

SIGN UP FOR OUR FREE NEWSLETTER

Live better, look great, and be your best—every day.

Enter your e-mail address here

SIGN UP

relationships

Dating Over 40? Here Are 40 Amazing Expert-Backed First Date Ideas

FROM A NIGHT UNDER THE STARS TO A HOT AIR BALLOON ADVENTURE, DATING OVER 40 JUST GOT A WHOLE LOT EASIER.



By ALESANDRA
DUBEIN
FEBRUARY 13,
2020



iStock

Whether you're on a continued search for your forever partner or reentering the dating market after a long hiatus, dating over 40 is a whole other animal from your dating days decades earlier. Potential mates know more about themselves, they have well-established preferences, and that means well-established intolerances, too.

"Dating when you are over 40 can be a wonderful advantage because you have grown up, experienced many relationships, perhaps had your heart broken, and learned so much about life and love," says therapist and relationship expert Audrey Hope. "When you are older, you don't want to waste time and you don't have to. Hopefully the years have given you more self-love and esteem, and more knowing about what you want and don't want, so first dates can be more meaningful."

And those dates can take many forms, from sophisticated evenings out to reclaiming old-school fun. Perhaps you're looking for simple, straightforward first date ideas to minimize the initial pressure—or you'd rather blow it out with a big adventure and see where it takes you. No matter your perception of a great first date, we have a suggestion for you. To get the juices flowing on where you can take the object of your affection, here are some great date ideas for everyone dating over 40, courtesy of top relationship coaches and dating experts.

1 | Start with a scavenger hunt.



Latest News



40 Facts About Words That Will Blow Your Mind

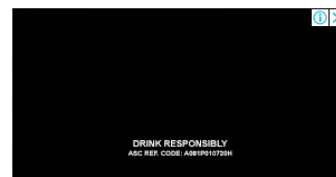
What you never knew about the words you use.

25 Amazing Tricks for Better Winter Skin

Kiss that frostbitten skin goodbye!

13 Hilarious Things Every Parent Does

Just when you swore you wouldn't be that parent...





Shutterstock

One way to lighten the mood before the date even starts is by arranging a meetup at a particular landmark that requires a little effort on the part of both parties. "One of the recommendations that I make for people **planning first dates** who are open to something fun is to meet in a museum by a specific piece of art that they both have to hunt for," says **Haley Neidich**, LCSW. "This adds an air of excitement and it's like a fun treasure hunt that you get to go on in order to connect. This is also a great way to break the ice before you even meet, making each individual more open and receptive."



2 | Find a first for both of you.



Shutterstock

As you're arranging your first date together, talk about things neither of you has ever done before—and perhaps always wanted to do. Then, settle on a plan to do something that's brand new to both of you, suggests Neidich. Hey, if the date's a bust, at least you both got to uncover a new find in town!

3 | Have a night out at a charity fundraiser.





Shutterstock

This one's a win-win, too: Even if the date doesn't go great, at least both parties can feel good about participating in something philanthropic. "If one of your favorite charities is having an event and you would like to go—invite your date! This kind of date provides you with an opportunity to share what is near and dear to your heart," says psychologist and relationship coach **Linda Humphreys**. "It also provides your date an opportunity to share with you what he or she finds meaningful."



4 | Volunteer together.



iStock

Along those same lines, you might take a first date for a volunteering experience—perhaps an environmental or community clean-up day, food bank packing, or another service project. "This kind of date gives you an opportunity to share what you both value—and to share it together," Humphreys says. "Seeing someone serving [others] gives you a wonderful insight into their heart and soul."

5 | Watch the sunset.



Shutterstock

A first date doesn't have to be expensive; in fact, spending a lot of money can be a setup for disappointment or uncomfortable expectations. So take advantage of what nature has to offer

instead. Whether you're having a meal in a restaurant with a view or taking in the scenery with a walk in the park, few things are more romantic than catching a stellar sunset, Hope says. Bonus: It costs nothing, and it doesn't look like anyone tried too hard.



6 | Visit the botanical gardens.



iStock

If you're trying to set a romantic scene, it sure doesn't hurt to surround your date with the beauty of a botanical garden. "Immerse yourself in romance while observing the beauty of the flowers," suggests dating and relationship coach **Carla Romo**.

7 | Take a hot air balloon ride.



