



# If Brad and Angelina Can Make Time for Date Nights, So Can You!

Just because you're **fully committed to each other** doesn't mean you should stop going on dates. According to dating and relationship coach Kateryna Spiwak (datingessentials.com), **even the busiest couples must set aside time to have fun together** and spend one-on-one time like they did in the days of their courtship. So in the spirit of summer fun, let these **eight great date ideas** help rekindle (or maintain) your love and provide you and your partner with **hours of entertainment after dark.**

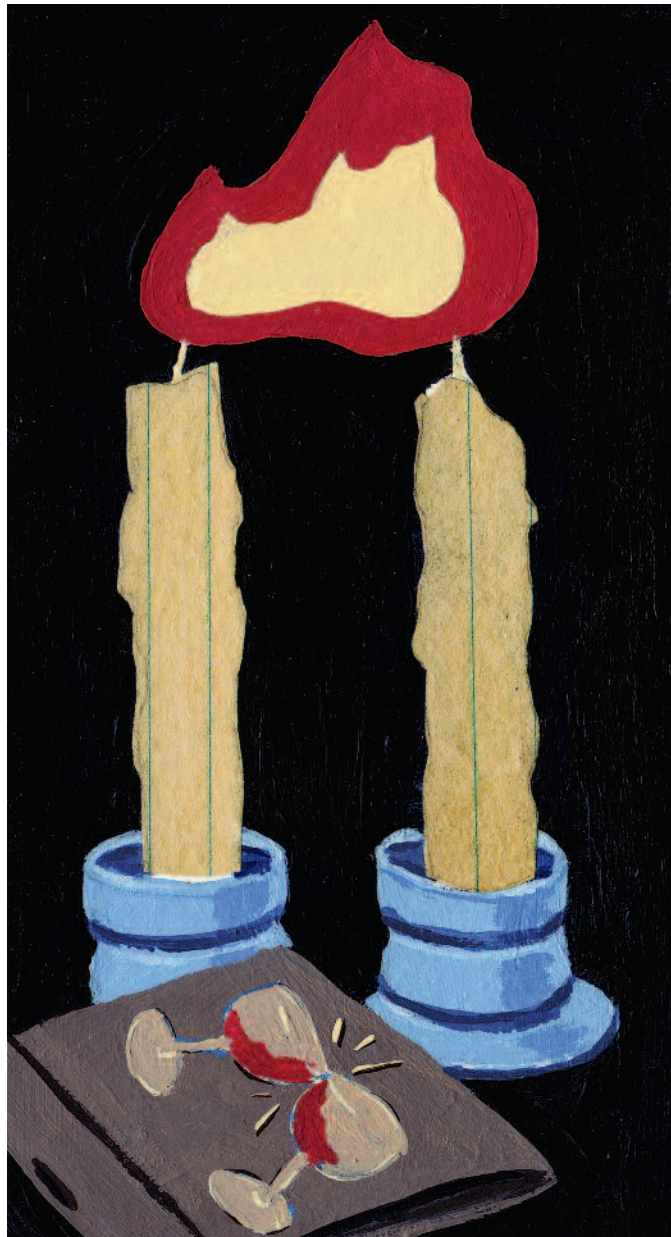
BY HAILEY EISEN ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPHEN SLATTERY

**DATE 1** **Try Something New** Take your relationship to new heights and try something that neither of you has ever done before. This could be a gut-splitting round of **karaoke at a dingy local bar** or a dance lesson (men: this one is worth huge brownie points) followed by a night of getting your groove on at a club or dance hall. "This type of date is sure to create new memories that you can laugh about for years after and will deepen your connection as a couple," says Kateryna Spiwak.

**DATE 2** **Adrenalin Rush** Get your heart pumping like it was right before your first kiss with an exciting evening activity. Rollerblading through downtown at dusk can be the best bonding time you'll share all week—and it will have you both laughing hysterically as you try to maintain balance. Thrill-seekers can conquer an **amusement park roller coaster** together.

**DATE 3** **Friendly Competition** Challenge your mate to a duel—but be sure to shake hands when the match is over. A bit of playful competition will help keep things fresh and interesting. On a rainy night, take to **glow-in-the-dark disco bowling** and impress your mate with your sleek form and ability to sing "I Will Survive" while bowling a strike! Or move the competition to a mini-putt course. Bring your camera along to capture the memories or to create some ridiculous photos to post on Facebook.

**DATE 4** **Taste Test** A typical date night may involve going to your fave neighbourhood restaurant and ordering one of the few standards you always turn out of habit. Our expert's advice is to try something totally different when it comes to enjoying food together. "Even grocery shopping can be a fun



activity when shared by a couple,” says Spiwak. So instead of going out, why not treat yourselves to a **romantic candlelit dinner for two in your backyard** or on your patio or balcony. Make cooking dinner part of your date. Exploring new flavours will help you get to know each other better and allow you to develop new and shared interests.

**DATE 5** **Starry Night** If the only way to forget about work is to leave the city, perhaps an **overnight camping trip** will do the trick. After all, there’s nothing a night of S’mores and singsongs can’t fix. “Setting up a tent can be a fantastic team building exercise,” says Spiwak. Camping gets you out of your element and allows you to distance yourself from worries and concerns. Bring your favourite bottle of wine and roast hot dogs on the fire.

**DATE 6** **Show and Tell** Part of being in a healthy partnership is having independent interests and hobbies, says Spiwak. “Outside passions provide you with something new to bring back to the relationship.” Set aside time to experience your partner’s idea of fun and make a date out of it. Take on a scrap-booking project, **have a Guitar Hero jam session** or indulge in a wine and cheese pairing. For just one night, suspend all judgment and let your partner share his or her world with you.

