

The best six reasons for dining out this Valentine’s Day

Valentine’s Day is celebrated in various ways throughout the world. One of the more popular methods of spending time with a romantic partner is over a delicious meal at a nice restaurant.

Statistics Brain says that 34.6 percent of Valentine’s Day celebrants in the United States dine outside of the home, making this day dedicated to couples one of the most popular days to dine out all year.

Dining out on Valentine’s Day helps to make the day more special. Following are a number of additional reasons why couples should enjoy a meal out on the town this Feb. 14.

1. Embrace the chance to try new foods. Dining out gives individuals the opportunity to try new cuisine they may not attempt at home. This is a chance to expand flavor profiles and give something new a chance.
2. Enjoy creative plating. Many restaurants expend extra effort on presentation on Valentine’s Day, dressing the plates with special garnish or with a unique presentation of the foods. Valentine’s Day meals are often as beautiful to look at as they are delicious to eat. Experiencing such visual masterpieces can add to the enjoyment of the night out.
3. Enjoy a night off from

cooking. One of the biggest benefits of dining out on Valentine’s Day is enjoying an evening away from the kitchen. Heading out for a restaurant meal means no stressing over what to cook for dinner, no wrangling with ingredients and no post-meal cleanup.

4. Learn something new. Chefs and restaurants may pull out all the stops for a special occasion like Valentine’s Day. Diners may learn more about exotic foods and wine pairings on Valentine’s Day than they might when dining out on less popular nights.

5. Beat the winter blues. For much of the country, Valentine’s Day occurs

during a time of year when winter is at its most harsh. Wintertime can be isolating as many people spend increased hours indoors to avoid inclement weather. Dining out gives couples the opportunity to get some fresh air and dine in a social environment that can help buoy spirits.

6. Jump start other activities. Dining at a restaurant may be the precursor to other things to come on Valentine’s Day. While out, couples may opt to head to a movie, enjoy some local live theater or stroll through a museum gallery. A good meal can make for the perfect starter to a memorable Valentine’s Day.



ALL IN GOOD TASTE — Dining out on Valentine’s Day is a tradition that can benefit couples in various ways and make an already special holiday that much more memorable.

Have you heard of these romantically named locales around the world?

Valentine’s Day places love and romance front and center.

Come Valentine’s Day, sweethearts of all ages engage in various romantic traditions, including love notes, date nights and gift exchanges, to showcase their affection.

Another way couples might want to celebrate Valentine’s Day is to travel to places around the world that have romantic names. Feelings of love may be enhanced when celebrating in locales with names that call to mind love and affection.

The following are some locations sweethearts might want to visit this Valentine’s Days.

Galesnjak Islet
This small island in the Adriatic Sea near Croatia

has become an ideal spot for romantic Valentine’s Day getaways. The land mass came to prominence after its unusual shape — which looks like a heart — was highlighted on the app Google Earth. The island is uninhabited and privately owned. Travelers have inundated the owner with requests to stay there and have renamed the location “Lovers’ Island.”

Newfoundland
Visitors to this northeastern province of Canada can find many romantically named towns. Travelers can visit Cupids, Heart’s Content, Heart’s Delight and Little Heart’s Ease if they want to share the gift of a getaway with the one they love.

Valentine
Plenty of places around



LOVELY LOCATIONS — Enjoy a touch of romance by traveling to locales with names that evoke feelings of love and affection.

the United States pay homage to St. Valentine himself. Towns named Valentine

can be found in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Indiana, Louisiana, Minnesota,

Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia. In Maryland, there is a town called Valentine’s Creek, while New York is home to Valentines Beach.

El Beso en el Parque del Amor, Peru
In Miraflores, Lima, Peru, El Beso en el Parque del Amor (“The Kiss Statue at Love Park”) is a large statue of a couple kissing. The piece depicts sculptor Victor Delfin and his wife in an embrace. Couples may gather in the park and engage in kissing competitions to see who can kiss the longest.

Loveland
The name Loveland may conjure images of idyllic streets filled with couples

holding hands and embracing. Although it sounds like a place one might encounter when reading fiction, Loveland can be found in Colorado, Iowa, Oklahoma and Washington.

Kissing
If kissing is what lovers have in mind, they might like to travel to the municipality of Kissing in the Aichach-Friedberg district in Bavaria, Germany. Kissing is a relatively small area with just around 12,000 inhabitants. Not too far away is Petting, another municipality in Bavaria.

Couples who want to include travel in their Valentine’s Day plans have many romantically-named locales to include on their itineraries.

Throw a casual wedding they’ll remember

Elegant, lavish weddings provide moments couples will remember for years to come. But while such storybook ceremonies and receptions remain popular, casual affairs are gaining popularity.

According to the bridal resource The Knot, more and more couples are opting for less pageantry and more laid back panache when planning their weddings.

For those who prefer something more intimate and more personalized, casual weddings may be right on target.

