



Valentine's
Day

Getaways to Kindle a Spark

Sweep your beloved off their feet by planning a surprise getaway for two.

Think about what you and your bae love to do together, the things you want to see, the goals you have. Then get to planning. Let's get started.

LOOK FOR PACKAGES

Valentine's Day is a pretty popular time to plan a couples' vacation. This means you should probably start planning early, but it also means many of your special spots will offer package deals that include hotel stays, spa visits, chocolates, flowers and discounts for local businesses and restaurants.

MAKE A LIST, CHECK IT TWICE

Research the area you're going to and make a list of must-see and must-do activities. Feeling stumped? Call your hotel and ask! The staff are locals and can point you to hidden gems in the area, special discounts and more. Plan your time away, but don't clog it with so many activities that you don't get some well-deserved rest and relaxation, either.

FIND THE ROMANCE

Look for special opportunities for just the two of you. Private or semi-private meals, wine tastings, cooking schools, hikes, spa packages and other activities can give



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you time to unwind together. Ask restaurants for a private or mostly private table, away from other patrons. Most restaurants, especially around Valentine's Day, are eager to provide special touches to make the meal more romantic.

GET PACKING

Take one more thing off their to-do list by helping them get packed for your special trip. You may or may not trust yourself with outfit planning, but you should have a good idea of what toiletries they'll need.

Throw in a new bottle of their favorite cologne or perfume, too, or maybe some sparkly new accessories to set off their radiant natural beauty.

CREATE MEMORIES

Remember, this is a time for

you to create beautiful memories with your partner. Consider using the time to have a photo shoot or even just have some special pictures taken of the two of you. You're sure to get some suitable for framing after all that careful planning.

Famous Love Poems

Roses are red, violets are blue, that was predictable, but you don't have to be. Serenade your loved one this Valentine's Day with love poems to tickle their heart strings and their intellect. Here are some snippets and favorites from the Poetry Foundation.

**[love is more thicker than forget],
by e.e. cummings**

love is less always than to win
less never than alive
less bigger than the least begin
less littler than forgive

Love, by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

From "Endymion," by John Keats

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
Its loveliness increases; it will never
Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet
breathing.

**"I loved you first: but afterwards
your love," by Christina Rossetti**

For verily love knows not 'mine' or 'thine';
With separate 'I' and 'though' free love has done,
For one is both and both are one in love:
Rich love knows nought of 'thine that is not mine';
Both have the strength and both the length thereof,

Both of us, of the love which makes us one.

On Love, by Kahlil Gibran

For even as love crowns you so shall he
crucify you. Even as he is for your growth
so is he for your pruning.
Even as he ascends to your height and
caresses your tenderest branches that quiver
in the sun,
So shall he descend to your roots and
shake them in their clinging to the earth.

Sonnet 65, by William Shakespeare

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea
But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O, how shall summer's honey break hold out
Against the wrackful siege of batt'ring days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but time decays?
O fearful meditation! where, alack,
Shall time's best jewel from time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O, none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine
bright.

The Perfect Valentine's Day In

Maybe it's the weather. Or the crowds. Or maybe, just maybe, you can actually have the perfect Valentine's Day without leaving the house.

TIME FOR HYGGE

Hygge, long a staple of Danish culture, is becoming more mainstream. It refers to a quiet coziness with warm feelings of contentment or well-being. Think a crackling fire and cozy blankets on a cold winter's day. Lit candles and a soft light. A book and a mug of perfectly brewed tea.

Create a hygge cocoon for two by drawing the curtains and blinds to shut out the noise from outside. Light a few pleasantly scented candles. If you have a fireplace, get that puppy going. Lay out soft blankets on the couch and a pile of pillows. Grab a stack of your favorite books or movies and get cozy.



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MAKE DINNER

Set the mood with a dinner and cocktails worthy of a five-star restaurant. Get the best ingredients from your local high-end grocer and liquor store. This is not the time to get cheap. Lay a white tablecloth and use the good plates and flatware. Light some candles and put out some fresh flowers. Try this champagne cocktail to kick off the

evening:

Passiontini

Recipe is from Moët & Chandon.

- 3 ounces brut champagne or sparkling wine
 - 3/4 ounce passion fruit syrup
 - 1/2 ounce vanilla simple syrup
 - 1/2 ounce lime juice
 - 2 dashes chocolate bitters
1. Pour the bitters, lime juice,

vanilla syrup and passion fruit syrup into a short tin. Put ice in a larger shaker and put the short tin in.