**DATE 7** **Celebrate Good Times** “Take the time to celebrate all occasions, big and small,” recommends Spiwak. “A promotion at work, an anniversary or even the completion of a project is excuse enough.” What better reason to celebrate than hot, sunny days and long, warm nights? Surprise your mate with a celebratory bottle of champagne, a pair of tickets to the theatre or a limo ride around town. Get dressed to the nines and strut your stuff like you’re Posh and Becks for the evening.

**DATE 8** **Zen Dating** Kick off your shoes and relax—this date night won’t require you to leave the couch. Sometimes a romantic evening at home is all you need to reconnect as a couple, suggests Spiwak. Rent a comedy (they say a good laugh is a true cure for stress!), put on some soft music (see “Get It On!” at right), light candles, put away your cells and BlackBerries, **take turns giving each other massages** and totally unwind. ■

## Get It On!

Need some good beats to set the mood? Here are some selections from our music reviewer, *Andrew Ennals*, that oughtta do the trick.

### ESSENTIAL SONGS

**“GIRL,”** The Beatles, *Rubber Soul*, 1965

BECAUSE... Past the point where they wanted to hold your hand, and a few years away from urging us all to come together, the slow intake of breath after every slow “Giiirrrlllll” is the very definition of unspoken longing.

**“LAY LADY LAY,”** The Isley Brothers, *Givin’ It Back*, 1971

BECAUSE... Al Green and Isaac Hayes may be sexy soul staples, but the Isleys can get a mojo working just as smoothly. This Bob Dylan song is a slow-burning 10-minute-long jam for lovers who like to take their time.

**“WICKED GAME,”** Chris Isaak, *Heart Shaped World*, 1989

BECAUSE... You don’t need to see Isaak and Helena Christensen in black and white on a beach (remember the sexy music video for “Wicked Game”?). This song’s slow twang is perfect for exchanging your own smouldering glances.

### ESSENTIAL ALBUMS

**THE BEST OF LEONARD COHEN,** Leonard Cohen, 1975

BECAUSE... Poet, singer, legendary ladies’ man—Leonard Cohen knows a few things about seduction. Put this on, light a few candles and let Montréal’s finest remind you why they say the brain is the most important sexual organ.

**ÁFRICA BRASIL,** Jorge Ben, 1976

BECAUSE... Rod Stewart stole the melody for “Do Ya Think I’m Sexy?” from this album’s “Taj Mahal.” (Ben successfully sued him.) At least Rod had the right idea, as this mid-70s Afro-Brazilian funk masterpiece is perfect for sweaty, celebratory times—provided that you’ve got a lot of energy.

**MOON SAFARI,** Air, 1998

BECAUSE... Ten years on, the French duo’s debut album still oozes futuristic European sex. Smooth and stylish throughout, songs like “Sexy Boy” and “All I Need” could soundtrack your own private fashion show.



## The Infinite Date

Writer *April Serink* believes you can (and should) still date after tying the knot. In fact, she and her husband are major advocates of dating post-marriage. Dating *each other*, that is. Their motto: **Date your partner until death do you part.**

After the bells stop chiming, the memories of bygone dating days fade as married life shoulders in with a whole pile of routine. What happens between couples after they marry? Does signing the marriage certificate translate to a death warrant for the fun times you shared as a dating couple? Not unless you let it.

Sure, dating after marriage is no cakewalk. It requires effort, planning and creativity to keep things spicy. But really, not much has to change unless you let it. Think about it: This is not like a first date. You now have the marital advantage of being able to **act like yourself, caring only what your partner thinks, knowing that you’re best pals forever.** Best pals with your own house to strip to your skivvies and share boat drinks, munch on nachos together in a random room, watch movies or karaoke your hearts out in.

If marriage is the engine, then dating is the fuel to keep it running. In between the tasks inherent in a marriage, my husband, Paul, and I still plan jaunts together, such as hiking, taking a walk or paddle boating at a local pond. Never being late, saying please, **ditching predictability,** opening doors, letting the other one pay for a meal and sealing the deal with a kiss guarantees our engine maintains peak performance.

We also **plan dates carefully, craftily and with long-term intent.** Scuba diving, for example, provides us with an opportunity to not only plan stellar holidays but also heighten our intimacy, as our lives are dependent on each other under the sea. Same goes when we skydive at 12,000 feet together or test drive Ferraris.

Paul and I are committed to one another, so we’ll rev up our engine and pour in the juice for a sweet ride until death do we part. And every day we thank each other for another great date, knowing that tomorrow another will follow.

## And Some Double Date Ideas

Cuz once in a while it’s fun to throw couple friends into the mix. —H.E.

### DOUBLES TENNIS

An after-work doubles tennis match is a great way to team up with your partner. Instead of competing against each other, spend the summer perfecting your doubles skills and challenging your friends. If you’re all getting along well, and you didn’t beat ‘em too bad, you might suggest that the losing team buy the first round of drinks as your date continues post-game.

### DINNER PARTY

Inviting another couple over for a backyard BBQ is a great way to pass a summer’s eve. But you’ll want to have a few games tucked away in your back pocket for when dinner has been served and conversation starts to dwindle. Try “If you could host a dinner party and invite any five people (dead or alive), who would they be?” and watch your conversation take off!

### TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME

A sporting event is a great date if both of you like sports. But if your lady is more interested in the player’s dating history than his batting average, a double date may be just what you need. Let the sports fans go on about stats and logistics while those less interested in the details enjoy beer and peanuts and take in the sights.