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How to be a gentleman on a date

Dragon Images/Shutterstock Are you going for a first date and you intend to make it spectacular? You don't have to do what everyone does on their first date. If you want to set yourself apart from the crowd, try these unexpected first date ideas. They will electrify your date and help you to make an unforgettable first impression. And who knows, maybe you will still talk about it many years from now.Visit a MuseumExtraordinary, right? There's a common misconception that museums are full of old boring art. However, these days there are a lot of contemporary museums that showcase intriguing modern and contemporary pieces. Art is always a good conversation starter, and you can get to know more about your date's perspective through art.Comaniciu Dan/Shutterstock VolunteerDo you know of any organizations in your area that could do with a helping hand? An example of volunteering would be feeding the homeless or visiting a senior center. Here you can get to see your date's human side by seeing how they relate with the less fortunate. Afterward you can spend some quality time with your partner over a meal or a cup of coffee.Dnytro Zinkevych/Shutterstock Tour Your CityVisiting tourist sites around your city is a great way to spend your first date. Every town has a lot of hidden gems which you can explore with your date and spend quality time together.Barank/Shutterstock Watching a Live GameThis sounds rather boring, but it can be exciting on your first date. Sport matches have a very dynamic atmosphere and are exciting. Also, if you're lost for words you can always talk about the match. A few games to watch are basketball, soccer, baseball, tennis, rugby or golf.Yulia Mayorova/Shutterstock Visit an Arboretum or Botanical GardenThere's nothing as romantic as watching different species of birds and plants on your first date. Being in nature is also very peaceful and will give you a lot of quality time. Combine the trip with a picnic to impress your date even more. To sit on a picnic blanket amongst flowers and birds with nice snacks is a very relaxed yet romantic way to get to know each other.Beer5020/Shutterstock House HuntIngs either of you looking for a place to live? Why not ask your date to come along? House hunting can quickly help you find out plenty of things about your partner. Ask them a few questions during the hunt, and you'll discover whether they're spendthrifts, good planners or have a good eye for detail as well as their tastes and preferences.JP WALLEY/Shutterstock Visit a PsychicA psychic can tell you right away if you're compatible or not. Of course, visiting a psychic depends on your beliefs, but you might find it interesting whether you believe in fortune-telling or not. There are a lot of fake psychics these days, so be sure to do in-depth research on your psychic before the visit. Miriam Doerr Martin Frommherz/Shutterstock Attend a Cooking ClassYou are going to get hungry at some point, right? Try attending a cooking class where you can both learn how to make delicious meals that you can eat afterward. Flamingo Images/Shutterstock Watch Movies at HomeWatching movies at home will give you and your date intimate time to bond. Instead of visiting a movie theater where you have to watch whatever's showing, you can pick any movie that you like at home. You can also save money if you happen to be broke. After all, broke people need to date too. Visit a Flea MarketFlea markets have many activities that you can do together with your date. From eating to buying trinkets and gifts or listening to different bands play their music, there's no shortage of activities. Flea markets also take the pressure off the date, as you're not focused on each other all the time but can pay some attention to bargaining and browsing for rare finds.goodluz/Shutterstock MORE FROM BLOGLINES Oh the terrifying world of dating. That minefield of awkward silences, waiting for texts, expensive bar bills or the worst of all – the realisation that the beautiful woman in the red dress you met a week previously, is indeed a full blown crazy-cat lady. We've all been there, countless times no doubt, but if you're reading this then the likelihood is that you're yet to make a true success of it. Equally, if you're reading this, then I'm going to presume that you have indeed over come the first hurdle and already asked her out. If so, then take a moment to pat yourself on the back. It takes serious balls to actually ask a woman out, and however you ended up doing it – she's said yes – so well done you. The next hurdle, however, is a pretty big one too. How to actually impress a woman on a first date is anyone's' guess. They all want different things, so that cute little French bistro that Miss A simply adored last week, might be Miss B's idea of kitsch hell. The place is not so much the problem, rather it's the impression you give off that will determine if there's going to be a date number 2 or not. And whilst some may not necessarily be every woman's' idea of the perfect man – we're prepared to bet that these few simple tips will bag even the most Neanderthal of men date #2 or even #3. The key to impressing her on a first date is quite simply a string of gentlemanly gestures. No matter what women say about wanting a 'bad boy', trust us when we tell you that they don't. Not really anyway. Yes they may hark on about boys in bands with tattoos up their arms and unwashed hair, but what they really really want is a gentleman. You don't need to look like one, but you sure as hell need to act like one. Have you ever heard a woman say "he was such an a*hole last night, I can't wait to see him again" – no, nor have we. We're not saying you need to go overboard, but here are a few simple tips to impress her on a first date...Make an effort with appearance: She will have spent hours talking to friends discussing outfits, weighing up the pros and cons of wearing heels, doing her hair and make-up and accessorising, so make an effort yourself. Nothing over the top, but a crumpled shirt and trainers does not a good impression make. Open doors for her: From the door of a cab, to the restaurant and the bar afterwards, it's really quite easy, but you'd be surprised to hear how few men actually do this anymore – trust us, she will notice. Keep curbside: An easy chivalrous gesture that she may not even consciously notice, but still worth the effort. Take her coat/ give her yours: When you walk into the restaurant take her coat, when you're walking out help her back on