2. Shake the short tin until well chilled. Pour the champagne into a coupe glass. Strain the mixture into the glass.

BREAKFAST IN BED

Start their special day off right with a tray of tasty

breakfast foods served right in bed. Make sure to include a flower or two in a bud vase and maybe a great new read to help them start their day relaxed and content.

Red Velvet Cake Coffee

- Recipe is from OXO.
- 2 cups of hot, freshly brewed coffee
 - 2 tablespoons unsweetened

- cocoa powder
 - 1 teaspoon sugar, adjust to taste
 - 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - Red food coloring
 - Whipped cream
1. Divide the coffee evenly between two mugs.
 2. Put half the cocoa powder, sugar and vanilla in each mug.
 3. Add red food coloring to each mug until it reaches the desired color. Top with whipped cream.

Valentine's Movies to Binge

Cinephiles, it's your time to shine. If your idea of a perfect Valentine's Day date is snuggling up for a movie marathon, try these flicks on for size.

LA LA LAND (2016)

Starring Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone, this love story is heavy on dreams of stardom. Fun fact: Ryan Gosling spent six days a week in piano lessons until he could play all the pieces in the film without a hand double or CGI.

ALWAYS BE MY MAYBE (2019)

Two childhood friends reunite after 15 years. Are those sparks I see? Find out. Quote: Start with the thing that can fly away.

ENCHANTED (2007)

A beautiful princess is banished by an evil queen from her magical kingdom to modern-day Manhattan. Then, there's a divorce lawyer. Fun fact: The only main character in this movie that doesn't sing is Broadway star Idina Menzel, who said that in this case, she was flattered to be hired solely on her acting ability.

LOVE, SIMON (2018)

A coming-of-age story about a gay teenager coming to terms with his identity. Starring Nick Robinson, Jennifer Garner and Josh Duhamel.



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Quote: I was an extra in "The Lion King," and this is where I am.

PALM SPRINGS (2020)

A wedding in Palm Springs turns surreal as a day keeps repeating itself. Starring Andy Samberg and Cristin Millioti. Fun fact: This movie holds the record for the biggest sale of a

film at the Sundance Film Festival, \$17,500,000.69, beating the previous record by 69 cents.

PORTRAIT OF A LADY ON FIRE (2019)

Set in 18th-century France, a painter is commissioned for a strange assignment: A wedding portrait without the bride

knowing. Fun fact: Director Céline Sciamma and star Adèle Haenel were formerly a couple. They broke up before filming started.

THE HALF OF IT (2020)

A shy, bookish teen helps the school jock woo the girl they both love. Quote: The good thing about being

different is that no one expects you to be like them.

LOVE & JANE (2024)

Jane Austen suddenly appears in a literary enthusiast's life in this Hallmark Channel movie. Fun fact: Allison Sweeney and Benjamin Ayers also co-star in Hallmark's "Chronicle Mysteries."



Who Is Cupid?

Cupid is the ancient Roman god of love and is often depicted as a winged baby carrying a bow and a quiver of arrows. A hit from one of those arrows inspires love or passion in his target.

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ORIGINS

The Romans took from the Greek pantheon for their gods, basing Cupid on Eros. The Greeks believed Eros was one of the primordial Gods who simply sprang into existence. In Latin literature, Cupid is the son of Venus. Seneca claims Vulcan is his father, though later classical tradition has Cupid being the son of Venus and Mars, a traditional allegory of love and war.

The name Cupid or Cupido is a derivative of the Latin *cupere*, to desire.

MEANINGS

Cupid is often depicted as

young because love, like the young, are often irrational. He is winged because lovers can be flighty and may be blindfolded because, as Shakespeare says, “Love looks not with the eyes.” He’s usually carrying the traditional bow and arrow, but may also have a torch, as love inflames the heart.

LOVE CONQUERS ALL

“Amor Vincit Omnia” by Caravaggio is one of the most famous depictions of Cupid. In the painting (made 1601-1602), a naked Cupid romps playfully over emblems of human endeavors: bay leaves, a flower,

armor, musical instruments, a pen and manuscript. The painting is meant to illustrate the line from Virgil’s “Eclogues,” “Love conquers all; let us all yield to love.”

Originally part of Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani’s collection, the painting can now be seen in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin as part of the Berlin State Museums.

CUPID AND PSYCHE

The story of Cupid and Psyche comes from “Metamorphoses” by Apuleius. In it, Venus, Cupid’s mother, becomes annoyed with the

beautiful mortal Psyche after Psyche becomes an object of worship. Venus sends Cupid to make Psyche fall in love with something hideous.

