

connecting COUPLES

Summer 2011

inside

Romantic Rendezvous -

Set up the perfect summer picnic for your sweetie. Use our simple tips and tricks.

What Kind of Anniversary Guru are You?

Take our Anniversary Quiz to see how you measure up!

Planning On Getting Married?

Save your money and be a part of The Biggest Wedding!



How to Prepare a Perfect Romantic Picnic

by Lauren McNeal

Preparing for a romantic picnic can be both an exciting and fulfilling experience. Yes, the preparation itself can be an exciting experience especially if you intend to make it a surprise romantic picnic. Of course, we all know that making a person feel special is always a happy and fulfilling experience.

The trick to planning a romantic picnic is by imagining a romantic setting. What elements are found in that setting? The food, the atmosphere, or ambiance; basically all the details can bring out a romantic mood.

The Ambience

The weather plays an important role in bringing a romantic ambience, and so is the time of day. There are certain accessories and adornments though that could also bring a romantic ambience. Candles and flowers are the best examples for this. The scenery and the company of each other, of course, complete a perfect romantic atmosphere.

The Food

Regardless of whether it's a romantic picnic or not, what is a picnic without food! There are a lot of picnic menus to prepare but for the particular atmosphere that you would like to achieve, there are certain foods that could just spice up your romantic picnic.

Here are some ideas:

1. A "romantic platter" of your favorite sausages, cheese and olives combined with your favorite wine. Sausages could be anything from the all-time favorite Italian sausage, Hungarian, Schublig or Bratwurst. Your choice of cheese, on the other hand, could be brie, camembert, Swiss, goat, or cheddar. As for wine, gone are the days when you have to pair red wine with meat and white wine with fish. It's now all about your taste. You can go for a White Chardonnay or a White Briolo or even champagne. Remember, this is a romantic picnic for you and your partner.

2. For those who love a romantic seafood treat, you can also go for shrimp cocktails, oysters, and caviar.
3. If you think you won't have the time to prepare a romantic setup, but would still like to achieve a romantic food experience, you can also go for ready to eat meats like pastrami, roast beef, turkey or any smoked products. You can also couple it with bread like baguette or your favorite French bread.
4. For desserts, you can either have fruits or chocolate. You definitely won't go wrong with these two. Fruits can be anything from strawberries, to cherries, to grapes, to kiwi slices, to apple slices. You can prepare them with your favorite whipped cream or just serve them in style with a martini glass or a small basket. Chocolates could be your favorite dark chocolate, Hershey's kisses, or even the popular peanut butter cups. If you want to make your dessert more interesting, you can also go for gourmet chocolates - this would definitely go well if you want to make an all-gourmet romantic picnic.

The Basket

Of course! Your picnic basket is your ever-reliable "accomplice" to help you set up your romantic picnic plan. What is important is that you pick the right basket that will allow you to store all your romantic preparation. It should have compartments not only for food but also for your other must-haves like silverware, knife and wine glasses.

Oh, by the way, don't forget the blanket!

Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/2528424>



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Marriage

Education Works

Couples enrolled in VOW have had an 87% success rate. Founded in 2006 VOW has helped over 5,500 couples and Soul Mate has served 27,000 students. In 2011 VOW Family Champions will transition from being a federally funded program to a community lead program of Wellness Pointe.



Join the Cause

VOW Family Champions is asking you to join and/or support us to: 1) educate couples on the relationship skills they need to get their marriage started on the right foot, to provide a relationship "check-up" for those who are married, and to offer intensives for couples considering divorce. 2) equip young people with relationship skills basics. 3) serve together as an allied force with other like-minded organizations to equip each other and empower strong families.

Marriage is in danger of becoming a luxury good attainable only to those with the material and cultural means to grab hold of it. State of Our Unions 2010: When Marriage Disappears.

Consider joining us in insuring that happy, healthy marriages are the right of all couples in East Texas, NOT a luxury.

1. Become a VOW Family Champion

Join and become a VOW Family Champion for as low as \$2.50 per month, or an annual individual membership of \$30 per person. Other monthly donations are encouraged to provide ongoing services in East Texas. All support is used directly to strengthen families in relationship education.

2. Sponsor a Couple

Sponsors will give couples the opportunity to complete the VOW course if they are unable to pay. Each 8 hour course costs \$400 per couple. There are other opportunities available such as providing books, materials, and other supplies for the workshops.

3. Join the VOW Advisory Board

Advisory members will meet bi-monthly or 6 times per year. Members assist with planning for conferences, marriage retreat weekends, fundraisers, and providing educational resources for couples, youth, parents, and fathers. You can help in creating the vision and strategies for the future with other dedicated members.

