First Date Etiquette Cheatsheet

Shy Guy's Guide to Rock the 1st Date

She wants to meet you!

Before you can get to that place in a relationship when you share "remember when we ...," you need to nail the first date while remaining authentic to who you are and offering an experience that's sustainable, if not repeatable.

Meaning: Whatever you do on your forever-remembered-by-her first date, make sure you won't have to hear "why don't we ever ___ anymore?" Choose something that sets the tone of your true personality—or at the least the personality you truly aspire to have!

#JustTheTips

1. **Do** go to her neighbourhood and/or make sure you take care of her transportation to and from your chosen date location. (This applies whether in a big city or a small town.)
2. **Don't** suggest that she choose the first date location. If you're thinking of a café or going for din-ner (lame but safe), ask her for her favourite types of foods and/or dietary preferences. Then you choose the venue. Your certainty and leadership makes her feel safe!
3. **Do** choose a date idea that's within your budget. You are setting a standard: make it managea-ble. Guys don't need buckets of money to go for a walk on the beach, a bike ride or a free con-cert in the park. Be creatively romantic: bring a flowering weed or corsage.
4. **Don't** select a place where she'll feel unsafe. Although you both might love hiking, save the vir-gin forest foraging for when she trusts your Paul Bunyan skills without having Ted Bundy con-cerns. Always ask her if she's comfortable with the date location or wait until you're at a place in the relationship where she can invite a friend.
5. **Do** *smile—with your eyes*, too—when you greet her! Not like your team just scored the final goal but like your cell phone bill came in surprisingly low.
6. **Don't** tell her that she looks "hot" no matter how obviously great her sweater-stretchers look. Save "hot" for the bedroom when sex is on the immediate menu.
7. **Do** compliment her on something she is wearing or how *beautiful* or *pretty* she looks. Guaran-teed she put some effort in even if she seems all natural.
8. **Don't** compliment her on her T & A. Yes, I do mean "tits and ass." Not that you would, but just in case!
9. **Do** remember that if there's no attraction—*it can grow IF* there's no romantic pressure and there's personality chemistry. And! If the physical chemistry simply doesn't develop, but you like each other, remember that she has friends who she's compatible with and who, if you're friends, you might meet.
10. **Do** be chivalrous, which in modern-feminist terms means *conscientious*. Open doors (let her go first), walk on the outside of the sidewalk (away from the "dangers of traffic"), make sure she arrives home safe (ask her to text you to be sure), and so on. Even if she is ultra-independent, she'll appreciate your thoughtfulness. If she prefers less courtesy, she'll say so, and you can decide if you're OK with less chivalry.
11. **Don't** interrogate! Treating your date like an interview makes her feel like she's on the witness stand and accused of a crime. Note: not the way to win her heart ... or any other parts!
12. **Don't** fidget, avoid eye contact, or fill in every silence. If you're nervous, take a deep breath and remember this: everyone poops. *Wait, what?* We are all human; she's simply another person you're curious about.
13. **Don't** have more than one or two alcoholic beverages. Even if you normally suck back three pints before hitting the squash court totally sober, this shows her that *you can suck back three pints and still be sober,* as in—you're a seasoned drinker. No gal that you want wants Billy The Boozer.
14. **Do** keep it light. You have plenty of time to discover each other. However ...
15. **Don't** be silly and tell jokes the *whole* time. She needs to believe you're a grown-up, too. Con-stant joviality is a sign of nervousness (Read: insecurity. Read: not a sexy quality.) Tone it down.
16. **Do** talk about yourself. *Really?* Yes. But ...
17. **Don't** hog the conversation and *only* talk about yourself. "Enough about me, let's talk about you: what do you think of me?" Hashtag wrong answer. This is another sign of nervousness.
18. **Do** ask her questions about what she likes. Whether it's work, hobbies, shopping, yoga, what-ever. A good question to ask: "What is it about yoga that you like the most?"
