

DATE NIGHT

Master [Baking] Chef

Prep

About this date

You can make time to connect without ever leaving the house. Put the kiddos to bed, put on your jammies and prepare for some friendly baking competition.

As the date gets started, pop the popcorn and make your warm drink.

Preheat the oven and set out your cookie baking supplies. Raid your cabinets, if you need more items to decorate with.

Rules of the date

Ask your spouse out on a date. Set a day and time. Put it on your calendar and commit!

Unless you're snapping a photo, agree to put down your phones. Set it on silent.

Set your mind on having fun! This isn't wasted time. This is valuable time to focus on having fun with your spouse.

Connect

While the cookies are baking, talk with your spouse over a bowl of popcorn or a bag of M&M's.

Not sure what to talk about? Use the conversation starters to jump start your dialogue.

Take it up a notch

Get competitive. Post your final cookie decorations on social media and ask people to vote for their fave.

Share the sweets. Package up your cookies and share them with a neighbor.

Soundtrack to your date

Walk down memory lane. Sing along to classic love songs from the decades by listening to our Spotify playlist:

<http://bit.ly/NCCDates>

Cook

Items you might need from your pantry

- Flour for dusting
- A rolling pin
- Extra cookie cutters
- Baking sheets

Get baking!

Mix the dough. Roll it out to 1/4 inch thick.

Pick your shapes and cut your cookies, rolling out any extra dough.

Bake the cookies, and once they're cool, decorate using the icing writers and sprinkles.

Make more frosting

Want to up your decorating game? Make a simple frosting by beating together 1/3 cup room temperature butter, a splash of milk and 3 cups of powdered powdered sugar. Use food coloring to tint as needed.

Follow-up

This date might be done, but dating is far from over! Here are some ways to follow up after this date:

- Schedule another date. Get it on the calendar now! Text the babysitter, if needed.
- Follow up on something your spouse said, maybe it's an activity that they want to try or dream that they shared.
- Sneak in a love note. Tuck an encouraging word in their lunchbox, car or coat pocket.

Continue to cook together

Did you enjoy cooking with your spouse? Here are some other options for dating at home:

- Dance in the kitchen. Relive your first dance.
- Surprise your spouse with their favorite meal.
- Experiment with a new recipe together.
- Compete to see who can make the best dish from items in your cabinets.

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DATE NIGHT

Game Night In

Prep

About this date

You can make time to connect without ever leaving the house. Put the kiddos to bed, put on your jammies and prepare for some friendly competition.

As the date gets started, pop the popcorn and make your warm drink. Read through the instructions (if the game is new to you) and pick an option to start with.

Bonus points: Set a wager. Who will win the game-off?

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Play

Use the game you selected, like Uno or Phase 10 or Uno Flip, to challenge your spouse to some game night fun.

Other game options

Use the attached set instruction packet to choose another 2-player card or dice game.

Card games

- Nerts
- Gin Rummy
- ERS
- Golf
- Speed
- Crazy Eights

Dice games

- 10,000 (or 5,000)
- PIG
- Yahtzee
- Ship, Captain, Crew
- Balut

Connect

Press pause on the competitive fun between games to talk with your spouse over a bowl of popcorn or a bag of M&M's.

Not sure what to talk about? Use the conversation starters to jump start your dialogue.

Want to keep it competitive? Play 20 questions, "Would You Rather" or "Two Truths and a Lie."

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Continue to play

Want to keep playing with your spouse? Invest in a new board game or invite another couple over for an evening of fun. Here are some options:

- Pandemic, a cooperative game
- Tenzi, a fast-paced dice game
- Dominoes, a classic

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DATE NIGHT

Paint Night

Prep

About this date

You can make time to connect without ever leaving the house. Put the kiddos to bed, put on your jammies and prepare channel your inner Bob Ross.

As the date gets started, pop the popcorn and make your warm drink.

Pick a tutorial to follow, or create your own original masterpiece. Find options at <http://bit.ly/NCCPaints>

Rules of the date

Ask your spouse out on a date. Set a day and time. Put it on your calendar and commit!

Unless you're snapping a photo, agree to put down your phones. Set it on silent.

Set your mind on having fun! This isn't wasted time. This is valuable time to focus on having fun with your spouse.

Connect

While you are painting, pause the tutorial occasionally and connect in conversation.

Not sure what to talk about? Use the conversation starters to jump start your dialogue.

Take it up a notch

Get competitive. Post your final paintings on social media and ask people to vote for their fave.

Swap paintings and put your spouse's art on display at your desk or on your bedside table.

Soundtrack to your date

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<http://bit.ly/NCCDates>

Paint

Additional items you might need:

- Paper plates to serve as your paint palette
- Cups of water to clean brushes
- Aprons or smocks (if you're a messy painter)

Get painting!