You can make a difference TODAY!
Find out more and register to receive
our first year charter member benefits at
vowfamilychampions.org

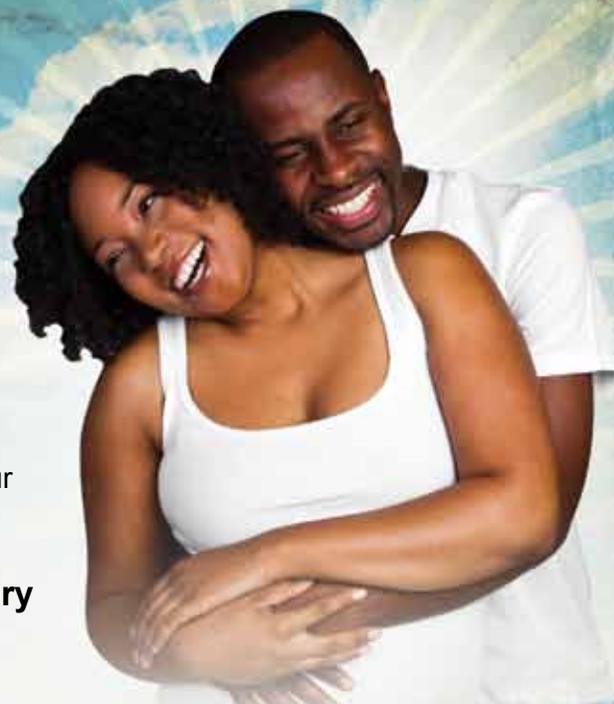


Happy Ever After

-Brittney Loth

So much time and energy is spent planning your big wedding day, but what about planning for your life? With busy work schedules, family to juggle, and the everyday tasks at hand, how do you celebrate and cherish your wedding anniversary each year? It is a special day to remember. After all, it is the anniversary that commemorates where your lifelong marriage began.

Take this short quiz, and find out what type of anniversary guru you are!



- 1. What do you get your spouse for your anniversary each year?**
 - a. I buy the same typical flowers and candy, and maybe go out to dinner.
 - b. I plan something out of the ordinary to keep the element of surprise.
 - c. I tend to overspend and overindulge in expensive gifts.

- 2. What is your personal view of a wedding anniversary?**
 - a. No preference – It comes once a year and I am pretty low-key.
 - b. It is a special celebration I like to honor with something special each year.
 - c. I like to splurge and go all out with dinner, gifts, and maybe a day trip just for the two of us.

- 3. If you had to pick a perfect anniversary date night, it would be:**
 - a. Eating at your favorite restaurant and keep the same tradition each year.
 - b. Recreating the first date you ever shared.
 - c. Be inventive, and cook a great dinner outdoors with music and lighting.

- 4. How do you involve your children (or future children) in your special day?**
 - a. We find a babysitter so we can have time for just the two of us.
 - b. We have an early family dinner and then go out just us two.
 - c. We let the grandparents babysit while we concentrate on the day together.

- 5. Since your wedding day, how would you say marriage has strengthened your relationship and family life?**

- a. We have been like best friends ever since and our family continues to grow because of it.
- b. We are great as a couple, but are also strong individuals and keep a strong hold on our family values as well as personal goals.
- c. We are still deeply in love with each other and use our anniversary day to remind us of how great we are as a couple so we can teach our children the same values of family structure.
- d. Both A & C



****Traditional Twosome** – If you chose mostly **A's** as your answer choices, you are considered a Traditional Twosome. You both like the idea of values and keeping the same routine because it's comfortable and customary. These consistent wedding anniversary plans each year will breed lifelong memories for you and your family.



****Dynamic Duo** – If you chose mostly **B's** as your answer choices, you are considered a Dynamic Duo. Daring, surprising, and adventurous are just a few titles that describe your anniversary date night choices. You are not afraid to live outside your comfort zone. These yearly anniversary plans keep both you and your partner, and the relationship itself, on an exciting edge.



****Splurge Spenders** – If you chose mostly **C's** as your answer choices, you are considered Splurge Spenders, meaning you save this one special occasion a year to go all out! There is certainly nothing wrong with enjoying life and throwing caution to the wind in order to enjoy each other's company. Celebrating an anniversary should be extraordinary, and with each year that passes marks one more year you survived successfully as a team. Why not splurge a little?

Planning to get Married or just got Engaged?



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This spectacular mass wedding will include 50 couples and their 25 guests. The first 50 eligible couples to register online will win a fabulous wedding package to include...*

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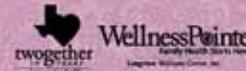
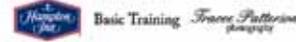
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The first 50 engaged couples to register must have either completed the VOW Marriage Program's or Together in Texas Prenatal 9-hour course after January 1, 2011 or prior to complete the course by August 1, 2011. Partial funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant #60FE0081. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

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