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Sober & Single: 5 first dates that don't involve the bar

By Jarone Ashkenazi (/experts/jarone-ashkenazi)

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What to do on a first date for those who don't drink

Where to go on your first date. The dreaded decisions daters across the world are faced before meeting that new potentially special someone. Daters want to pick a place that sets the right mood, plays to your's or your partner's interests and one that can be memorable! You want to be thoughtful and personal, as choosing a first-date location should be fun not stressful.

When thinking of a 'first date, the scene is familiar, a fun local bar to grab a drink. But for those who don't drink what are they to do?

There are a lot of great first date ideas (<http://www.yourtango.com/experts/find-your-plus-one/five-great-first-date-ideas-expert>) you can do without alcohol to get to know someone and create a connection. Drinking doesn't "guarantee comfort or confidence by any means," says Los Angeles based therapist Dr. Nancy Irwin (<https://twitter.com/DrNancyIrwin>). For non-drinkers out there, or those that want to mix up dating (<http://www.yourtango.com/dating>) with **EXERCISE (/EXERCISE)** some **LOVE OPPORTUNITIES (/LOVE-OPPORTUNITIES)** **DATING (/DATING)** **MEN (/WHAT-MEN-THINK)**

1. Classes: COOKING & PAINTING **CHALLENGES** **SEX (/SEX)** **BREAKUPS (/BREAKUPS-AND-DIVORCE)**

Find a local cooking class. It's a great way to learn a new skill and also enjoy learning it with someone new. Doesn't matter if you are a complete novice in the kitchen or if you consider yourself a master chef, cooking together is "one of the greatest bonding experiences you can have as it is a great way to see how you work together" says Mary Mattern (<https://instagram.com/nomyourself/?hl=en>), better known as the brains behind Nom Yourself (<http://www.nomyourself.com/>). Who knows, you may end up cooking with foods that are said to be aphrodisiacs (<http://www.yourtango.com/2007216/eat-drink-man-woman>) like chocolate or oysters and if the date goes well, it can lead to setting up another date where you make dishes together!

Try a painting class. Studios like PAINT:LAB (<http://www.paintlab.net/>) offer uninstruced and instruced sessions daily where daters can paint together and enjoy a fun and creative activity together. A painting class can be very sexy (<http://www.yourtango.com/2014222560/how-send-sexy-selfies-worth-bragging-about>) as it is a way to express yourself without words and most importantly is going to give you, "the free flow of thought that's unleashed when you're doing something with the right side of your brain," says April Masini relationship expert and author behind AskApril.com (<https://www.askapril.com/>).

2. Outdoor adventure

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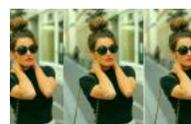
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Noah Van Hochman (<https://twitter.com/oceanhawk1>), author of *Dude! What Were You Thinking: a common sense guide to dating* (<http://www.amazon.com/Thinking-Common-Sense-Dating-Relationships-ebook/dp/B00DHMX870>), notices that there has been a trend in the dating scene to move from “traditional dates such as movies, bistro's and other typical first date venues to more adventurous first dates.” Adventurous activities could be outdoor activities like: hiking, a nice bike ride or a rock climbing class. Outdoor activities on the first date give you an opportunity to get to know your date while keeping active instead of being static bound to a dinner table or a something similar. Another benefit of an adventurous date, is that “If the date turns bad the activities can also be a great buffer until you can bid a hasty retreat!”

If you like the outdoors but prefer something more low-key, going for a walk in a nice park is a great alternative as well. A walk in the park is a fun cheap date - check out Lori Cheek (<https://twitter.com/loricheeknyc>) who is the founder of the dating service Cheek'd (<http://cheekd.com/>) tips for cheap park dates in NYC (<http://travelsavvy.tv/travelchannels/tstv/cheap-dates-in-nyc/>) - but make sure to “find a place with a beautiful view and pack a picnic along as well,” advises Sherri Murphy, CEO of Elite Connections (<http://www.eliteconnections.com/>).

3. Bowling, ice skating, mini-golfing and more!

Many first daters are afraid of the talking portion of the date. Embedded in activity dates like bowling and ice skating are fun environments which “take the potential stress of wondering what to talk about out of the equation,” says Louie Felix, CEO of Matchmaking VIP (<http://matchmakingvip.com/>).

Bowling is a true classic and for good reason. “This activity will break the ice and allow you two to become playful with one another. A little competitive banter can be extremely fun and flirty,” says Kate MacLean (https://twitter.com/kate_maclean), resident relationship expert and public relations coordinator at PlentyOfFish (<http://www.pof.com/>).