Shutterstock

A hot air balloon ride may not be an ideal first date idea for the timid (or for the budget minded). But if your approach is to **take a risk** in the hopes of some major romantic payoff, try a hot air balloon ride. "Who doesn't like an adventure?" asks Romo. "This is not only a romantic thrill, but it's a breathtaking view you can enjoy together."

qb intuit quickbooks.



Valentine's Day Sale

90%

8 | Go to a science museum.



Shutterstock

A first date at a science museum is actually a chance to gather some pretty useful information about a potential new love interest. "There are tons of exhibits that are interactive and interesting," says relationship expert **Jaime Bronstein**. "And seeing how your date learns and tries to figure things out is very attractive."

8 | Visit the planetarium.



Shutterstock

Is there anything more romantic than gazing up at the stars? Probably not. Even if the weather isn't conducive to the real thing, you can visit your closest planetarium. Plus, stargazing is "conducive to intriguing and intelligent conversations," says Bronstein.

10 | Take in a comedy show.



iStock

Laughing with a first date is a great icebreaker—and if you share a **sense of humor**, it bodes well for the future of the

relationship. "Having fun and laughing together is key in any relationship, especially at the beginning," Bronstein says. "You can get to know a lot about a person by what they think is funny or not, and smiling on a first date is very important."



11 | Go on a park picnic.



Shutterstock

A simple park picnic is a budget-friendly date option that has some major romantic potential. "A sunny day in a pretty park can be a whimsical setting for a first date, and is also easily personalized to reflect your personality," explains dating and relationship coach **Sami Wunder**. "Sipping gin and tonic out of tiny cans or sharing a bottle of something sparkly will give a sense of occasion as you nibble on your choice of delicious snacks and chat away on the grass."

12 | Or share a meal under the stars.



iStock

Want to amp up the romance factor of that picnic? Instead of doing it in the daytime, head out after dark. "Choose a place away from city lights and other distractions where you can enjoy the view of the stars," suggests **Robin Suthers**, dating coach and editor at the women's site **Galtelligence**. "Be ready with some **questions to encourage conversation** and get to know each other. The quiet and romantic environment will be perfect for setting the mood for a nice talk and a memorable first date."



13 | Take a cooking class.



Shutterstock

This one's great for devoted foodies, but it's far from limited only to that group. "Regardless of your culinary skill levels or comfort in a kitchen, taking a cooking class together can be fun and insightful," says Humphreys. "This kind of date can help you see what kind of teammate style the other person has. Are they take-charge? Bossy? Cooperative? Sharing? It also helps you to learn about your date's food preferences and degree of healthy eating preference—or not."

14 | Or cook for your date.



Shutterstock

If you and your date are both comfortable getting to know each other in the **intimate environment of someone's home**, prepare a meal in your own kitchen. "It shows respect and care right up front. And as long as you are charming and confident, the date has a much likelier chance of turning into more," says dating author **Spike Spencer**. "Personally, this is how I dated after 40 and it worked incredibly well. I married an amazing woman from those dinners!"

15 | Hit up the farmer's market.



Shutterstock

A farmer's market makes a great first date for so many reasons. "It's a morning date, so it doesn't end up feeling very high stakes," says **Eric Resnick**, online dating coach and professional dating profile writer at ProfileHelper.com. "You are surrounded by great food, you can see what sorts of things the other person is into, and you can do some great people watching together."

16 | Visit a u-pick farm.



iStock

If a farmer's market isn't an option in your neck of the woods, consider visiting a u-pick farm in your area to gather strawberries, raspberries, pumpkins—whatever's in season. If that goes well, "then make a theme meal together highlighting your special ingredient," suggests love and sex author and educator **Heather Claus**. "It's an amazing way to spend time together, and see how you work as a team in the kitchen, and it shows off your creativity."

17 | Do something touristy in your city.



Inspire excitement on your first date by playing tourists in your own town, or one nearby. "For example, check out Airbnb experiences for your area," Claus suggests. "These can range from beer or wine tastings to cooking classes to hidden street art."

- 18** | Hunt for conversation starters in a library or a bookstore.



There's a lot of fun to be had on a casual, affordable first date in a library or bookstore—and a lot to be learned about your date, too. "Spend time finding the most outlandish magazine topics you can, and share them with each other," Claus suggests. "Not only is this low-key fun, but it **builds a foundation** of getting to know each other over humor and learning."

