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By Andrea Syrtash

How to rediscover passion and romance and with your spouse

**Columnist Andrea Syrtash provides the means to
escape the hum-drum routine**

Whether you've been married for twenty years or for only two months, there's always a way to make your relationship with your spouse more exciting and fulfilling. In "Cheat On Your Husband (with Your Husband)," columnist Andrea Syrtash shows you how to revive the intimacy and excitement in your marriage. Here's an excerpt.

When I was growing up, my parents took me and my sister on fun trips and out to great restaurants, but they also left us with a sitter on many Saturday nights. I'm sure I moaned, whined, cried, and stomped my feet for the first few minutes when they left for their date, but I also remember being excited to have a fun teenage babysitter hang out with us.

Children are amazingly adaptable. As you get accustomed to having a special scheduled night with your spouse, date night will also become normal to your kids. They will understand that a night out is part of their parents' lives. In fact, when you show your children that you are making your marriage a priority and taking time just for you and your husband, you are modeling good relationship behavior. Children like to see their parents getting along. They may cringe when you're affectionate in front of them, but they'd certainly rather witness a hug and a kiss than a fight.

I've heard parents lament that the cost of childcare prohibits them from taking time for themselves. These days, reliable babysitters and nannies can charge a small fortune. After paying for childcare, you may not have a lot of money left over for your date with your husband--but don't use that as an excuse to skip scheduling time alone together. Some of

the best dates in life are free! In my research with singles, interesting experiences always score higher than fancy meals at expensive restaurants in terms of overall date satisfaction. Novel experiences--activities you try together for the first time--also trigger the pleasure centers of our brain and therefore help us register our connection with our date (even if it is our husband) as new and fresh.

Top Five Cheap Date Ideas

Adventure Date: Tourist in the City

Ever notice that you haven't visited some of the top tourist sites of your city in a while--or ever? Is there a fabulous lookout with a panoramic view or a famous landmark that you learned about in school? Is there a cute neighborhood you haven't explored? Have you taken all of the scenic walking trails or tours that visitors typically access?

Write down some of the spots in your area that you've heard or read about but haven't seen, and then let your creative juices flow. Book a date to go to one of the locations, and bring a camera to capture the date (just as you would on vacation!). Discovering new areas and landmarks with your spouse will create new memories and remind you how much is left to discover together.

Exotic Date: Ethnic Cuisine

Check online reviews and find a Thai, Vietnamese, Chinese, or Indian restaurant in your area with good ambience. Ethnic restaurants tend to be cheaper than your usual white-tablecloth bistros and may add spice to [your routine](#). Sample exotic dishes together and stimulate your taste buds.

Active Date: Play Together

Sharing a physical activity will boost endorphins and may also bring out a fun, competitive, flirting spirit. Play Frisbee, go jogging, or take a hike. Challenging [your body](#) and sharing a common goal with your spouse (like completing a hiking trail) will reinforce your bond. If you are playing a competitive sport, like tennis, make sexy bets to amp up the flirtation.

Cultural Date: experience Live Music or a Museum

Whether you reside in a big city or a small town, there are always talented musicians performing for a low cover price to build their fan base. Check out your local music listings to find the style of music that you enjoy most and head out to support a local musician--often for under \$10.

Head to the museum for a special talk or take advantage of the "pay what you can" discounts offered by many institutions. You may decide to explore local galleries, which are usually free to enter, to see the work of featured artists.

RESOURCES

If you don't have trusted family members in the area to watch your children, it can be difficult to figure out how to schedule a day or night date without your kids. Your local community center, church, synagogue, or mosque may have some excellent resources. You may also consider checking out well-rated babysitting Web sites (complete with references) like Sittercity.com and GoNannies.com.

Sexy Date: Book a Hotel

I used to work with someone who would take her husband to cheap motels for date nights. "The seedier the better!" she told me. There was something about being in a totally new environment, without worrying that the kids would walk in or thinking about the laundry yet to be done, that put her and her husband in the mood. Enjoying time together in a hotel in your city will make your date a memorable one (even if you just decide to stay in and order breakfast in bed with a pay-per-view movie).

Note: If you can't spare a night away, consider finding a day rate for an afternoon rendezvous! Many motels and hotels have cheap midweek specials that you can find on a discount hotel Web site.