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# 5 Dating Tips that Won't Break Your Heart or Bank

By **JULIA FLEMING**  
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Regardless of your budget, don't be cheap. There are ways to save and still be romantic.

Last week, DailyFinance featured an interview with Patti Stanger—you might know her as the blunt romantic from *The Millionaire Matchmaker* (<http://www.bravotv.com/the-millionaire->

Want more from Julia Fleming?



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At some point in your professional career, your boss is going to take you out to eat and you have to know how to act.

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[matchmaker?\\_source=ggl%7Cmillionaire+matchmaker%7CMillionaire+Matchmaker%7CG\\_AlwaysOn&sky=ggl%7Cmillionaire+matchmaker%7CMillionaire+Matchmaker%7CG\\_AlwaysOn&qclid=CNKkple3wqoCFQFN4AodqFDbHQ](#)). They asked Patti how to go on a cost-effective date. (And who says romance is dead?) She had eight tips that you can read [here \(http://www.dailyfinance.com/2011/08/10/8-tips-for-cost-effective-dating-from-the-millionaire-matchmaker/\)](http://www.dailyfinance.com/2011/08/10/8-tips-for-cost-effective-dating-from-the-millionaire-matchmaker/)—some I loved, like going to a BYOB place, and some I didn't.

Although I wasn't a fan of all eight tips, her points were valid and I thought it would make a great column for our site—since I assume you fabulous readers are out there wining and dining (and trying not to go broke in the process). We've all had our share of bad dates, and I love to hear a your horror stories. But for now, here are few tips from my conversation with Manhattan-based life coach [Julie Melillo \(http://www.yourdreamslifecoach.com/\)](http://www.yourdreamslifecoach.com/).

**1. Get cultured.** Not be harsh, but no one likes a dummy; a date that involves local or international influences is sure to impress. "There are always plays, performances, concerts, and other cultural events available for free, or vey low cost—these aren't going to be Broadway shows, but they might be entertaining," Julie said.

*Dinner idea:* If you're museuming, grab a glass of wine and some small bites at a nearby bar. For outside

events, think picnic—they're fun, affordable and will show off your creative side. (Your date doesn't need to know about this article.)

**2. Find a hobby.** "Find mutual hobbies—if you've met each other on a co-ed sports team—perhaps you met while playing soccer—offer to practice your skills together," she suggests. If sports aren't your thing, consider taking a class together. Pottery, yoga, cooking, hip-hop dance—any of those are great way to show your open to fun and trying new things.

*Dinner idea:* If the class is small, like a pottery class, reach out to the instructor and ask if you can surprise your date with dinner there. A few candles, some take-out, and a little libation can do a lot for an art studio. (Think: *Ghost*)

**3. Do lunch.** Patti says skip lunch but I happen to love lunch. (Maybe it's because I spend most of my lunches at my desk.) "Find a casual restaurant (something cute and classy but not an expensive steakhouse) and grab a quick bite," Julie says.

**4. Don't be cheap.** "Regardless of your financial situation, remember that spending a bit of money is romantic and shows you're interested," she says. Obviously, go somewhere that won't break the bank.

"Don't take a woman to a restaurant you can't afford—choose something within your means," Julie advises. "Yes, that might mean a local sandwich shop." Personally, I'll never forget the dinner I was asked on where my date didn't bring enough money to pay—the house salad and water should have been my clue. Thank goodness I brought my wallet or else we would have been washing dishes.

**5. Be nice.** Someone was nice enough to ask you out, be courteous. Don't order the most expensive item. When I was dating I would try to see what my date ordered and pick something in that price range. In my opinion, the person who asked for the date should ask for the check but everyone has his or her own comfort level.

What are your money rules when it comes to dating?

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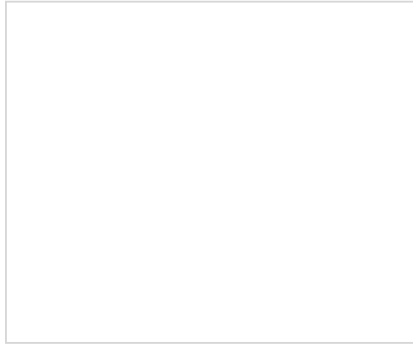
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