

RELATIONSHIPS



# DATE FRIGHT

Ramp up the romance to avoid a valentine's night massacre

Admit it, you messed up last year. An evening that ends with the missus doubled over the toilet attempting to regurgitate the shrimps you forgot to cook and your neighbour banging the door down demanding an answer to why his garden roses have no heads left, could never be deemed a success. But it doesn't have to be that way. Here's how...

**WHAT'S IN A GIFT?**

Buying gifts for your Valentine depends on what you're trying to achieve, says Trudy Hill, head of matchmaking and coaching at Seventy-Thirty. 'In life, we either give loved ones situational gifts (birthdays) or tactical gifts ("I really like you"),' she says. 'Across many species males give tactical gifts to females to woo them, and females have evolved to expect tactical gifts as a display of commitment or intention. What men fail to understand is that women want to see you being tactical on valentine's; in fact, they expect it.'

**WHY THE CARD MATTERS**

If flowers are confusing, cards are a total mystery to most men. So if you're unsure and are contemplating a last minute job, don't bother. 'A standard card from a shop with your signature in will mean little more than no card at all,' says Trudy. 'It's all about showing you care and investing something precious (time and brain power in this instance) into maintaining or creating the relationship.'

And if the thought of writing something profound makes you dizzy, Trudy suggests drawing a picture. 'Women are drawn to intelligent men so if you can't spell you should probably draw a picture instead.'

**THE ALL IMPORTANT NOSH**

'Don't use the commercialisation of valentine's as a cop out,' says Trudy. 'Sometimes the simplest gesture can increase the attraction 10-fold. Find out what she likes other than eating out and cook her favorite meal. Or, forget the food, litter the house with candles and offer her a massage instead.' Remember it's not an excuse for your perfect night in. Making the assumption that she fancied a micro-waved Lamb

Vindaloo and a can of Stella won't cover you in glory.

**YOU DON'T NEED TO BE SHAKESPEARE**

Unless you're dating a literature teacher don't sweat over what you say or write to her on valentines. 'She wants to know what you love about her and not just from a visual or physical point of view, although that will help.'

**UP YOUR SLEEVE...**

Forgot the big day? Here are some classics to get you off the hook

- ◆ 'The Florist couldn't find your house, did you move?'
- ◆ 'I sent an e-mail card. You never got it? Yahoo must have messed up again!'
- ◆ 'I didn't know you liked jewellery?'

! Trudy Hill is the head of matchmaking at SeventyThirty  
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**The truth**  
 41 per cent of men confess to have forgotten Valentine's Day until the day itself. The other 59 per cent (we suspect) are liars