

QUICK POLL

Are Super Bowl parties a good way to meet potential dates?

- Yes, as long as people don't talk over the game
- No, I'm there to watch football / Madonna's halftime show / the ads

VOTE

Shouldn't romance have a place on your bucket list? To help you start planning now, here's a few options ranging from the simple to the sublime — including one that's out of this world!

By Laura Schaefer

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Are you a planner? Do you actually have five-year goals? Hey, there's no shame in it! Planners get things done and can actually have more fun in the long run... just don't forget to include your partner when you're setting out your latest "bucket list." After all, if life's adventures are fun for one, they're even better when they're shared with that special someone!

April Masini, the relationship expert behind AskApril.com and author of Romantic Date Ideas, says that "a couple's bucket list" includes everything [both partners] want to do together, but have put off. Now is the time, folks!" The next night you're out to dinner with your sweetie, why not pull out your napkin and a pen and have a big conversation about all the adventures you'd both like to have at some point? "Your 'couple's bucket list' may include something as simple as having more sex, but [it] could also include traveling the world, spending a year in Asia together, or telling your partner a secret that's been hidden for a long time."

What's on your list? Here are some suggestions to get the conversation rolling:

**The classic experience: Kissing under the cherry blossoms in springtime**

"I vote for a moonlit walk on the beach and candlelit dinner at a fancy restaurant. They are classics, but they're classics for a reason," offers Josh Adrians, a 32-year-old bank manager in Wisconsin. You can always take classic romance up a notch by adding two plane tickets into the mix, if you're so inclined. But where should you go? Adrians suggests kissing under the falling cherry blossoms in Japan (a popular spring pastime which attracts thousands of tourists each year). "I second the cherry blossom suggestion," agrees Alisha Kirchoff, 28, a university lecturer and administrator in Champaign, IL. "Add D.C. as the next best thing. We went there soon after [my husband] proposed. It was an awesome trip!"

**The active experience: Climbing a mountain**

"The thing that keeps coming to mind is camping or backpacking," says Stefan Streit, 30, who works on an organic farm in New York State. "I think combining a lover and the wilderness is just too awesome for me to reckon." If you and your sweetie love nature and aren't afraid to get a little dirty on vacation, take part of your bucket list outside by signing up for a triathlon, taking rock-climbing classes, or setting your sights on scaling a mountain. "The one thing that brings couples closer more than anything else is having fun, exciting, and interesting shared experiences," says Guy Winch, Ph.D., author of The Squeaky Wheel: Complaining the Right Way to Get Results, Improve Your Relationships and Enhance Self-Esteem. "Find that passion, interest or hobby you can both get behind and engage in it."

**The creative experience: Sharing what you mean to each other**

"When [my husband] and I were first dating, we were both pretty poor. So for our first Valentine's Day, instead of buying me flowers, he made paper hearts and attached them to a stick (sort of like a flower) and put them in a vase," explains Jean Hintze Chapman, 47, a small business owner in Wisconsin. "On each flower, he wrote why he loved me or what I meant to him. To this day, that is my most memorable gift he has given me." This just goes to show that something on your bucket list doesn't have to cost a thing. Or, plan

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a romantic scavenger hunt for your sweetie with charming hand-written clues, or vow to write each other letters *on actual paper* a few times a year.

### The adventurous experience: Going on a hot air balloon ride

Doing something outside of your comfort zones can really juice up your romance quotient. There's always sky-diving — but if that sounds like a bit much for you, work your way up

### Dinner and dancing on the moon would be the ultimate date night.

to it. Krystal Klapatch, 29, a college instructor in Milwaukee, WI, suggests reaching for the clouds in a different way: "Hot air balloon ride — cheesy, but really cool if you think about it!" If you'd rather keep both feet on the ground, there's always the local karaoke bar for a little out-on-a-limb lyrical adventure. Have you really lived until you've heard your man try to warble his way through "Sweet Caroline?" We think not!

### The uninhibited experience: Skinny-dipping in the moonlight

"Unshackle yourself from inhibitions and self-consciousness and go for it — whether it's dancing on top of the table, learning to play the piano, or skinny-dipping with your partner in the dark," says Dr. Fran Praver, author of *The New Science of Love: How Understanding Your Brain's Wiring Can Help Rekindle Your Relationship*. The key to loosening up is to start out small by encouraging your partner to take harmless chances. You don't have to run out and get matching tattoos, but if you automatically veto something that sounds a little out of your comfort zone, your bucket list will end up falling short. So communicate, plan... and then act. "I believe planning romance can be most arousing and exciting, because action begins in the imagination. Research shows that [your] imagination can trigger love-inducing brain chemicals," adds Praver. What are you waiting for? Let your imaginations run wild!

### The challenging experience: Learning how to scuba dive or surf

Learning new things isn't always easy once we've settled into adulthood, but an exciting new relationship can change that. So why not take on new adventures, like surfing or scuba diving? Dr. Lissa Coffey, author of *Closure and the Law of Relationship: Endings as New Beginnings*, says: "We are constantly learning more about ourselves — and we can always learn more about the other person. Take classes together, have fun, and go out with other happy couples." Putting yourselves into a totally new activity is a great way to get to know each other better in a short amount of time.

### The expensive experience: Vacationing at an ice hotel (or other exotic locale)

Sure, a lot of bucket list items might be expensive, but what's the point of dreaming up a romantic bucket list together if you're thinking about cost instead of the experience? Go ahead and add a stay at the [ice hotel in Sweden](#) to the list. Or how about booking a trip to Poseidon, the world's first [sea-floor resort](#)? Could a yearlong cruise around the world satisfy your wanderlust? *Absolutely!*

### The everyday experience: Sending each other goofy texts

Talk to your partner about those little things that give you each a case of the warm 'n' fuzzies. Is it a short backrub at the end of the day, or waking up to a cup of tea? Your bucket list should include some of the small gestures you can do for each other to make everyday life sweeter. Maybe you can't get enough funny text messages during the workday, for example. Whatever these little things happen to be, keeping up with them on a regular basis is an important part of any happy couple's bucket list.

### The cinematic experience: Visiting an iconic location for lovers

Take a cue from your favorite classic movies and plan a rendezvous on top of the Empire State Building or the Eiffel Tower. If heights aren't your thing, why not lounge on a gondola in Venice meant for two? Yes, please!

### The not-yet-possible experience: Floating in zero gravity

"I'd love to take my boyfriend with me on a space shuttle ride," says Masini. "Dinner and dancing on the moon would be the ultimate date night." Hear that, Richard Branson? You have eager bucket-list customers just waiting for [Virgin Galactic](#) to take off.

Laura Schaefer is the author of *The Secret Ingredient* and *Planet Explorers Chicago*.

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