



AUSTRALIA & CANADA

Not Another Movie Date!

By Lisa Daily



While movies are great, they're generally a horrible first date. Why? No talking, and other than what's on the screen, no imagination. Frankly, in the great running history of romance we all have in our heads, another action flick with a side of spaghetti doesn't even register a blip. So, whether you're on your first date, or your 41st, pass on the popcorn. Just check out the ideas below for seven dates that will get your heart pounding in more ways than one.

1) Roller Skating Date

Take your date back to the fifth grade, to a world where glittering disco balls, neon shoelaces, and doing the Y.M.C.A are still cool. Sure, neither one of you will be able to skate backwards, and first-graders hopped up on birthday cake will probably leave you in the dust, but at least you'll know you're hooked up when they turn down the lights for the "Couples Skate."

So geek, it's chic. See also Bumper Cars at Amusement Parks.

2) Habitat for Humanity Date

You're not just a great date, you're a great human being! Nothing brings people close together like doing something for others, such as building affordable, accessible housing. You'll be tired, you'll be proud, you'll be an ace with a circular saw. For a project near you, check out www.habitat.org. The atmosphere is great, you can pack your own picnic, and you'll both have the chance to show off your better side. Whether you help out for a single Saturday or dedicate yourself for a lifetime, it will be a date neither one of you will ever forget.

3) Ballroom Dancing Date

With the popularity of crooners on the rise, it only makes sense that ballroom dancing would be making a comeback in a huge way. It's romantic, it's fun, and most girls adore a guy who can really twirl them on the dance floor.

Lisa Rinkus of Euroballroom says, "Ballroom dancing is one of the most romantic dates I know of. You can learn a lot about a person by the way they dance."

Not only that, it's a great way to get close (and get your heart pounding) in a non-threatening way. There's nothing that makes a woman swoon like a guy who can cut a rug. Lots of studios have



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beginner nights and one-time lessons; for a dance studio near you, check out www.havetodance.com which offers links and info on studios in the U.S. and Canada.

4) The Flying Wallinskis Date

There are a bunch of new "experience" sites cropping up online, offering everything from **Flying Trapeze Lessons where you learn to "fly" like circus performers** to Nascar Driving where you can actually do a couple laps in a real Nascar race car to Cave Exploring where you, well, explore caves. What's surprising is that many of the options are quite affordable (as in, under \$50.) Check out www.wallbounce.com, www.greatamericandays.com and www.totalexperience.ca for an adventure near you. Offerings vary by region and season, so you never know what thrills may await in your own backyard.

5) Horseback Riding

Pack a picnic lunch and take advantage of a chance to slow down and enjoy the ride. Most riding stables will let you rent for an hour or a half day. Don't surprise your date with this one, though -- it's not easy to ride a horse in a miniskirt and four-inch stilettos. Remember, girls love cowboys even if it's temporary.

6) Take a Class Date

Hit your local adult education center, and expand your mind (and your dating repertoire) in ways you never dreamed possible. Whether you take *Palm Reading for Beginning Psychics*, *Toilet Paper Origami*, or even *362 Ways to Cook Chicken*, you'll not only have a date you'll both remember but you may possibly discover a new talent as well.

7) Book Signing Date

It's different. It's interesting. And it's going on at a bookstore near you. And, as long as you don't pick a title like *25 Years of Good Porn* or *Encyclopedia of Mold and Spores*, your date will think you're smart, and you'll have something to talk about afterwards. Most authors do book signings, but even the famous ones hardly ever draw more than a few people -- except that damned dog, Mr. Winkle. His book signings usually have crowd-control personnel worthy of visiting royalty, and a line of screaming fans around the block.

Anyway, get your books signed (as long as you're there, you might as well get a couple -- personalized books make great holiday gifts) enjoy the discussion and the free coffee, and spend some time chatting with the author. You'll have a souvenir from your date, and you might just start your own book club for two.

Finally, www.snookus.com has a funny little notepad where you can rate your dates, (\$8) -- and if the goodnight kiss on the doorstep doesn't tell you how your date went, well, you'll just have to score yourself.

Dating Expert Lisa Daily is the author of Stop Getting Dumped!