

2020

THE IT'S JUST LUNCH
GUIDE TO DATING



Chapter 6
The First Date

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THE FIRST DATE

Congratulations, you're officially dating!

However, if a little voice inside your head is trying to talk you out of it, don't panic. A little nervousness is perfectly natural--you're excited! That's a great sign.

Yes, it's true that dating means taking risks. Heaven forbid, you might get dumped. But the good news is, you'll live. The happiest people are those willing to step outside their comfort zones and take a few risks, because the potential for rewards is so great.

As for rejection, don't take it personally. It's just part of the dating journey. It will lead to bigger and better things — and eventually a few laughs as well.

Here's the key: Learn how to distinguish between describing the date as a failure and seeing yourself as a failure. It's not the same thing. Not everyone will be a match. And how else are you going



to find the person who's right for you?

Every date is a learning opportunity — a chance to observe yourself. So there's really nothing to be nervous about. Treat dating as an adventure. Take it lightly and it will be fun.

Most of all, you'll be exploring every opportunity to reach your relationship goals.

Safety First

Okay, we know this subject is not romantic, but it's necessary! Before you set out on your first date, there are a couple of safety measures you need to take so you can rest assured that you'll be around to talk about it later.

If it's an It's Just Lunch date, then you know that we've done our absolute best to set you up with someone with your safety in mind.. But we can't be on the date with you, so use your best judgment when meeting someone the first few times. Safety and discretion are priorities for us, so we work with both of you directly to arrange a time and place for you to meet, and we never give out any of your personal information.

If you're going it alone and meeting someone you've never met before (blind date, Internet date, someone you met in a bar) versus someone you've known for a while or who has been recommended by a mutual friend, then do the following:

- Arrange to meet your date in a public place like a restaurant or bar.
- Let friends know the details of your date and when you expect to be home.
- Don't get in a car with him or her.
- Trust your instincts. If you find yourself in a situation that makes you feel uncomfortable, politely excuse yourself and leave.

-Don't hesitate to leave if your date shows signs of drunkenness, rudeness, disrespect, recklessness or any other embarrassing or dangerous behavior.

What to Expect

A first date is all about getting to know the other person a little better and walking away with a sense of whether or not you want to see them again. Stop right there! That's all there is to it. Don't go on a first date with an agenda or a checklist of non-negotiables. There will be subsequent dates to find out if he's open to having kids, or her views on the last election or his relationship history.

Keep It in perspective

Try to keep it light and fun. Don't lose sight of the fact that it's just a date!

Marriage should not be the goal (or the topic of conversation). You have no idea how it will turn out and have no control over that anyway. It will either work or it won't. So relax, laugh at yourself if you notice you're getting a little absurd (like thinking about picking out your china pattern together) or making the date too significant.

Pay attention to what you are learning about your date.

No matter how excited, thrilled or turned on you might be, it's important to listen. Otherwise, you can go through the whole date in a giddy daze and not remember anything later.

Enjoy Yourself

Focus on being present and having fun. And don't forget to smile. It makes you more attractive. And who knows, you might have a good time. You might even meet the love of your life!



Women Only

What Men Look for in a First Date

As much as some of us would like to believe that men are above judging a woman based on her looks, it's simply not true. (Actually, women do it too.) Men are very visual beings, and sexual attraction ranks highest on their list. The good news is that our national surveys show that looks are not the only attribute men look for; qualities like intelligence and a sense of humor are equally important.

So what really attracts men? Most men are attracted to women who are intelligent, witty, passionate, confident and who are good conversationalists.

What Turns Men On?

Eye contact — men love flirty eyes and lots of smiles. They like it when you focus your attention on them and are genuinely interested in getting to know them better. Men also love women who appreciate humor.

Men Only

What Women Look for in a First Date

Self-confidence is extremely sexy to a woman. In fact, we'd go as far as to say that, more than a man's looks, job status or good manners, confidence is a winning trait that gets the girl. As old-fashioned as it might sound, women want someone who's not going to run from a fight; a man who is confident in his ability to provide and protect. Women also like men who aren't afraid of emotional intimacy, who can talk openly and are willing to share their thoughts and feelings. Our research shows that the top qualities women seek in a man are good communication skills, chivalry, kindness, intelligence and a sense of humor.