Instead, Cupid himself falls in love with and marries Psyche under the condition that she can never see his face. Eventually, Psyche is overwhelmed by curiosity and lights a lamp. Cupid catches her and flees.

Psyche tries to follow, but becomes lost and endures wandering, trials and tribulations. The lovers are eventually reunited and Psyche is made immortal by Jupiter.

A Language All Their Own

Posies are more than just pretty decorations. Traditionally, many of the flowers we give as tokens of our love have deeper meanings. Here are a few blooms and what they stand for according to The Old Farmer's Almanac.

Aster: A bright purple bloom with long, delicate petals, asters are a symbol of love and daintiness.

Baby's breath: This familiar spray of tiny white blooms means everlasting love.

Calla lily: These elegant, vase-shaped flowers are symbols of beauty.

Camellia: The meaning of a camellia depends on the color. Pink signals longing; red, desire; and white, a sign that the giver considers you adorable.

Carnations: This popular posy's meanings also depend on color. Red signifies a deep love; white, a pure love or innocence; pink means you're unforgettable.

Coreopsis: These small, sunny blooms mean cheerfulness.

Daffodil: Sunny harbingers of spring, daffodils also stand for unequalled love.

Daisies: Cheery, nodding daisies mean loyalty.

Gardenia: Heavenly scented gardenias are a sign of a secret love.

Gladiolus: The tall, proud gladioli are a symbol of victory and strength.

Hibiscus: Tropical hibiscuses stand for delicate beauty.

Lilies: This is another flower where the meaning depends on the color. Yellow lilies signify happiness; white, purity; and tiger lilies are a sign of pride.

Magnolia: Big on smell and size, magnolia blooms are given to represent nobility and love of nature.

Nasturtium: Often given in warm hues, these blooms signify conquest or victory.

Peony: These ruffled, delicate blooms are a symbol of happiness.

Roses: A popular Valentine's pick that comes in a whole rainbow of hues, the meaning is in the color of the petals. Red roses mean love; dark crimson roses are a sign of mourning. Pink roses mean happiness; white roses, innocence.

Snapdragons: These cute blooms are a sign of graciousness.

Sunflower: The meaning here depends on the size. Dwarf sunflowers mean adoration while tall



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sunflowers mean haughtiness.

Sweet pea: This flower is a sign of bliss or pleasure.

Sweet William: These soft, frilly blossoms are a symbol of gallantry.

Violet: Usually given as a whole plant, violets are a sign of faithfulness.

Zinnia: No matter the color, this flower is a sign of affection.

Experiences: A Gift For a Lifetime

Move beyond boring cards and chocolates to gifts your love will really appreciate: an experience instead of another material item to collect dust.

Unlike those flowers, the memories will last a lifetime.

FINDING AN EXPERIENCE GIFT

There are several websites that offer directories of experience gifts in your area. Giftyory, for example, offers packages that include driving a race car, learning to fly an airplane, dinner cruises, picnic packages, helicopter tours, spa experiences and more. Virgin also offers experiences searchable by location and activity. Examples include scavenger hunts, golf lessons, painting classes and wildlife experiences.

Tingly is another website offering experience gifts, either as an e-voucher or a physical box, perfect for people who like to wrap or unwrap gifts. The box comes with a personalized greeting and includes an experience journal. Gift box options include happily ever after, fun together, once in a lifetime, bucketlist, adventure awaits and more. Start by picking a box and fill it up with experiences such as kayak tours, shark dives, racetrack ride-alongs, spa days, cocktail classes and more.



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TAILOR IT

The great news about experience gifts is they don't have to be big and flashy. Not everyone wants to drive a race car. Experience gifts can be as small as a mani/pedi at a local salon, a gift card for a professional photo shoot, grocery delivery for a month, a

cooking class, a wine tasting or other local adventures. Pair it with a gift card for Lyft or Uber or to a favorite restaurant.

GO VIRTUAL

Now more than ever, experience gifts can be online. Think about cooking classes,

gardening classes, learning a foreign language. Just about anything can be taught online and your partner will gain a skill that will serve them well throughout their whole lives.

MasterClass, for instance, offers more than 80 classes taught by celebrities. Gordon Ramsay and Wolfgang Puck

teach cooking classes. Marc Jacobs lectures on fashion design and Bobbi Brown on makeup and beauty. Aaron Sorkin offers courses on screenwriting and Hellen Mirren talks about acting. Learn about country music from Reba McEntire or jazz from Herbie Hancock.