

PARENTING/PARENT HEALTH + RELATIONSHIP

Call the Sitter: This Is Not Your Average Valentine's Day Date

Low-key and offbeat Valentine's Day date ideas — with or without the kids

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If a fancy dinner and a suite at the Sorrento is your style, more power to you. But for a lot of parents, pulling off that kind of splurgy date sounds more stressful than romantic. When that's the case, the best Valentine's Day date is one that doesn't cost much and comes with very little pressure to be perfect. You've already successfully wooed your partner, so take advantage of these low-key and offbeat Valentine's Day date ideas for enjoying each other's company. (And if getting a sitter isn't an option, most of these ideas are casual and corny enough for the whole family to enjoy together.)

A trip to the movies

Going to the movies is the ultimate date-night cliché. Now that you have kids, actually watching a movie uninterrupted makes the old standby refreshing. But you can add an extra layer of fun by avoiding the standard movie experience. Watch a silent movie accompanied by live music at The Paramount Theatre's [Silent Movie Mondays](https://www.stgpresents.org/smm) (<https://www.stgpresents.org/smm>). On Feb. 13, catch a screening of the 1927 romantic comedy "It," starring Clara Bow.

[Seattle Art Museum](https://www.seattleartmuseum.org/) (<https://www.seattleartmuseum.org/>) presents a diverse roster of films in its theater — the most well-known a film noir series. (The films were suspended during the pandemic; sign up for [SAM emails](http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/sign-up) (<http://www.seattleartmuseum.org/sign-up>) to find out when SAM Film will relaunch.)

[Central Cinema](https://central-cinema.com/) (<https://central-cinema.com/>), not only sells alcohol, pizza and small plates, it screens cult classics in “Hecklevision,” where you can use your smartphone to send smart-alecky comments to the screen. Sing-alongs, movie trivia nights and free family cartoon nights are other draws. The 21-and-older venue [Big Picture](https://www.thebigpicture.net/) (<https://www.thebigpicture.net/>) has full bar and food service, with fare delivered to your armchair seat.

Re-create a date

For sentimental types, re-creating a special moment in their relationship can be the perfect mix of romantic and easy. (After all, you’ve done it before, and you probably had less money the first time.) You might repeat your first date or your first Valentine’s Day together. Maybe there’s a best date that you’ll never forget that you would both would love to relive again. Or maybe there’s a worst date you’ll never forget that’s due for a do-over. The specific activities and reasons you pick that particular date to re-create will be different for every couple — which is exactly the point.

Dorky sports

If you’re both athletic, by all means, make a date to play tennis or pickleball, or challenge each other to a game of one-on-one basketball. But even if you’re both card-carrying couch potatoes, “old-man sports” such as bowling and pingpong can be a fun date. Try curling, or [geeky options](https://whatnerd.com/weird-sports-for-geeks-and-nerds/) (<https://whatnerd.com/weird-sports-for-geeks-and-nerds/>), such as quidditch or [Racket: Nx](https://www.racketnx.com/) (<https://www.racketnx.com/>). Any version of golf works, too: the classic game (there are indoor [virtual options](https://blog.nextgengolf.org/golf-help/indoor-golf-5-places-to-play-around-seattle) (<https://blog.nextgengolf.org/golf-help/indoor-golf-5-places-to-play-around-seattle>), now), [miniature golf](https://www.parentmap.com/article/where-play-mini-golf-putt-putt-seattle-kids-families) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/where-play-mini-golf-putt-putt-seattle-kids-families>) or [disc golf](https://www.parentmap.com/article/seattle-disc-golf-courses-tips-kids-families) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/seattle-disc-golf-courses-tips-kids-families>).

The point is to do something that gets you out of your routine and lets you see your mate in an unfamiliar light. Since you’ve already picked such an uncool way to spend a romantic holiday, there’s no pressure to be any good at it. Dorky sports generate gift ideas, too — consider a pair of red vintage bowling shoes, pickleball racquets à deux or a personalized curling stone. Even if you don’t stick with the sport, the gift will be a keepsake of a memorable date.

Play in the snow

If you really want to splurge, it’s hard to top a weekend getaway to one of the Northwest’s [best snow towns](https://www.parentmap.com/article/northwest-snow-towns-winter-family-fun) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/northwest-snow-towns-winter-family-fun>). If you know how to ski or snowboard, you already know that the worst day on the mountain is better than the best day anywhere else. But even if you have no skills, playing in the snow is a rom-com trope for good reason. [Tubing and sledding](https://www.parentmap.com/article/top-places-to-go-sledding-for-seattle-area-kids-and-families) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/top-places-to-go-sledding-for-seattle-area-kids-and-families>), [snowshoeing](#)

(<https://www.parentmap.com/article/snowshoeing-101-for-seattle-area-families-and-kids>) or even just a good old snowball fight offers fresh air and exercise (endorphins!) while creating shared memories. That makes the state [Sno-Parks](https://www.parentmap.com/article/new-snow-play-area-seattle-annette-lake-sno-park) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/new-snow-play-area-seattle-annette-lake-sno-park>) a good option for the whole family, too. Whether you go with the kids or just each other, bundle up and bring snacks and a thermos of hot chocolate or cider to take away the chill. You'll get bonus points if you can work a [hot springs dip](https://www.parentmap.com/article/hot-springs-dip) (<https://www.parentmap.com/article/hot-springs-dip>) or a hot tub into the excursion.

