

# Eight Fun, Fresh, and Creative At-Home Dates for Parents

If you're like most parents I know, finding the time and money for "dates" together can be really tough. (Babysitting alone might run \$40...and that's not counting the cost of whatever else you plan to do!) Of course, we all need to get out of the house with our partners every so often. But for most people, this is going to be less frequent while we have children at home.

However, couples who are also parents definitely need to take time for each other! In fact, given the stress and strain of parenting, they probably need to do this even *more* often than others. So, what are a couple of parents in need of some together time to do?

Never fear. Once you've got the kids to bed (and we know how hard that can sometimes be!) there are plenty of ways to create a relaxing, intimate, and enjoyable date for each other—without needing to pay a sitter or even leave your house. Read on for some great ideas.

## 1. Plan a "fake" trip together.

Okay, so maybe it's been a while since you've been able to manage a big vacation—or a vacation at all. Time for a mental escape! Fire up your phones or computers and pick a dream destination together. Then go all out planning an amazing itinerary. Where will you stay? (Assign that to one of you...) What will you do? And that to the other, and so on). It might be fun to create a board for this dream trip together on [Pinterest \(http://www.pinterest.com/\)](http://www.pinterest.com/). And who knows—maybe some day, some of it will come true. Read more about this great idea [here \(http://www.beautythroughimperfection.com/at-home-date-night-fake-vacation/\)](http://www.beautythroughimperfection.com/at-home-date-night-fake-vacation/).

## 2. Entertain each other with some killer karaoke.

Want to spice up a dull night at home? How about watching your spouse down on his knees belting out "Total Eclipse of the Heart"? (This option is perfect if you'd be too self-conscious to try this at a club.) Free apps for your smartphone and online karaoke sites make this a super-cheap option. Tip: each of you might try picking out a song and rehearsing in private beforehand. Costumes get extra points.

### **3. Get in the mood with a romantic candlelight or fireside picnic.**

If you've got a yard, you've got a little place to get away. Bring the baby monitor or tell the kids where to find you in case they need you, and set up a little nighttime picnic by the warm glow of torches, candles, or a fire in the firepit. Blankets are a great addition. And make s'mores. We won't tell the kids.

### **4. Enjoy a game night for two.**

If you haven't played board games since you were a kid, you might be amazed by all the great new products out there. Some will be highly strategic, some cooperative, and some are just intended to make you laugh. Here are some lists of [board games \(http://www.datesbydesign.com/two-player-games-for-couples-game-night-date-night-part-1/\)](http://www.datesbydesign.com/two-player-games-for-couples-game-night-date-night-part-1/) that two can play and enjoy. More of a screen gamer? Try some of the special apps that require players to interact in person, sometimes known as local multiplayer games. Here's a [list \(http://www.localmultiplayer.com/touchscreen\)](http://www.localmultiplayer.com/touchscreen) to get you started.

### **5. Have a sweet evening with a blindfolded taste test.**

Variation #1: Blind-taste taste test a bunch of different foods (chocolate?) or wines or beers and rate them to see what you truly prefer. After all, there's something about really focusing on taste that's very sensual. To "blind" it for both of you, have one person assign each item a letter beforehand and put this letter on the bottom of each identical plate or cup, using tape and marker.

(Don't forget to write down what letter you assigned to which product!) Then that person can close his or her eyes while the other person (who doesn't know what's what) mixes up the plates or cups.

Version #2: Each partner picks out various sweets or treats for the other to taste while he is she is blindfolded (hand-feed your partner the treats if you like). Then, see if he or she can guess them. You could try Nutella, whipped cream, flavored or filled chocolates, caramel sauce, honey, or frosting, as a start. This game is as fun and risqué as you want to make it, of course.

## **6. Learn a new skill together and discover one another.**

Learning a new skill is a great way to introduce some novelty, excitement, and growth into your relationship, a practice known to strengthen couple bonds. But you don't have to take an expensive class to reap these benefits. YouTube is absolutely full of great videos teaching you how to do just about anything, from throwing a Frisbee to folding an origami crane to salsa dancing to making latte art. You could each pick a skill and search for videos about it, or browse a general how-to channel like [HowCast](https://www.youtube.com/user/Howcast) (<https://www.youtube.com/user/Howcast>), [ExpertVillage](https://www.youtube.com/user/expertvillage) (<https://www.youtube.com/user/expertvillage>) or eHow. Keep in mind that you might need to purchase a few materials beforehand.

## **7. Hold a junior-high dance, without the awkwardness.**

Take a trip back in time to the school dance you probably never attended together. First, each of you should make a playlist of old songs you would have danced to back in the day. Keep it secret from your partner! At an appointed time, dress up, arrange for some mood lighting (disco ball and streamers optional), then surprise each other with your lists and dance together. No one will be judging you from the corner of the gym.

## **8. Make a bucket list.**

Here's one to work on together over some take-out or a nice home-cooked meal, and maybe a glass of wine or other special beverage. Set the mood with candlelight if you like, too. Now, both of you take paper and pen and 15 minutes or so to write down a "bucket list" of things you want to do with your partner—today, six months from now, or before you die! It can be as simple as going rollerskating or as major as buying an RV and traveling cross-country in your retirement. Once you've made your separate lists (no talking while you write!), share with your partner, discuss, and dream a few dreams together. Maybe you'll even decide to start saving up for some of these goals now.

So there you are--8 new and different dating ideas that you can enjoy together at home for little expense after the kids are tucked in. Many of these ideas will allow you to try new things (proven to improve relationships) or talk about yourself and your hopes and dreams with your partner (ditto). I'm about ready to get planning for my own weekend date. How about you?

### References:

Aron, A., Melinat, E., Aron, A. N., Vallone, R.D., & Bator, R.J. (1997). The experimental generation of interpersonal closeness: A procedure and some preliminary findings. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 23(4), 363-377.

Aron, A., Aron, E. N., Heyman, R. E., Norman, C. C., & McKenna, C. (2000). Couple's shared participation in novel and arousing activities and experienced relationship quality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 273-284.

Tsapelas, I., Aron, A., & Orbuch, T. (2009). Marital boredom now predicts less satisfaction 9 years later. *Psychological Science*, 20(5), 543-545.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02332.x>  
(<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2009.02332.x>)