There are many advantages to having a “luxé with less” wedding, including the ability to break molds and impart more of the couple’s personality into the event.

Another advantage is the price tag. The average U.S. wedding, according to The Knot 2014 Real Weddings Study, costs \$31,213.

In some urban areas, particularly New York City, average costs are three times that amount. Golden Girl Finance, a leader in financial digital media, has

found that Canadian weddings average \$31,000 with honeymoon included.

Although wedding costs have gone up, the average number of wedding guests has gone down.

As such, certain couples might look to rein in other aspects of their wedding.

Transforming the festivities into a casual affair can help keep the overall budget low while still allowing for an exciting and enjoyable event.

To put casual plans into motion, consider these ideas to help the wedding vision come to fruition.

Venue
Catering halls and other reception sites do a wonderful job of meeting the needs of their clientele. However, food and beverage costs are often the most expensive wedding expense. To reduce the per-guest cost and also incorporate some variety into their wedding days, couples can consider a venue change. Look for public locations that allow couples to hire their own caterer, which may be a favorite restaurant or specialty food shop.

The cost per person may decrease dramatically from the venue costs.

Changing the venue also enables couples to pick unique spots that may hold special meaning to them. For example, couples can choose the site of their first date or the location where their proposal took place.

Contrast
Enjoy a casual, free-spirited wedding that incorporates some aspects of formality in an off-beat way. Think about serving fast food, such as fried chicken or pizza, on fine china. Those wearing tuxedos and gowns can opt for casual footwear, such as athletic shoes. Place wildflowers in crystal vases. These are just some methods to give a rich feel without removing the fun element.

Personal touches
Menus or wedding programs printed at home in a fun font can set the casual tone couples are looking for. Look for eclectic fabrics to use as gift tags or napkin holders. Hand-painted signs or a hodgepodge of picture frames can display pertinent information, such as itineraries or seating arrangements. Encourage friends or family to contribute a favorite menu item to the food offerings. A home-baked dessert can be delicious and budget-friendly.

Wardrobe
Clothing often indicates the formality of an occasion. Everyone from the wedding party to the guests can dress down. Sundresses can replace taffeta bridesmaids’ gowns. Guys can opt for tailored sports coats with jeans. Guests may feel comfortable in less formal attire that facilitates dancing and mingling.

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Different roles for the father of the bride

Popular movies and televisions shows give the impression that the job of the father of the bride in a wedding is ultimately about making sure the festivities are adequately funded. In the movies, fathers fret about the costs of everything from flowers to photos.

But gone are the days when the father of the bride bankrolls his daughter’s entire wedding.

The Knot’s “2014 Real Wedding Survey” reported that, on average, the bride’s parents contribute 43 percent of the total cost of a wedding; the bride and groom contribute another 43 percent; the groom’s parents spend 12 percent; the remaining 2 percent of the budget is paid for by family members or friends.

That frees up Dad for other roles in wedding planning.

With some creativity, couples can find ways to

incorporate the father of the bride into the festivities in even more productive ways.

- Wedding sites: Assign dear old dad the important task of looking at potential wedding reception sites prior to visiting them yourself. He may have certain connections through work or attended business or leisure occasions at catering halls and other venues. Dad’s connections can pay off. Let him impart his negotiating skills and find the best deals with the ideal backdrop for the festivities.
- Wardrobe: Let your father assist the best man and other groomsmen in securing their tuxedos or other wardrobe essentials. Dad also can step in and return rented items following the wedding.
- Beverages: Dad may be fitting to keep tabs on what is occurring at the bar during the reception, ensuring that guests’ needs

are being met. He also can keep an eagle eye trained on anyone who may have overindulged and needs to take a break.

- Speech: Give your father an opportunity to shine by letting him make a speech. Remember, this is a momentous day for Dad as well, as he may be trying to come to terms with his daughter starting a new life.
- Father-daughter song: Let Dad pick father-daughter song, and go with his choice even if you had something else in mind.
- Ceremony: Even if you prefer a less traditional wedding ceremony, let your father walk you down the aisle. This will likely be a moment he’ll remember for years to come.

Expand the father of the bride’s role in the wedding by assigning him tasks where he can put his style, experience and excitement to good use.



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Did you know?

Longevity in marriage is something to be celebrated. Couples who reach 50th and 60th wedding anniversaries often commemorate those anniversaries with big parties.

But there are some around the world who would consider golden anniversary celebrants to still be newlyweds.

In December 2015, Karam Chand, 110, and his wife, Kartari Chand, 103, from Bradford, West Yorkshire (originally from India), celebrated their 90th wedding anniversary, becoming the world’s longest-betrothed couple.

In America, John and Ann Betar, ages 104 and 100, respectively, have been married 83 years as of 2016.

The couple eloped in 1932. They have been named one of America’s longest-married couples by the Worldwide Marriage Encounter.