



# LOVE notes

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## Dates that Won't Break the Bank

### Low Budget, High Impact Date Ideas

Here are some ideas to get your creativity flowing. Keep your focus on spending time instead of money.

1. Go to a coffee shop and play one of the board games that are usually available for customers. If not, take your own game. A latte or cup of hot chocolate and a wild game of dominoes can be fun.
2. Watch your community newspaper, Internet listings and local announcements for free or low cost events that are happening in your area. Think street fairs, concerts in the park, farmers markets, art exhibits, speakers etc.
3. Take advantage of free introductory offers. For example, a dance company may offer a free lesson in ballroom dance, or an outdoor store may offer lessons on a rock climbing wall. Find activities that fit your interests or stretch yourself and try something completely new.
4. Pack a picnic and head for the park. Lie on a blanket and look at the clouds. Or spend time watching people.
5. When was the last time you strapped on a set of roller skates? Head for the nearest roller rink and remember to hold hands!
6. Arrange to go to the early showing of the movies where the prices are typically reduced.
7. Spend an evening at a bookstore, or library.

Find books on a topic or hobby that interests both of you.

8. Take a walking tour of your town. Check out interesting old homes, historic locations, fun shops etc.
9. Work out together. Go to the gym, rollerblading, cycling, or hiking with each other.
10. Spend time building your dreams. Test drive a new car; look at show homes, or wander through the garden center.

### *Marriage* and relationship educators stress

the importance of couples spending quality time together. A common homework assignment is "date night" where couples are asked to plan and go on a weekly date. Ground rules for date night are pretty simple: do something enjoyable; try not to talk about the kids or work; avoid arguing; remember how much fun it is to be with this person you love.

### Money is a Challenge

However, for some couples, financing these dates is a problem. Add up the cost of dinner and a movie, for example, then throw in paying a babysitter, and the date quickly becomes too expensive for many budgets. Spending time together turns into something saved for special occasions, like birthdays and anniversaries.

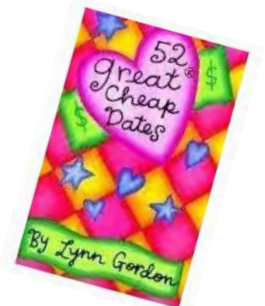
### Get Creative

Being short on cash doesn't have to mean you can't enjoy a date night. You just have to use your imagination and tap into your creative side. Think about the things you did as a young adult, when being low on money was a way of life. You still spent time with that special someone. What did you do?

### Plan for Success

Before you even schedule your first date, set yourself up for success:

- If you have children, get babysitting lined up. Offer to trade with another family, so that neither of you has to hire a babysitter. Ask grandparents or other family members to help. Take advantage of programs offered by some daycare facilities where they watch kids for a "Parents Night Out."
- Take turns planning the date and arranging child-care so that the responsibility doesn't always fall to one person.
- Make a big deal of your date, and don't cancel unless there is a true emergency. Look forward to the fun you'll have; do a little primping so that you look your best; and flirt with each other. Make it fun. For more cheap dates check out this book:



The purpose of this publication is the dissemination of technical information. Funding is provided through a grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant #90-FE-0001/04-5. The opinion, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this document and associated materials are those of the author(s), and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families.