Kunin ang
\$30
Trading Bonus*

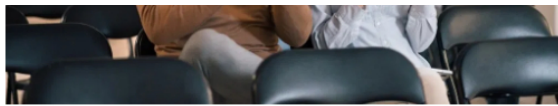
Magbukas ng Account

*May T&Cs. Ang forex at CFD trading ay may mataas na risk at maaaring mag-resulta sa pagkalugi ng lahat ng iyong in-invest na kapital.

XM **IC**
FOREX

- 19 | Attend a reading.**





Shutterstock

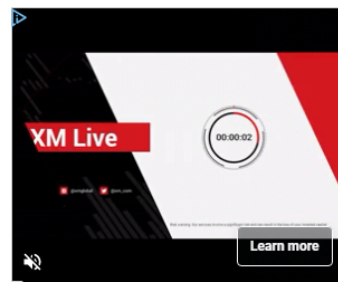
If you like that literary theme, but you're looking for a more structured first date option, why not hit up a reading at your local bookstore? "Share with your date why the topic is important to you or what you like about the author's style of writing," Humphreys says. "After the reading, it's always fun to ask your date to take you to their favorite section in a bookstore and to share with you about their favorite book topics and authors. This kind of date helps you to see what interests and inspires each other."

20 | Go on a hike.



Shutterstock

A hiking first date is a solid multitasker: You're out in nature—and even if the date tanks, at least you got some cardio in, right? "Hiking is always a great way to get to know someone," says Bronstein. "Being on a hike will relax your nervous system. Also, hikes can be challenging, and when you challenge yourself along with someone you're getting to know, it creates a feeling of connection."



21 | Or take a stroll.



Shutterstock

If a hike feels too ambitious for your fitness or commitment

level, make it a stroll instead, whether in an urban environment or in nature. "It has the added bonus of being the ultimate open-ended date; a walk can easily be cut short if the connection between two people just isn't there, or extended to another location if things are going well," Wunder says.

22 | Hit up a festival.



Shutterstock

Depending on the size of your city, you might find endless options for cultural or food festivals each week. "These are great dates because there is a good chance you'll both be experiencing something together for the first time," Resnick says.

23 | Go to a concert.



Shutterstock

This is an especially great date option for folks who already know they share a favorite band, especially one from their pasts. "Sharing music you love with a potential mate can be an intimate experience. So why not buy tickets for two and enjoy the music that makes you reminisce about the earlier days of your life?" says **Celia Schweyer** of [DatingScout.com](https://www.datingcout.com). "Give each other a chance to tell the most memorable moment of your younger years and see if you will connect."



24 | Take a dance class.





Shutterstock

Sure, we acknowledge that this one isn't for the faint of heart—or for those self-conscious of their two left feet. But it can be an ideal way to form a bond, even (or especially) if some awkwardness ensues. "Even if you are an experienced dancer, if your date is open to learning some form of dance, pick a style that is new to both of you," Humphreys says, noting it "puts you both in the same boat." "This date can be filled with fun, some fitness, and lots of laughter."

25 | Or take an art class.



Shutterstock

You don't need to be skillful for this one, either—just open-minded. Some places even offer art and wine evenings to loosen up the vibe. "Even if you or your date thinks that you or he/she does not have any artistic talent and are challenged with drawing stick figures, going to an art studio is fun," Humphreys says. "This kind of date helps to bring both of your playful inner-kid sides out."



26 | Go on a ferry ride or a road trip.





Shutterstock

"Driving down the countryside or going on a ferry ride offers a change of scenery," says Schwyer. "Taking your date to the country is both romantic, and at the same time, a stress reliever from your busy lives as adults. Exploring the rural areas even for a day can also provide you the opportunity to know each other more without exhausting yourselves from treks or hikes."

27 | Go fishing.



Shutterstock

Fishing's not for everyone—and might not even be feasible, depending on your geographic location. But if both you and your date are down, fishing can make for a surprisingly fruitful first date format.

"Fishing encourages you to sit side by side, rather than across from each other, helping to build feelings of companionship and intimacy," says **Lena Köpcke**, chief of people and culture for the outdoors app **Fishbrain**. It also "helps to boost endorphins and promote positive mental well-being. And it encourages uninterrupted conversation and patience, helping you to get to know your date without modern distractions or technological intrusions."



28 | Attend a sporting event.



Shutterstock

If you share a love of a particular sport, grab some tickets for a

game day first date. "It's always fun to cheer on a team together and it can also be fun if you are rooting for opposing teams because that witty banter is a type of flirting," Bronstein says.