Make a morning of it

Sometimes when your kids are young, a night on the town is not worth the lack of sleep. If your kids have trained you to wake up before the crack of dawn, take advantage of the early hours you're forced to keep with a morning date. Take the dog for a sunrise walk together. Go for a run or a bike ride and wrap things up with a breakfast you didn't have to cook. Feel free to skip the outdoor activities if the weather is foul and head straight to your favorite restaurant or coffee shop together. And if finding a morning babysitter is too hard, hand the kids the TV remote and a box of cereal for once. Then enjoy a breakfast ([made ahead of time](https://www.tasteofhome.com/collection/make-ahead-breakfast-recipes/) (<https://www.tasteofhome.com/collection/make-ahead-breakfast-recipes/>)) in bed.

Get smart

Kids say the darndest things, but sometimes you crave conversations that dig a little deeper than "Sesame Street" plots and jokes that don't start with "Knock, knock." If you're in the mood for adult entertainment of the cerebral kind, consider an author reading at your favorite indie bookstore, or attend a [ParentMap](https://www.parentmap.com/pm-live-2022-2023-parented-talks) (<https://www.parentmap.com/pm-live-2022-2023-parented-talks>) (shameless plug!), [Town Hall Seattle](https://townhallseattle.org/) (<https://townhallseattle.org/>) or [Seattle Arts & Lectures](https://lectures.org/events/) (<https://lectures.org/events/>) event. [Seattle Art Museum](https://www.seattleartmuseum.org/programs-and-learning/public-programs) (<https://www.seattleartmuseum.org/programs-and-learning/public-programs>) hosts public education talks on a variety of art-related topics, and its [Gardner Center](https://www.seattleartmuseum.org/gardnercenter) (<https://www.seattleartmuseum.org/gardnercenter>) hosts the Saturday University series of lectures on topics related to Asian arts and history (another good option for a morning date).

Seattle's theater world is rich in options for both all-ages theater and shows you wouldn't want to take the kids to. In February, consider [Seattle Rep's](https://www.seattlerep.org/) (<https://www.seattlerep.org/>) "[Metamorphoses](https://www.seattlerep.org/plays/202223-season/metamorphoses/)" (<https://www.seattlerep.org/plays/202223-season/metamorphoses/>), Oscar Wilde's "[A Woman of No Importance](https://www.taproottheatre.org/shows/2023/a-woman-of-no-importance/)" (<https://www.taproottheatre.org/shows/2023/a-woman-of-no-importance/>) at [Taproot](https://www.taproottheatre.org/) (<https://www.taproottheatre.org/>) or "[Into the Woods](https://www.5thavenue.org/shows/2022-23/into-the-woods/)" (<https://www.5thavenue.org/shows/2022-23/into-the-woods/>) at [The Fifth Avenue Theatre](https://www.5thavenue.org/) (<https://www.5thavenue.org/>). For lighter-hearted fare, enjoy a night of comedic improv or burlesque – clubs around town often have special Valentine's Day shows. Teatro ZinZanni's limited-run engagement "[Coming Home](https://zinzanni.com/seattle/)" (<https://zinzanni.com/seattle/>), has been extended through March 12.

More time together

Some couples are great at scheduling together time, with a monthly or even weekly date night. But if Valentine's Day is the only night of the year that you go out together, you need more than just plans for an evening. Make time together a priority by committing to a recurring event. Refresh those dance lessons you took for your wedding, learn to cook a new type of cuisine by attending cooking school together, buy two season tickets to the ballet, the Macha Theatre Works' [Distillery Series](https://www.machatheatreworks.com/distillery-about) (<https://www.machatheatreworks.com/distillery-about>) or [Seattle Kraken](https://www.nhl.com/kraken) (<https://www.nhl.com/kraken>). Join a bridge club or a bowling league together. It can be any kind of ongoing commitment, as long as you are both interested in it.

Bonus: Still can't find the perfect idea? Peruse one of [The Adventure Challenge books for couples](https://www.theadventurechallenge.com/collections/couples-collection) (<https://www.theadventurechallenge.com/collections/couples-collection>) and let it be your guide. It includes a key so you can pick a date based on time of day, whether you need a sitter and other considerations.

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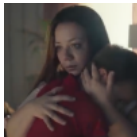
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