. We spend time talking about interests and hobbies, learning new skills together or having an adventure. Whatever it is we spend that time focused on each other.

Favorite Date Nights

It doesn’t take a lot of money to have a great date night. Some of our favorite things to do together are pretty inexpensive. Here are some of our favorites:

- *A picnic dinner at one of our local parks, area campgrounds or picnic areas. If there’s a fire pit we roast marshmallows and make s’mores. Sometimes we play checkers or a game of chess while sitting at a picnic table.
- *Attend free concerts or Friday night movies in the park or at our area college theater.
- *Dinner at a local drive-in and then a walk along the river parkway.

- *Attend star parties sponsored by the local astronomy club.
- *Lock ourselves in the basement and play board games or cards. We've had a running game of Gin Rummy since our honeymoon. (I'm still ahead by 2,630 points!)
- *Go to your local library and check out an old movie on DVD. Grab some take-out, make some homemade popcorn and, again, lock ourselves in the basement for a cheap movie night. The only interruption allowed is if the house is on fire and the fire extinguisher didn't work.
- *A scenic drive in the mountains or out in the desert (it's scenic, too!) with a stop for ice cream afterwards.
- *Go for an Adventure Drive. Take turns choosing a direction and drive only on back roads. Take a map and enjoy the ride.
- *An unwind night at the park. We take a blanket to spread out on the grass, books we're reading and spend some time reading together. Sometimes we read out-loud to each other, sometimes silently to ourselves. It always sparks some conversation.
- *Tour one of our local historical sites. This includes some of our area historical cemeteries. Far from being spooky or creepy we've found the grave sites of some interesting and noteworthy people from our area.
- *Walk to our local miniature golf course and play a couple of rounds of miniature golf. Winner treats the loser to ice cream.
- *Learn a hobby together. One year we went to a ceramics shop and over the course of 4 weeks we made a nativity set together. It wasn't big and fancy but it was fun. We pull it out for display every year.
- *Art gallery strolls. Our Historic Downtown puts on a gallery stroll on the first Friday of the month. It's a lot of fun to see new art works; sample goodies from local restaurants and meet people from the community that we haven't seen for a while.
- *Junking challenge. I know, "What's junking?" We love to go to consignment stores, charity shops, second hand stores, antique shops and the odd flea market. The rules for this outing are simple. We have a set dollar amount that each of us can spend. The items we're purchasing have to add to our home in some way. No clutter! I always keep a list of things I'd like to find and I refer back to it before we go. Quite often we each get ten dollars to spend. The idea

of these outings is to see who can find that best find, make the best deal or locate that rare item on our list without going over our ten dollar limit. Winner takes the loser out for ice cream.

- *Browse through our local book store. It's pretty eclectic and there's always something fun to be found.
- *Dancing! I can never get my hubby to take me out dancing but if I put on some music and dim the lights in the family room (after the kids are in bed) he's more than happy to spend an evening dancing. It's good exercise, too.
- *Fly remote controlled model airplanes at our local model airport. I'm not so good at this so I get to fly the model that's easy (and cheap) to fix after I crash it.
- * Listen to podcasts. There are all sorts of fun things to listen to. Simply search for podcasts that match your interests.
- *Attend small town Festival Days. We live in a cluster of small towns and almost every weekend starting the second weekend in June all the way through the second weekend in August there is a town days festival going on somewhere nearby. Take your family during the day and you and your hubby can go back in the evening. The activities vary by town and are a lot of fun!

Whatever it is you decide to do make date night a priority night for yourself and your spouse. Time spent together helps bond your relationship, decreases stress and gives both of you a break from the normal routine. Make some time to go have some fun!