



w h e n b o y m e e t s g i r l

The Chemistry Guide



For some of us, dating comes naturally. For others, it's a tricky business. If you are entering the dating arena and feel unprepared, fret not. The tips in here will go a long way in helping you embark on your journey to meet that special someone.

An alternative date

When most of us think of going on a date, the first thing that comes to mind is dinner and a movie. Try something different! Here are a few alternatives that will leave a lasting impression with your date.

beach bums

Sun-worshippers, hit the beach! Sun, sand and sea is a great equaliser to moods and tensions on a first date...bring a picnic basket but observe suntan lotion decorum!

culture fever

Show off your renaissance spirit! 'En-culture' yourselves! Visit a museum, art show or the theatre. Pick up the newspapers and run through the arts listings and pick an event that appeals to both of you. A little pricier but dinner and drinks after the show leaves an even more lasting impression.

book 'em

Take your date to your favourite book haunt. Books will give you some insight into your

date's mind and provide valuable clues to garner a second date. If your date picks up a book on wine, it could be that he/she is into wine drinking. Why not suggest after-dinner drinks at a wine bar? Or if your wallet permits, how about dinner at a chic restaurant?

play tourist

Make your way to Chinatown, Little India or Geylang Serai and take in a treasure trove of cultural sights and sounds. There is always something new and exciting waiting to be discovered in the little streets and lanes. You could script and act out your very own 'City Beat' or 'Makansutra'.

the never-ending ride

Hop on a bus and see where it takes you. The mystery and suspense of an unknown destination will be a unique icebreaker and the journey provides an opportunity to engage in conversation.

enjoy the great outdoors

Put on your hiking boots and set off for a nature walk. Bukit Timah Nature Reserve (also a great venue if you are into mountain biking), MacRitchie Reservoir and Pulau Ubin are but some of the pockets of nature available in Singapore.

fur-friends

Man's best friend can turn out to be your best bet for a date. After all, who can resist those puppy-eyed fur-faces? If either of you are dog owners, a stroll through the Botanic Gardens with your date and dog in tow may be an excellent opportunity to connect and relax your weary minds from the stress of city-living. If not, the casual surroundings and dog-friendly cafe at the park's entrance does make for an easy-going and casual encounter with your date. East Coast Park and Bishan Park are also equally dog-friendly environments where you may consider for a doggy-date encounter. Just make sure that your date's not afraid of dogs!

Before the date...

Here are some pointers to keep in mind before you set off for your oh-so-important date.

first impression counts!

Yes they do! Unfortunately, many books are judged by their cover at first glance, so if you want to secure that second date, spruce yourself up before you meet! Whether you are a natural beauty or cosmetically-challenged, you are what you make yourself out to be.



the "X" factor

Add 'oomph' to your looks by letting your personality shine. Take the initiative and be approachable. Be generous with your time, patience and understanding - become the soul of empathy. Put your date's interest before your own. Not only will you earn their trust and respect but it will leave them yearning for more of your company.

There's a fine line between having a glib tongue and holding an interesting conversation with someone. Being able to converse comfortably takes practice and having a ready-database of general/current knowledge does help. How does one obtain such a repository of information, you might ask. Surfing the Internet, reading newspapers, magazines or watching current affairs on TV are just some of the many ways.

By being in the know, you will not be caught in a situation where you run out of conversation topics. However, avoid discourteous or sensitive topics such as income, personal investments, past relationships and sexual experience. You are just getting to know one another and such topics are usually reserved till you have developed that special relationship. Living in modern times, some of us have learnt that we can't do without our handphone. It would be good practice to switch it to silent mode on your date or even turn it off. Your date deserves your full and undivided attention.

great expectations

Exercise 'expectation management' in all first date meetings! The rule of engagement in this game is to nullify all lofty matrimonial ideals and to take a progressive approach. 'Getting-to-know-you' is the name of the game at this juncture, nothing more. Coming on too strong and fast will only discourage a second date.