What Turns Women On?

Chivalry is not dead. Good manners (holding the door open, pulling out the chair and helping with her coat) are still attractive to women. Lots of eye contact, attentiveness and being a good listener are other traits women appreciate.

What Turns Both Men and Women Off

Being drunk, negative conversation, complaints, self-pity and not laughing at their jokes.

Conversation Starters

It always helps to have a couple of topics in mind or a few questions handy should your conversation ever fall into one of those awkward silences. If that happens, don't panic. It's perfectly normal to fall into the occasional lull.

In fact, it's a great icebreaker (and endearing!) if you acknowledge it by saying something like, "Are we having one of those weird silent moments?" Seriously, your date will probably laugh and that will put you both at ease.

Need a little help with some clever conversation?

Check out these great starters:

- Find out what they like to do in their free time (this can help you secure a second date by inviting them to do something they listed)
- Talk about your travel experiences — trips you've been on or places you'd like to visit and why (this gives your date more insight into what your passions are).
- Mention current events or news. Ask your dates what they think about a topic... but stay clear of political issues.
- Talk about where you grew up, your family, then ask about



theirs.

- Ask about their favorite sports teams, movies, plays and books.
- Talk about something exciting in your life. A high school reunion, a promotion, a new home.
- Notice something positive about your date (nice hair, eyes, an expression or gesture) and compliment them on it.
- Ask a fun question like, “If you could change places with anyone in the world, living or dead, who would it be?”
- Mention something beautiful or touching you’ve seen or experienced in the past week. Even if it was just in a movie!
- Talk about the things you’re most passionate about, from volunteering at a homeless shelter to your 1980s record collection.
- Ask about their dreams for the future. This will get them excited. (But please don’t turn this into a deal breaker.)

Talking Tips

- Ask open ended questions that evoke a response beyond yes or no.
- Keep up with current events
- When you talk about yourself, keep it positive! Stick to the things you are most passionate about.

Conversation Killers

Try not to say things just to please or impress and stay away from sensitive or taboo subjects such as religion or politics — at least on the first few dates.

Avoid talking about the following:

- Ex-anything. Leave your past relationships in the past and be present for the first date.
- Other people you’re dating.
- Personal topics like cosmetic surgery, medical history or “if only

I could lose 10 lbs.”

-Marriage, your plans for a large family, or not being interested in having children.

-Superficial things such as an interest in money or that Porsche you just bought.

-How much you pay (or get) in alimony.

-Controversial political topics: capital punishment, abortion, and gay rights — these topics are better left for a later date.

-Name dropping, bragging or showing off in general.

Who Pays?

If you're on an It's Just Lunch first date, it's our policy that you split the check. It's just easier that way and takes away the whole “who pays” dilemma. On subsequent dates we suggest the following:

-Whoever does the asking should pay for the date. If he asks you out to dinner, he picks up the check. If she asks you to the symphony, she gets the tickets.

-If one person makes significantly more money than the other, then he or she could carry the majority of the weight, but the other person can contribute by paying for less expensive dates or making dinner on a romantic night in.

-No matter who pays, it's generally a nice gesture for the other person to offer to contribute (if you have been dating for a while).

Most Common Dating Mistakes

Oh, c'mon. We've all made them. Confession is good for the soul.

Judging Your Date

Picture this. You're sitting at the table waiting for your date to arrive. He or she comes in, walks up to the table and says, “Hi.”

Do you respond by saying, a) “Pardon, you must have the wrong



person,” then grab your coat and leave or, b) “Take a seat, I’ve been looking forward to meeting you?” Tell the truth! Many people make the mistake of immediately judging their dates negatively and don’t even give them a chance.

If you catch yourself stacking up hurdles in front of your potential love matches, chances are none of them will make it to the finish line.

Unrealistic Expectations

This one happens a lot. We get so excited about the fantasy of our date that we start imagining all sorts of unrealistic ideals. By the time we get there, we’re expecting to have lunch with Mr. or Ms. Perfect. No wonder it’s a letdown!

