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Dating Poorly Will Cost You More Money than Dating Smart

By [April Masini](#) on Jul 31, 2014

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On the surface, dating seems like a snap that shouldn't be a big expense, right? Somebody asks you out, you go, you have a nice time, or not, and wait for the second date. If. Only. The reality is that dating is expensive, whether or not you're picking up the tab. Why? Because dating poorly will cost you more money than dating smart.

Here's why: Most people don't break down the real costs of dating. Without going into too much detail, there's the cost of grooming. (You have to look good to attract dates, right? And you want to be ready if you meet someone accidentally, who could be awesome, so you need to maintain your grooming at all times if you're serious about dating.) Factor in salon expenses (hair, nails), aesthetician (facials, waxing) bills, wardrobe (you must be wardrobe-ready for a black tie event or a polo match, bowling, barbecues or beach dates because last minute panic shopping means shelling out more than prepared, in-advance, wardrobe maintenance), lingerie (should be updated every three to four months, as granny panties and frayed undies are a big fail), home upkeep (your nest is part of your appeal), car upkeep and transport — and the price for those half gallons of ice cream, extra large pizzas and bottles of wine with straws in place, that you go for when a date doesn't go so well or a break up takes you by surprise. Then, there's long-distance dating that requires plane tickets, hotel bills, lots of restaurant charges, roaming costs for those l.d. global relationships that aren't just in the next state over — and hey, if you have kids, add in big babysitting bills for in town or out of town dating where you go and they stay put.

So, how do you find love without losing all your money?

I'm so glad you asked!

There are lots of ways to reduce spending, and tons of consumer websites to show you how — from shopping sales, to finding a good tailor so you can make sure your clothes fit well so you don't have to replace them, to flying on particular days of the week when ticket prices are historically lower — but I have some better advice when it comes to saving money on dating:

Know what you want in a date and a relationship.

This is free, and enormously money-saving, but it's hard work, and that's why so many people don't do it — and pay through the nose over the years. Simply knowing that you want to marry can help you decide not to date anyone who doesn't want the same thing. While that sounds simple, I hear from so very many women who are "in the moment" and reliant on chemistry, so that they choose men who are either rebounding, separated, but not divorced, or even upfront about saying they don't want to be in a relationship, to date — because they're attractive guys or the women just aren't thinking strategically. A year later, I usually hear from them asking for advice because the relationship isn't progressing — when he said he didn't want a relationship on the first date! If you want a long-term, committed relationship, date like you do! This will save you loads of time and money!

Long distance dating is not for everyone!

It's particularly expensive because of the travel costs involved, but more so because it's not as easy as it appears on the surface, and women who get involved with long distance relationships that don't pan out — after a year or more — have wasted that year, and money in the process. They've not only flown all over the place, paid for hotel rooms and the extra

restaurant charges that travel involves, but they've taken themselves off the market, suffered cumulative jet lag, put work on hold to travel, and suffered anxiety about the commitment because there's no meeting up for a quick drink after work when your date is thousands of miles away. Checking in and taking the relationship's temperature is a lot more difficult, and this stress takes a toll on every aspect of many women's' lives — and wallets. So think twice about long distance dating commitments that tug at your heart and your wallet, but aren't good investments.

Make a list of your deal breakers so you don't waste time with guys who have criminal records. And wives. And no job.

I know, I know — I'm so strict! But seriously, I've heard from many women who think their soulmate is the amazing looking "hunk" right out of a romance novel. But in a reality the same guy has physically abused them, has an addiction problem, is still married, or is a serial cheater. I'm giving you extreme cases here — but they're not uncommon. And I'm trying to illustrate a point that to avoid these situations and others like them, you should make a list of deal breakers and don't date anyone who possesses the deal breakers. Vet your dates early, often — and gracefully. If you can't get a straight answer from him about how many kids he has, move on. A fuzzy answer is an answer! If he's "between jobs" — and you find out this has been going on for eight years now that he's between jobs, move on. He may have a PhD from MIT, but if you want kids, a home and two cars, an unemployed genius who doesn't want to stay home with babies, is a bad dating investment for you. This also goes for more mundane arenas, like religion, socio-economic group and ethnicity. If you really want to marry someone who shares your religious or spiritual beliefs, don't waste your time (or his) with anyone outside that parameter. Be honest with yourself if you simply can't see yourself marrying someone who's not from your ethnic background. Your life will be easier, you'll spend less money dating men who you will never wind up with, and you won't be wasting his time or money either!

April Masini is one of the foremost experts on dating and is considered by many to be the modern day "Dear Abby." She is 'Ask April', the relationship expert behind the #1 free Q & A advice forum, author of four dating advice books and the critically acclaimed advice column.

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