A collection of beginning paint tutorials are available on YouTube: <http://bit.ly/NCCPaints>

Or, you can search for an old Bob Ross episode and follow along.

Other ways to paint

Use painters tape to create different zones on your canvas. Paint the areas different colors and then remove the tape as the painting dries.

Find an inspiring quote or favorite Bible verse. Paint a colorful backdrop and then hand letter your quote.

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Continue to connect

Did you enjoy painting with your spouse? Here are some other options for dating at home:

- Bake and decorate cookies together.
- Play games together. Search online for card and dice games for 2 players, or pull out your favorite board game.
- Sneak out the video games and challenge your spouse to a driving or adventure game.

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DATE NIGHT

#sgf Scavenger Hunt

Prep

About this date

Gas up the car. Warm up your engines. Relive those days where it didn't matter where you went as long as you were together!

Use the clues in the Drive box to embark on a driving scavenger hunt across Springfield. Follow as many or as few clues as your want. Snap photos at the landmarks you find.

Bonus points: Share your photos on Facebook or Instagram using #NCCDates.

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Connect

End your road trip at Andy's. Share a bench or a tailgate and talk with your spouse.

Not sure what to talk about? Use the conversation starters to jump start your road trip dialogue.

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Drive

Choose a few clues from the options below. If you get stumped, move on to another clue or use the answer key at the bottom of this page.

1. Find your wings before this insect migrates south for the winter.
2. Urban art and bakery delights meet in this delicious sculpture treat downtown.
3. Lions, tigers and ____ - oh my! Find the biggest one of these at Springfield's biggest school.
4. Home, home on the range, where the deer and the antelope [and bears and ducks and alligators and turtles and fish] roam! Strike a pose with your favorite stuffed creature.
5. Fun on the farm will find you making friends with these furry creatures.
6. Get your kicks on Route 66 by making a stop at this GIANT roadside park.
7. Home to outlaws (or just urban legends), bats and bears, this natural formation is worth a peek.
8. Stick a ____ in me, I'm done.

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Continue to explore

Want to continue exploring Springfield together? Here are some great hike options in the area:

- Springfield Lake
- Sequiota Park
- Valley Water Mill

1. Butterfly mural on Walnut Street downtown 2. Candy Mama Cupcake sculpture at the corner of Campbell and Park Central West 3. Bears at Missouri State 4. Bass Pro Shops 5. Sheep and goats at Rutledge Wilson Farm Park 6. Birthplace of Route 66 Roadside Park at 1200 College Street 7. A cave at either Sequiota Park or Doling Park 8. World's Largest Fork in Chesterfield Village

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Conversation starters

** Questions taken from Woodland Hills' "4Dates4Weeks"*

Adventure

- What is the last totally spontaneous thing we've done together?
- What do you think of when you think of adventure?
- When it comes to adventure in our marriage, I feel most loved when you _____.
- When was the last time you felt really brave?
- When was the last time you saw me do something courageous?
- When was the last time we took a big risk as a couple?
- Create a bucket list of 5 of the world's most iconic places that you'd like to visit.
- If we could go away for a long weekend, where would you go? What would you do?
- What is an activity, sport or hobby neither of us are good at that we could try together?
- Where could we serve together?

Laugh

- What makes you laugh the hardest?
- In what ways do I take myself too seriously?
- Who is the funniest person you've ever met?
- What is the funniest movie you've ever seen?
- Looking back at pictures from your younger days, what was the most embarrassing look you sported?
- What's the silliest thing you remember us doing together?
- What word do you think is just weird?
- When you _____, I can't help but smile.
- Name something your parents said on a regular basis that drove you crazy but now makes you smile.
- Name one song or movie that you love but are embarrassed to admit.
- If you didn't have to act your age, what kid-like things would you love to do?

Play

- On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate our "playtime" together?
- How are you feeling the grind of life this week?
- Why does "play" feel irresponsible to adults?
- If we have only 20 minutes to play, what should be our go-to activity?
- What is one leisure activity you wish I would do with you more often?
- What is the most frustrating thing I do when we try to do an activity together?
- What is your best memory of a time we "played" together?
- How could we build some more spontaneity into our routine?
- What are some ways we can turn everyday chores into a playful time together?
- What are your favorite indoor or outdoor activities?

Dream

- If you could rewind to any point in your life, what would you want to relive?
- What would you do if you didn't have to work?
- When do you feel most alive?
- If you could try out any occupation for a day, what would it be?
- You must choose four vacations - all expenses paid, of course - to take with your spouse. Each has a theme: romantic, adventurous, fun, relaxing. Where would you go for each?
- What positive thing do you not say enough to your spouse?
- What would do with your spouse for the next ten years if you knew they were your last?
- What dreams do we have for our kids?
- What dreams do we have our retirement years?
- What's the best advice someone ever gave you?