On your date...

flash your pearly whites

Smiling is a great way to break the ice but don't grin like a Cheshire cat the whole time. Relax, you will find that people will want to be around you. Furthermore, you put your date at ease with your friendly disposition. Try it!

ooze confidence

A date is very similar to a job interview. You have to sell yourself. If you keep highlighting your weaknesses during your interview, chances are you will not get the job. Similarly when conversing with your date, focus on your strengths. Talk about



things you feel comfortable with but don't brag. Nothing is more attractive than a person who is brimming with healthy self-confidence.

the eyes have it

The power of eye contact is often underestimated. If you do it right, you could succeed in attracting and impressing your date. Having eye contact tells your date that you are paying attention and is interested in what they have to say. If you keep looking away, your body language indicates that you are bored, or that you aren't interested. Remember that your eyes are the windows to your soul.

all ears

Everyone loves to be heard. Talking too much can be a real turn-off. Listening to people

shows that you are genuinely interested and that you want to learn more about them. It sends out positive messages about your openness and interest. People are drawn to good listeners. But don't just sit there passively, engage whomever you are with. If the conversation is about an area that you are unfamiliar with, maybe it's a good time to broaden your horizons.

watch your body language

Experts say that more than words, it's your body language that creates the most impact. Be mindful of your subtle bodily movements, a scratch on the head, folded arms, jiggling feet are tell-tale signs that broadcast to your date your real intents and purposes. When your date is speaking, nod or include your viewpoint. This shows that you are interested in what the other party has to say.

The tone of your voice matters as much as your words. You may choose empathetic words but if your tone does not convey your emotions, those words will lose its essence. Using the right tone with the right words makes you more approachable and appealing.

compliments

Paying your date a compliment is a powerful tool! However, your compliments must be honest, sincere and genuine. When you receive a compliment, the best response is a 'Thank you'.





What's next?

You had a wonderful time with your first date and you can't wait to meet again but you are not sure when and how to approach the subject?

Keeping in touch has never been made easier, thanks to technology. One of the fastest ways to make contact is via SMS. If email is your thing, send a personal 'e-note'. Nothing beats a phone call if you can muster up the courage. Let your date know that you had a great time and that you enjoyed their company.

The next question on your mind must be when. If you are both very comfortable with each other, you can contact each other the following day or two days later. If you feel that you would rather wait a while longer (but not too long, the warmth might just dwindle to coolness), so be it. It's all up to you.

Some little tips...

shall we split the bill?

Who foots the bill or whether you want to go dutch depends on your preference. On a first date, the common practice is, the gentleman pays for the lady. If you both have a common understanding that the bill should be shared equally, go ahead and split the cost.

food court or fancy restaurant?

It would be a bonus if your first date takes place in a nice restaurant with a romantic ambience. However, if you both agree that it is all right to dine at a more affordable venue such as a coffee house, a food court or a fast food restaurant, this is acceptable too. What matters most is the company.

the ride home

Many ladies have their own set of wheels in this day and age, and not all guys drive. Traditionally this would be the guys' last act of chivalry. A nice gesture to conclude the date would be for the guy to simply offer to send the lady home. There is no need to mention the mode of transport - the open-ended offer will consequently lead the couple into a decision on this and the role of escort.

A gentle note on grooming

mirror, mirror on the wall...

The adage 'you are what you eat' cannot be more true - diet, exercise and skincare products are must-have investments for your personal portfolio (pun intended). Apply toners, moisturisers, scrubs and whatever traditional or artificial remedies, and don't forget the rest of the body. Every nook and cranny of your visage needs to be primped and pampered before the big date.

a breath of fresh air

Personal hygiene doesn't end with a shower and clean clothes. For close encounters between the sexes, oral hygiene cannot be ignored because there's no bigger turn-off than a foul mouth, reeking with leftovers from lunch! Extreme halitosis may require medical attention, so set up a dental appointment and fix that dragon-breath.

dress sense

Horizontal stripes accentuate your wide girth, bright colors make you appear even bigger and black is in. Brush up on fashion tips before deciding what to wear. Your chosen outfit should be one that you are completely comfortable in with no revealing gaps to cover or overly tight lines to worry about. With comfort, you'll be suitably confident to interact with your date.

Dressing sensibly also means dressing appropriately - for the occasion and situation. Observe dress codes based on your day's entertainment - formal dress codes apply well to a dinner event at One Fullerton but you might look out of place with your date in a tie and suit or party dress down at that neighbourhood coffee joint.

Last but not least, keep an open mind. Do not pre-judge the other party - relax, enjoy yourself and let things happen!