Another throwback and great first date idea is miniature golfing. Playing a game with your date “brings out your inner child” says Adam Samuel of The Big Fling (<http://www.thebigfling.com/>). But warning, don't get too competitive! Remember it is the first date so focus on having a fun time versus beating your best score.

Relationship expert extraordinaire and life coach Siggy Flicker (<https://twitter.com/siggyflicker>) - who recently released her book *Write Your Own Fairy Tale* - arranged a first date for a nervous client to be at an ice skating rink to “minimize the talking aspect of the date. I gave her one rule... Every time she wanted to say something when they were sitting down and drinking hot chocolate, she would need to take a sip before she spoke.”

Other fun ideas include:the zoo, sports event or catching a concert.

4. Head to a museum

Whether a blind date, or someone you have asked out yourself, a museum offers a cultural and educational environment to connect and learn about your date. It's a great way to pick your dates brain, without feeling like you are on an interview as, “there are so many ways to start a conversation and learn where your dates family is from, what your date values and how they view the world,” says Jessie Kay, CEO and Founder of The Real Matchmaker (<http://www.therealmatchmaker.com/>).

5. Froyo

Looking for a fun date idea to get to know someone without the loud club music or the haziness of alcohol, take your date to froyo. At the end of your walk (see date idea above) stop off at a froyo shop like Menchie's (<http://www.menchies.com/>), the world's largest self-serve froyo franchise. Use toppings to show your personality. Are you a fruit fiend? Chocolate connoisseur? Flaunt your flavor and give your date a peak inside what you enjoy to eat...

Whether taking a class, going on an outdoor adventure, sharing the experience of a fun activity or heading to a museum, “be yourself and have fun! A first date is the time to see if you like each other enough to have a second date,” says It's Just Lunch Houston (<http://www.itsjustlunchhouston.com/>) matchmaker and relationship expert Sarah Patt.

So if drinking is not a big part of your life, it is important to find someone that, “fits your lifestyle at the beginning stages of your relationship,” says Jessica Janik (<https://instagram.com/theinvisiblebridesmaid/>), bridal consultant and founder of The Invisible



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Bridesmaid (<http://www.theinvisiblebridesmaid.com/>). You want a clear picture of who your potential partner is and how you two may fit together in the near to distant future.

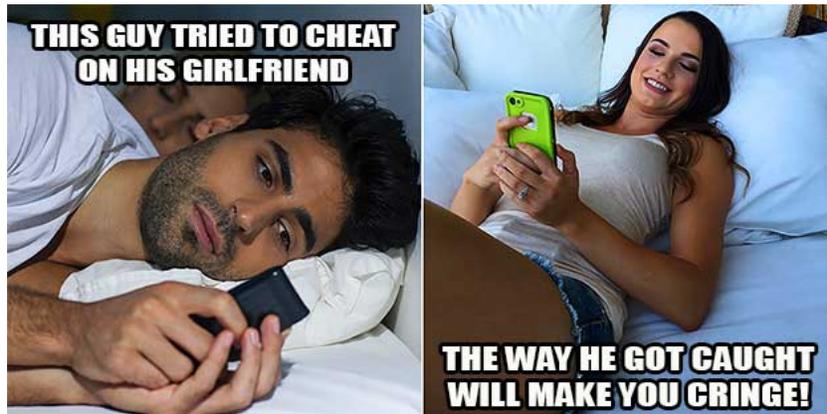
Remember, alcohol doesn't set the stage for a great first date, it is the "effort you put into planning the date and the connection the two of you have," concludes Patt.

By: Jarone Ashkenazi (<http://www.jaroneashkenazi.com>)
[@JaroneAsh](https://twitter.com/jaroneash) (<https://twitter.com/jaroneash>)

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ARTICLE CONTRIBUTED BY

ADVANCED MEMBER

Jarone Ashkenazi (</experts/jarone-ashkenazi>)

Author

</experts/jarone-ashkenazi>
View Profile (</experts/jarone-ashkenazi>)
Jarone Ashkenazi
Freelance PR Consultant and Writer

Website (<http://www.jaroneashkenazi.com/>)
[@JaroneAsh](https://twitter.com/JaroneAsh)
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jaroneashkenazi>
Location: Los Angeles, CA.
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Samantha Daniels of Samantha's Table has been a professional matchmaker for high-end, exclusive clientele for over 16 years. She has helped thousands of people find love and get married. In that time, she paid close attention to what people like and more specifically don't like about dating apps. She soon realized that she was perfectly positioned... READ MORE (</experts/jarone-ashkenazi/take-step-dating-lounge-invitation-only-dating-app>)

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