Get rid of all your expectations on a first date. This is not the time to decide whether or not he or she meets your criteria for everlasting love. It’s just a date!

Not Paying Attention

So by now we know that the most important part of a first date is to get to know the other person a little better, right? Well, you’d think so. But what often happens is that we spend too much time in our own head preoccupied with our own thoughts about what our date thinks about us.

If you’re wondering whether or not you are doing the right thing, if you look good in that light, or if she can see your bald spot, you’re going to miss out on the actual date.

If your mind isn’t focused on your date, how can your date get a sense of who you really are? And how will you know anything about him or her when you’ve spent most of the date worrying about yourself?

It’s impossible to know for sure if your date likes you or not (unless they tell you), so give it up!

Not Listening and Talking Too Much

These two usually go hand in hand. It's really important to be able to listen to the other person, and that doesn't just mean letting them speak, but also not trying to figure out what you're going to say while they're speaking. There's no way you can listen and think of a smart response at the same time.

Rambling on or talking "at" someone kills the experience of communication and alienates people. It's a big turnoff.

Your aim is to learn about your date; so ask questions, listen and let them do roughly 50 percent of the talking.

First Date Dos

When it's time to go on your first date, don't forget the basics:

- DO smile. Smile a lot.
- DO have fun. Remember, it's just a date!
- DO try to see the real him or her, not the person you'd like them to be. Furthermore, DO try to appreciate WHO they are. There's something wonderful about everyone. Find what it is.
- DO remember your manners. Treat a first date like an interview. We're not saying to be stuffy or overly formal, just polite.
- DO be positive. A good attitude lets a date know you're fun to be around.
- DO dress appropriately. If you're unsure about the dress code, call the restaurant beforehand.
- DO turn off your cell phone.
- DO pull the chair out for a lady or open the car door. Chivalry is NOT dead.
- DO be honest, be yourself and don't play games.
- DO be a great listener and be present.

First Date Don'ts

A few basics that will help avoid first date disasters:



-DON'T be late. One of the quickest ways to sabotage a date is to show up late. Tardiness sends out a message that says, "You're not really important so I didn't make much of an effort to be on time." A great mantra for all aspects of life, including dating is...if you're not exactly on time (or early), you're late.

-DON'T talk about yourself all the time.

-DON'T refer to your past dates or talk about past relationships. That doesn't belong on the first date.

-DON'T try too hard. If there's a lull in the conversation, just let it be.

-DON'T wear too much makeup, cologne or perfume.

-DON'T get drunk!

-DON'T prejudge. It takes time to really get to know someone.

-DON'T worry or fret about what they are thinking about you.

-DON'T ask them if they want to have children or about their marriage goals.

How to Tell If They're Interested or Not

It's really quite simple. There will be lots of clues, primarily given through body language. The non-verbal signals are pretty much the same in both men and women. Here's a quick checklist to help you gauge the chemistry clues:

-Are they smiling at you often?

-Do they compliment you?

-Are they making lots of eye contact or looking around the room?

-Are they leaning toward you?

-Do they try to make body contact, perhaps by touching your arm or putting their arm behind your back to walk you forward?

-Do they seem attentive and interested in what you are saying?

Are they nodding a lot?

-Do they make reference to doing something together in the

future?

Clues That They're Not Interested

- They look around the room a lot and don't make eye contact. (Even worse, they're checking out other people.)
- They talk about how busy they are, hinting that they don't really have time to date you.
- They talk all the time on the cell phone and ignore you — unacceptable even for a doctor.

The End of the Date

So the date is coming to a close and that confident, funny, super-sexy self that cruised through lunch just flew out the window leaving behind the insecure you.

Now what?

You realize there is a chance that you could be rejected at this point. Or perhaps you're the one who is going to say, "no thanks." Either way, this is often the part of the date that most people dislike.

It's important to be straightforward, however you feel about the other person. This might be a great time to thank your date for a wonderful lunch and leave it at that. If this person isn't right for you, then it's better to deal with it now.

