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Who Should Pay For a Date?

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Dating etiquette hasn't changed much in 100 years, which can be a good thing. You still want to be washed, wear spiffy clothes, be polite and on time. But deciding who should pay for a date can be trickier.

Women with a better income than the man may want to pick up the check. Or one person may feel uncomfortable having everything paid for them and want to have an equal partnership. And do the same rules on who should pay for a date apply at age 30 or 40 or higher that applied in your teens or 20s?

Dates can be expensive, so deciding who should pay for a date can be important if you're on a budget. Even a cheap [romantic date](#) of roses, pizza, drinks and a movie can cost \$180 or more in some of the most romantic cities in the world. Asking your date to "go [Dutch](#)," where each person pays half, can be a little tacky, especially on a first date.

So what are the etiquette rules on who should pay for a date in today's world of dating? We asked a few relationship experts and got their input on who should pay for a date:

You ask, you pay

The common rule that the person who asks should pay for a date has been around for almost ever, and it still applies, says [Amy Schoen](#), a dating and relationship life coach.



However, if the first date is more of a meeting than a date because they've met online and want to meet in person at a coffee shop or somewhere else low key, then each person should expect to pay their own way, Schoen says. But it's nice if the guy offers to pay, she says.

This rule holds for same sex couples, with whoever giving the invitation paying, says Scott Carroll, a [psychiatrist and dating expert](#). The invited person may offer to

pay half, but they don't have to since they didn't do the inviting and didn't pick the place, Carroll says.

The man should pay for a date

At least for the first few dates, it's good manners for a man to pay for a date, Carroll says. "He should always try to pay, but don't make a scene if she strongly and

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repeatedly insists she pay half,” he says. “Many women think they should pay half, but actually appreciate it when a man just takes care of it even if she makes just as much or even more money.

“The key is just hand the waiter your credit card and not make a big deal about it or try to discuss it. If she offers to pay half, reassure her that you’ve got it covered. If she starts to get upset about it, then let her pay half,” says Scott Carroll, a dating expert.

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If the woman makes a lot more money than the man, the man should still pay because it’s not about the money, says Elliott Katz, author of “Being the Strong Man a Woman Wants.”

“When a man takes a woman out on a date and pays for her, it makes her feel special and she wants to be with a man who makes her feel special,” Katz says. “A man should take a woman

to a place where he can afford to pay for her. Dividing the bill is not the way to show you believe in gender equality.”

Paying for a first date

If it’s a first date, the man should always do the asking, says April Masini, a relationship expert with an advice column on dating.

When women ask men out on a first date, they’re often confused because the date went well but the guy doesn’t call her back, Masini says.

“The reason is that they’ve taken away the opportunity from that guy to show his interest by simply asking for a date, showing up, constructing it, and trying to win her over,” she says. “And then, if he wants more, asking for a second date. The real way to know if a guy is interested, is if he asks a woman out. And when a woman takes that opportunity away from him, she robs herself of clarity.”

When the woman pays

An exception to the rule that men pay for dates, Carroll says, is if a woman invites him out to a place that is too expensive for him to afford, then he shouldn’t have to pay. He may offer to pay half if he wants to, but he shouldn’t have to pay even that much if he didn’t pick the date location.

If a relationship ensues after a first date, it’s fine for a woman to treat a guy and pay for a date, says Masini, the relationship expert.

“In many cases, there is a financial inequity,” she says, “and it’s important to understand that if he can afford to wine and dine her, she can still afford to cook him dinner, bring homemade cookies to his office, or take him on a date that’s within her budget – and the same goes for an inequity in the opposite direction, where the woman has more money than the man.”

Rigid rules aren’t romantic

The rules on who should pay for a date shouldn’t be rigid enough that they make anyone uncomfortable, says John Rasiej, founder of BringChivalryBack.com, a site meant to reintroduce the value of chivalry to men and couples.

“The offering of chivalry by a man is simply that, an offer. The rules are not so rigid that

A gentleman has the option of offering to pay for a date if that’s his preference, Rasiej says, and the woman has the choice to accept the offer or not. If she prefers to split the bill or pay for the date entirely, for whatever her reasons, then she’s free to suggest that, he says.



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“The offering of chivalry by a man is simply that, an offer,” Rasiej says. “The rules are not so rigid that a man and a woman are required to behave in a way they may not be comfortable. By making it a matter of offer and agreement, the issue becomes more in tune with how each person wants the date to proceed and loses any imposed

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obligation.”

If the rules of dating etiquette becomes too cumbersome to follow, both parties can make it a lot easier after a few dates by splitting the bill or taking turns paying for dates. Making money an issue while dating can be unromantic, says [Wendy Atterberry](#), a relationship advice columnist.

“Going dutch at each date is unromantic and shouldn’t be the norm after a relationship has been established, nor should couples get too hung up on whose turn it is to treat or how much each is paying for each date,” Atterberry says. “If money and budget is that big of a consideration, couples should focus on dates that are [cheap](#) or free.”

Who do you think should pay for a date? Tell us your view in the comments section below.

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