with it. If it starts to rain and you don't have an umbrella then volunteer your own coat as a rain shield. Put your phone away: Put it on silent or turn it off – nothing say's "You're boring" or "I'm not interested" to a woman more than a man texting or taking calls whilst on a date. Compliment her: Make them spontaneous and casual and ideally the earlier the better into the date, do not, and we repeat do not say 'you have beautiful eyes' – it is vomit inducing. Instead, stick to a more passing 'you look great', when you first see her. Anything after the first hour will seem planned and contrived. Ask questions: Yes, you want her to hear all your best qualities, but women love to talk to, and more than that, they love to be listened to. And we're talking, actually listened to. Don't just nod and smile – engage and expand. Know the difference between confidence and cockiness: If ever there were a fine line, this would be it. Similar to the above, you want her to know your best qualities, but stay revered – no woman wants to hear how much you earn, how many models you've slept with or how large your family estate is (at least not on the first date she doesn't). Pay the bill: Call us old fashioned, but we still believe that the man should pay the bill on the first date, especially if he is the one who initiated it. If you find yourself on a date with a new wave feminist who insists on paying (and you want to see her again) then still refuse, instead suggest that she pays for an after dinner drink or even the second date. Don't try to sleep with her on the first date: This is absolutely paramount. No good relationship has ever come from a one night stand. No matter how well you got on or how many cocktails were consumed, put her in a taxi and bid goodnight. That's what a gentleman would do. There are few things as utterly nerve-racking as first dates. You've never met this woman. You know very little about her. And yet, somehow you're supposed to whisk her off her feet in the hopes that she will fall madly in love with you. It sounds completely insane. Hey, nobody ever said it was easy. What's more, as a guy, there's a whole load of added pressure. Like it or loathe it, social norms dictate that men must take the lead when it comes to dating. Regardless of how much we've progressed in recent years, there's still an underlying expectation that guys will do the majority of the work. So, where on earth should you start? You've come to the right place. Here's a gentleman's guide to a flawless first date. How to Plan Your Date Spoiler: If you asked your date out, the planning responsibility falls firmly on your shoulders. You can't just turn up to meet someone without having an idea of what you're going to do. Before we go any further, you need to forget all the clichés you've learned about dating. Contrary to popular belief, the most common date plans are almost always terrible ideas. As a woman, I can tell you that the following date ideas make me recoil out of sheer awkwardness. Here's why: 'Let's head to the movies!' Taking a woman to the movies might sound like winning idea, right? It's a classic. However, it's not always the smartest idea. Think about it. Spending around two hours in sitting next to one another in a dark room—staring forward and not talking—is anything but a recipe for romance. A first date is about getting to know each other and you can hardly do that in silence. 'Fancy grabbing a bite?' Equally, you shouldn't go to dinner on a first date as it's too much of a commitment. Imagine the following scenario. You meet for a fancy dinner date and within minutes realize that you're not compatible. What do you do? You then have to spend two or three courses making polite chit-chat while both secretly wishing you could leave. It's a costly waste of your time and your date's time. So, what should you do instead? In my opinion, the key here is keeping things light and breezy. On a first date, neither one of you wants to be trapped or to commit hours to something that might not work out. Opt for a super casual meet-up. Grab a quick drink but keep it short and sweet. That way, you can see if there are fireworks and, if there are, arrange date number two. And, if there aren't fireworks, you've only wasted around 30-40 minutes on drinks! 3 Things to do Before the Date #1. Give Yourself a Pep Talk Confidence is always going to be an attractive quality. I can personally tell you that this is something I find extremely alluring. But hey, you're only human. We all get nervous and anxious in the lead-up to a date. Despite this, you should avoid letting this perfectly natural human emotion have any effect on how you act during the date. One of the major things that may concern you is your flaws—you might feel too out of shape, too dull, or not successful enough to be loved. While these thoughts race through your mind, take a step back and exercise a little self-compassion. Nobody's perfect and accepting that fact could be the secret to unlocking happiness within your love life. In fact, research has found that those who are compassionate toward themselves have a high chance of making lasting, meaningful relationships. Love yourself and others will follow. Avoid rushing right out of the door before a date. Take a few moments alone, breathe, and relax. You might find that exercising a little mindfulness or merely repeating some positive mantras helps you get into the right frame of mind. Giving yourself a little headspace is a winning idea and means that you will be cool, calm, and collected when you meet your date. #2. Consider Who Will Pay You don't want to be caught short—neither literally nor figuratively. If you've planned a spectacular date for you and your mystery lady, you might want to consider who will be picking up the check. Planning ahead will prevent any awkwardness down the line. It's a modern world which might lead you to believe that your date should foot the bill—or, at least, offer to do so. Surprisingly, a huge 72% of women still believe that men should pay on the first date. There's always the chance that your date will expect you to splash some cash. Even if that's not the case, if you're the one who has arranged the date—i.e. if you asked the woman out—the gentlemanly thing to do is offer to pay for it. You may find that your date wants to go halves on the bill but you should never presume that will be the case. #3. Do Your Research Finally, before you walk out the door and meet your date, you need to make sure that you do your research. Knowledge is power. The chances are that you've been talking to this woman for a while before you popped the big 'Fancy dinner?' question. That means that you will already have a wealth of resources about her at your fingertips. Go back through your messages and re-read them one last time. Show that you've been paying attention by dropping the information into conversation during the date. For example, if she sent you a text about going to a tennis club, you might say "I know you mentioned you play tennis. How long have you been practicing?" The fact that you remember the small points of conversation will show that you're attentive and a good listener. 