So be honest. Tell them whether you're interested in seeing them again or not. Most people appreciate it when you speak your mind, but make sure you don't just dump your feelings on them. Be responsible and respectful.

Let Them Down Gracefully

The great thing about having a lunch date is that if you're not having a good time, returning to work gives you a great out without having to invent some lame excuse. If you really don't



want to see the other person again, be honest, but not brutally so. Nobody likes to be rejected, so tell them you enjoyed their company but must get back to work.

If you don't ask for another date, the person will assume you're not interested. Whether it's an It's Just Lunch date or you're going it alone, please don't say, "I'll call you" if you know you won't. There is nothing worse than waiting around for someone to call. It's better to say nothing than to lead someone on. You wouldn't want someone to do that to you, now would you?

Asking for Another Date

If you've had a good time and you really like them, what do you need to do to seal the deal? How exactly do you leave it?

If you had a good time, don't be afraid to say so. Be as enthusiastic as you feel. Say, "I had a great time and I'd love to do it again soon." Exchange numbers or business cards. That way the ball is in their court and they'll call if interested. If you exchange cards, you can rest assured that you both like each other enough to go on another date.

Most women usually expect to hear from a man the next day. And based on our surveys, virtually all men will call within 48 hours if they are interested in seeing their date again. We recommend calling or texting the day after to say thank you or to indicate you'd like to go on another date.

To Kiss or Not to Kiss?

There's really no hard rule when it comes to kissing. We know some women who find it inappropriate to kiss on a first date, and then again we know others who think it's perfectly natural, depending on how the date went. If it's a lunch date, it's probably best to just give each other a hug goodbye. If you've been out for drinks or dinner, let your intuition guide you.

Before you even go in for anything physical, you must first establish that the person wants to be touched. It's easy to tell; just watch their body language. If in doubt, stay away until you receive stronger signals. Just leave it at a hug or a peck on the cheek. Strong sexual advances too early can be a turnoff, even for guys. So trust your instincts.

Five Things to Say If You Want to See Them Again

- “I had a great time. Would you like to get together again soon?”
- “Would you be interested in dinner next time?”
- “This was a great lunch! I'd like to get to know you better.”
- “I'm going hiking on Saturday and would love for you to join me.”
- “Now that the hard part is out of the way, are you interested in going out again?”

Five Things to Say When You're Not Interested

- “The best of luck and fun in your future dates. Thanks again.”
- “I can see us becoming friends. I'd like to invite you to my next party.”
- “I had a good time, but I just don't think we have that much in common.” (Very politely point out the differences between your lifestyles, interests, etc., which will show why you're not a good match.)
- “I have a friend you might like, can I give him/her your number?”
- “I feel that the chemistry just isn't quite right between us.” (This implies it's a mutual thing.)

A Second Chance?

Well, how did it go? At this point you could be in one of three places. Either you're excited and really want to see them again, or you're convinced that this is not the right person for you. Or



perhaps you're unsure about how you feel.

Before you press your built-in reject button, remember that you only need to determine whether or not you want to see them for a second date. So, stop right there!

While first impressions are important — and your time is precious — there is a point to giving someone a second chance. A lot of people suffer from first-date jitters. In fact, fear is the number one cause for first-date disasters and often leads to over-talking or out-of-character shyness.

We usually recommend two or three dates before you rule someone out completely. By the third date, you'll have gathered enough information to make a solid assessment.

At that point there are two areas you should look at. The first is compatibility. Do you have things in common? Then, it's a good idea to check in with your own instincts. Ask yourself, "How do they make me feel inside? Are they genuine and trustworthy? Do they treat me with kindness and consideration?"

Trust your instincts, and you'll be surprised at how perceptive you really are.

An instinctive "gut" feeling can draw you to Mr. or Ms. Right even if they don't match all your criteria on paper. You probably have friends who are with partners who you never thought they'd be with. What brings people like that together? They trusted their "gut."

Basically, we all want the same things in a partner: honesty, trust, good communication, confidence, fun and understanding. If we can add chemistry to that, then bingo!

All that's left to work out is the timing. Is this person ready to commit, and does he or she want to share these qualities with you?