29 | Hit the beach or the pool.



Shutterstock

Comfortable showing some skin on a first date? A beach or local pool can be a great spot to do it, according to Bronstein. "It's always fun to jump around in the waves and fall down, play a little paddle ball, and put sunblock on each other," she says.

30 | Go skiing or ice skating.



Shutterstock

If it's not exactly bathing suit weather where you are, a skiing or ice skating date can be equally romantic. "It can be nice to cuddle up when you're cold, and then bond over some hot chocolate or a drink afterwards," Bronstein explains. "Skiing and skating are pretty youthful activities, so it reminds you that you can still have fun physically and emotionally after 40!"



31 | Do something nostalgic.





Shutterstock

Bringing some nostalgia into dating over 40 could be just what you need. "People dating over 40 want to feel excited and happy. If you can bring back the carefree happiness, you will want to go on a second date with that person," says relationship expert **Sirarpi Sahakyan**. "Before the date, ask questions about childhood best memories. If possible, recreate these moments or at least do something fun." Looking for specifics? Well, you've come to the right place...

32 | Visit an amusement park.



Shutterstock

You can relive your younger days by visiting an amusement park or fair with your date. "The youthful and adventurous atmosphere of amusement parks is contagious. Just a few minutes in, and you and your date are already giddy and excited to walk around the grounds or try the newest attractions," Schweyer says. "The adrenaline pumping in your veins helps you de-stress and spend a genuinely fun time together."

Kunin ang

\$30

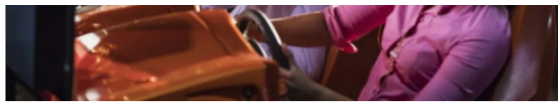
Trading Bonus*

Magbukas ng Account

*May T&Cs. Ang forex at CFD trading ay may malakas na risk at maaaring mag-resulta sa pagkukulugi ng lahat ng iyong in-invest na kapital.

33 | Hit up an old-school arcade.





iStock

Another way to channel childhood fun on a first date—without the expense or all-day commitment of an amusement park—is a meetup at an old-school arcade. "Lose the sense of time while enjoying a game from the past like Pac-Man," Suthers says. "Playing relieves stress and throws in a little bit of competition, both of which will make a first date quite unique."

34 | Order pizza and have a game night.



Shutterstock

If you'd rather keep things intimate but still want to channel that old-school, analog vibe, create a fun night at home with pizza and a game night. Think Uno, Candyland, or a puzzle. "Eat pizza and ice cream while laughing together and reliving your childhood," Claus suggests. "It's a fun way to spend an evening of nostalgia. Maybe follow up with a favorite movie from days gone by as well."



35 | Go mini golfing.



Shutterstock

Mini golfing, bowling, and billiards can make for great icebreakers. "Activity-type dates give you the opportunity to build chemistry by doing something playful," says **Karine Charbonneau** of **Find Veg Love**. "You can tease them [and] have a friendly competition "

36 | Pick a cultural conversation starter.



Shutterstock

Whether it's a museum, gallery, lecture, or some other thought-provoking milieu, arrange a date that has the potential to spark conversation around a culturally relevant topic. "Go to a cultural event where you can discuss relevant issues that matter to both of you," Hope says. "Make it something that lifts both of you up so you can have a fabulous talk about it and really get to know each other."

37 | Or pick one of their favorite things and run with it.



Shutterstock

There's no bigger turn-off than a first date who talks only about themselves. On the flip side, asking specific questions—and listening to the answers—makes a great first impression. So whether you plan a meal that meets their dietary restrictions, or some other activity that shows you're listening and you care about their passions and preferences, you're off to a great start. "Whoever does the asking should plan a date that keeps any information about [the person they asked out] in mind, from a shellfish allergy to a love of bookstores," advises **Ingrid Sthare**, founder of **Relationship Coaching & Coupling**.

38 | Meet at a coffee shop.





Shutterstock

If you're just dipping your toe into dating in your 40s, it's OK to start slow and simple. "I find that people over 40 might have different expectations about dating than when they were younger," says **Rae Mazzei**, health psychologist and owner of **Evolutions Behavioral Health Service**.

She acknowledges that the goal of a first date might simply be to gather data about whether a second date—perhaps a more adventurous one—is in the cards. "I suggest that they have their first dates in places that have a relaxed environment, such as a coffee shop or wine bar," Mazzei says.

