

No one likes to argue over money. Finances are a sore spot for a lot of marriages. Let's take a break from the heart ache and focus on a date that's cheap. Not because you're cheap—you're money savvy. You're just like The Beatles—can't buy your love. At least, that's true for tonight.

## A CHEAP DATE

### GAME CHANGERS

# A CHEAP DATE

### GROUND RULES

- Take a break from talking about the usual suspects—money, kids, in-laws, jobs. This is not a time to take care of checklists, this is time for your US.
- Flirt. Be considerate, kind, relaxed, and a great listener. Act as if you are still trying to win your spouse over.
- As much as possible, stay off of technology. Only text or take a call if it is an emergency. Everyone and everything will be OK. (People used to leave their homes all the time without phones, and they lived to tell about it.)
- In many relationships, there is a talker and a non-talker. If you are married to a non-talker, when he or she talks tonight, they might not do it as well as you. Give them time and space to find the words.

### GET READY

Rather than wearing an expensive new outfit on this date, put on your favorite outfit. You know the outfit—the usual. Old faithful. A date is something you want to enjoy, so why not be comfortable?

If you want to get crazy, you and your spouse can start the date off with a trip to Goodwill or a nearby thrift shop. Split up and spend \$5 (or less) on a new outfit or accessory for each other. Now you've got to wear that the rest of the date.

If you have kids, paying for a babysitter can often be a cost barrier to dating. Let's get creative to make this a non-issue. See if you can't barter for babysitting with another neighborhood couple. Offer to keep their kids another night so they can go on a date, too.

### KEEP IT GOING

If you're feeling a little more daring, there are a few other inexpensive activities you could try out:

- If you live near a wholesale club (like Costco or Sam's Club) go enjoy the free food samples. Don't have a membership? Borrow one from a friend.
- Test drive the fanciest new car at the dealership (But be sure not to buy the thing or this could suddenly end up being a really expensive date).
- Go to the closest dollar store and spend \$3 on a keepsake for your spouse.

### DARE ME (OPTIONAL)

### GO OUT

You don't have to spend a bunch of money to have a fun evening. Here are a few options on what you could do for a meal:

- Go to your favorite restaurant, but order the cheapest thing on the menu. (We'd recommend the cheapest entree, unless you're really hungry for that \$1 side of ranch dressing.)
- Go out to eat at a cheap restaurant. This can be a favorite fast food chain or local dive. Try to find and use a coupon if you can. Or try to go during a time when they have special discounts on appetizers.
- Eat at home. Cook a meal using only the food currently in your fridge. You can even use [SuperCook.com](http://SuperCook.com) to find recipes by searching based on the ingredients you already have.
- If you're eating out, the one thing you shouldn't get cheap on is tipping the waiter. Your fun night shouldn't come at someone else's expense.

While you're eating, be sure NOT to talk about money. The whole point of this evening is to push pause on finances for a minute while you enjoy an evening guilt free. So here are a few random topics that you may not often discuss:

- What attributes of your parents did you get? Which did you not get?
- What was your favorite class in school?
- If salary wasn't an issue, what job would you take?
- If you could speak another language, what would it be?
- What do you think there needs to be a national holiday for?

Now that you've had dinner, it's time for some cheap entertainment. There are plenty of local places around any town that you can enjoy for free or inexpensive.

- Check out a local park, the local library or the closest bookstore
- Head to the local pet store and spend some free time petting the puppies and kittens.
- Go for a walk around town or on a hike through nature
- See if there's a cheap event going on in your town, like an open mic night, festival, or concert.