5 Golden Rules for a Winning First Date But enough about what you should do before the date—let's take a moment to discuss what you should do once you're on it. While every woman out there is unique, there are some common guidelines that you should follow to win her over or, at least, have a chance at doing so. With that in mind, here are just five golden rules that will help you along the way. #1. Dress Well for the Occasion You've heard the stats before—it takes around seven seconds to make a first impression on someone. What's more, research published in the Social Psychological and Personality Science suggests that people decide whether or not they are attracted to a person win just 33 milliseconds based on merely looking at their face. Remarkable, right? You've got to give yourself a fighting chance here. Focus on looking the part when you walk in the door. Being well-groomed and well-dressed should be your baseline. Women notice the finer details from the minute they see you. Before you head out on the date, make sure that your look ticks these boxes: You've shaved and look well-groomed Your clothes fit you well They are suitable for the date That last point is crucial. You don't want to wear a dinner suit to a casual drinks meet-up. Equally, if you choose to do an activity (such as bowling) together, you should make sure that your clothing works for that scenario too. Dress well but consider what type of date you're going on. #2. Leave Your Smartphone in Your Pocket Addicted to your smartphone? You might want to cool it. 'Phubbing' (phone-snubbing!) is a modern phenomenon in which people ignore their present company in favor of their smartphone. Not only is looking at your phone incredibly rude, but it could also be a deal-breaker for your date. In fact, 75% of singles say that they are 'turned off' when someone answers their phone on a date, according to a survey from Match. Plus, it's not only speaking on your phone that could be a problem. The same research found that 66% hate texting during a date and 57% are upset if their date so much as reads a text message. The takeaway is clear—your smartphone does not need to be the third-wheel on your next date. Rather than having it on the table, leave it in your pocket and don't check it in front of the other person. Instead, give them your full attention. As a woman, if a guy is completely focused on our conversation and seems present, I find it seriously romantic. #3. Don't Be Afraid to Flirt (Without Being Creepy) If things are going well and you feel that all-too-familiar spark, you might want to take things up a gear. The key here is to flirt without being creepy. That in itself is an art form. Coming on too strong is likely to make things intense and, frankly, a little awkward. That's why you should focus on simple gestures that show your date that you are, in fact, interested in them. Start small and test the water. You might want to try mirroring your date—i.e. subtly mimicking their body language. When people are attracted to one another, they often do this unconsciously. By affecting it, you're letting the other person know that you're attracted to them. Notice how your date reacts to this technique and whether they become warmer or lean in further. #4. Create Closeness in Your Conversation What are dates really about? Shockingly, they're not just a prelude to sex or, worse, an interview for a long-term relationship. No, they're about getting to know one another and finding out whether you're compatible. It should go without saying that you should ask your date questions about themselves, but how can you supercharge your conversation? Self-disclosure—i.e. opening up and telling your date about yourself—could be a quick route to a sense of closeness, research suggests. While you shouldn't overdo it and spill your entire life story to your date, giving them a few nuggets of information about you is a smart idea. This technique could help your date to feel comfortable around you and want to know more. Pro tip: Don't give too much away on a first date. Choose the information that you want to share wisely but always leave your date wanting more. For example, you could tell your date a short but interesting story about your childhood vacations might be a fun way to engage them. However, you might want to leave your underlying mommy or daddy issues out of the chatter... There's such a thing as TMI and it's a real turn-off. #5. Read the Signs Before You Kiss To kiss or not to kiss—that is the question! If you've had a great date and feel a real connection, you might want to end the night on a high. Before you lean in for that romantic smooch, though, you need to read the signs. Is this what your date really wants? Here are some of the signs that your date is waiting for a quick kiss: They're lingering when they say goodbye Their body language is positive and pointed toward you They are leaning in... slightly If all signs are 'go', you might want to lean in for a peck on the cheek. More people are open to kissing on a first date than you might imagine. An overwhelming 64% of singles approve of sealing the deal, according to a survey by Match. It's crucial that you're conscious of what the other person wants and that you take things slow. Equally, you should leave your date wanting more. You don't want to go 'all in' when it comes to the kiss. Instead, give them a polite peck to show them that you had a great time and let them know that you do want to see them again. Conclusion Voilà! So long as you follow this guide, you should pull off a successful and memorable first date. It's important to note that not every date will work out—regardless of how charming and wonderful you may be. Sometimes, things just don't work out. Sometimes, people are not compatible. That's perfectly okay. However, prepping properly for a first date and giving it your best shot is the only way to go. Good luck and happy dating.

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