39 | Share a simple meal at a restaurant.

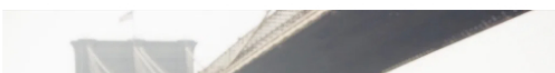


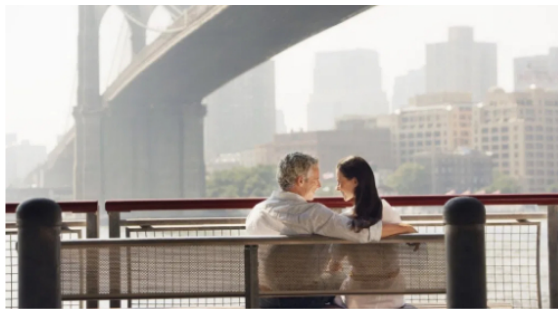
Shutterstock

Sure, this one's still not at the top of adventure scale either, but a full sit-down meal is a step up from a coffee or drinks date for those uncomfortable taking major leaps of faith from the jump.

Besides, a restaurant date "is the number one first date option that leads to marriage," says Wunder. "Committing to a dinner date encourages plenty of one-to-one conversation alongside the intimacy of sharing a meal. This option is definitely food for thought for anyone looking for a long-term relationship."

40 | Do *anything* that doesn't feel like a job interview.





Shutterstock

Those simple coffee or dinner dates can take the edge off of a first date before both parties see where they want it to lead. But if possible—even if you're planning a straightforward date like that—try to keep the vibe open and optimistic, with at least the sense of potential for romance. No matter the format, no one wants to go on a date that feels like a formal, rigid job interview. Both you and your date will know if it feels like just "you and a stranger, sitting down and auditioning for the role of boyfriend or girlfriend," Resnick says.

intuit
quickbooks.



Valentine's Day Sale

90%
off

Additional reporting by Morgan Greenwald

ALESANDRA DUBIN

Alesandra Dubin is a lifestyle editor and writer based in Los Angeles. [Read more](#)

FILED UNDER
DATING • OVER 40 • RELATIONSHIP ADVICE

READ THIS NEXT



40 Irresistible First Date Ideas

The most creative ways to start your relationship off on the right foot.



40 Experiences Only People Over 40 Appreciate

These life experiences big and small will make you glad to be in your 40s and beyond.



The 40 Best Compliments for People Over 40

These sincere and thoughtful compliments will make 40-somethings feel seen and appreciated.



20 Double Date Ideas Every Couple Should Try

These exciting date ideas are twice the fun!



30 Seriously Romantic



50 Seriously Romantic Anniversary Date Ideas

The best ways to celebrate a milestone with the person you love.



20 Romantic At-Home Date Night Ideas For Everyone

Staying in never sounded so good.



20 Non-Cliché Valentine's Day Date Ideas

These Valentine's Day date ideas from couples counselors and other experts will spark serious romance.

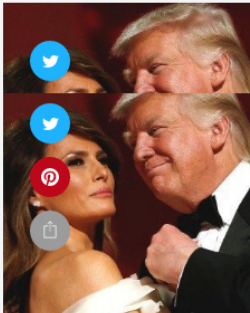


40 Irresistible Second Date Ideas

How to have the ultimate encore performance.

You May Like

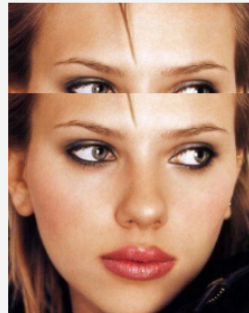
Powered by ZergNet



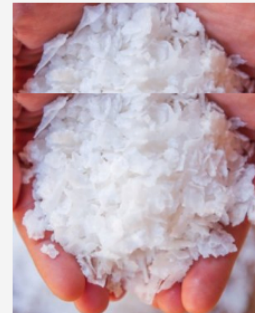
What One Body Language Expert Noticed About Melania and Donald



What Helicopter Pilots are Saying About the Kobe Bryant Crash



The Surprising Little Physical Features That Attract Men Most



Put Salt in the Corners of Your House and Watch What Happens

Follow



[About Us](#) [Terms and Conditions](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Partner Sites](#) [Advertise With Us](#) [Get Our Newsletter](#)

© 2020 Galvanized Media. All Rights Reserved. Bestlifeonline.com is part of the Meredith Health Group