19. **Don't** pry if she's an introverted or private person. She'll reveal as much as she feels safe to. Chicks dig feeling safe. That's your job, mister. If you ask a question, and she changes topics or gives an evasive reply, no biggy. Move on. If you sense she's not agitated (be sure), answer the question from your own perspective. She might open up. Maybe. And then ...
20. **Do** move on to another topic anyway. If she offers information on a topic normally off-grounds for her, she'll likely feel vulnerable, and she'll appreciate that you've respected her by letting it go. If *she feels safe* with you, she may come back to the topic. High five, my friend!
21. **Don't** talk with adoration, affection and regret about your ex/es or any current or previous crushes! Nope. Don't do it. *Nooo.* (Insert: scary Psycho movie slasher music.) You're not in a relationship, remember—just dating. Duet right.
22. **Don't** talk about your physical flaws. My legs are too short. I'm too short. No. You're you, and you're OK. And if you can't change it, the sooner you get over it the better you'll feel. Not only that, but she won't have to feel like you're scrutinizing her. Insecurity is not sexy.
23. **Do** talk about nonphysical qualities that you admire in people—"people," *not* exclusively women. This shows more about your character than these folks who inspire you and allows her to de-termine if she has those qualities. She'll likely reveal this to you, consciously or not.
24. **Don't** talk with negativity, anger or resentment about other people. If your date asks about your ex, tell her—*without bitterness or agitation*—something like, "We just weren't right for each oth-er, and I'm over it. I'm more interested in knowing about *you* ... What are some of your dreams and goals?" **Genuine smile**
25. **Do** limit your first few dates to a maximum of an 60 to 90 minutes of chat time. Motto: Leave her wanting more. This also prevents either of you from suffering longer if the chemistry isn't there. Note: time spent in a (short-ish) live performance, or similar facsimile, doesn't count. No talking or texting during the performance, please. You can plan to spend time together afterward if it's not too late, whereby the event can provide a topic for conversation.
26. **Don't** check your phone, text or call anyone during your date. Rude! Turn the ringer off, tuck that bad boy away—STAT. (That be Dr. AJ lingo for: *Right now, Mister.*) Unless, you're an emerge doc on call—if so, apologize in advance.
27. **Do** pick up the tab at least the first two dates. If you want to pay the bill every time, she may be A-OK with that. If *you're not OK with that*, however, and if she doesn't make an effort on the third go (if you get that far) or she doesn't offer to cook you dinner or apple pie or *something*, she's probably not "the one" *for you*. Refer to football and *punt*—as in: *next*!
28. **Don't** talk about the cost of everything. Whether you're living in a bachelor flat with a stack of vinyl records and working at Whole Paycheck or whether you're driving a Bentley to your water-front summer cabin in wine country, drawing attention to your awareness about the low or high price-of-anything is A. Turn. Off. Hint: any form of overt arrogance is a turn off. (Overt. *Is* there any other kind?)
29. **Do** give her a lingering—*non-pelvis-pressing—hug* (3 seconds—it will seem like an eternity) and possibly a chaste cheek kiss at the end of the date if you'd like to see her again. And—as long as she's not bolting down the road—tell her you'd like to see her again without expecting her to agree. You've put it out there. That's enough. Way too early to ask if she wants more. Trust me—she will let you know. Be cool, dude.
30. **Don't** kiss her on the first date *without her express, but not written, permission*. But let's say there is mutual chemistry and somehow the situation gets steamy. If there's a fairy dust twin-kling of possibility for a long-term relationship with her, don't have sex with her on the first date *if* you know that you will slot her in the "for a good time not a long time" category. I know! But hear me out: One night of pleasure isn't worth the risk of not *getting naked with your sweetheart for, like, everrr.* Otherwise, if the sex is good, you may ignore red flags.

Most importantly, breathe! Relax, get centred, and be your best-at-this-moment self.

You got this!

xo AJ