

A singles' guide to dating blind

By Kate Elliott

How many times have you heard someone share an amusing story about a blind date? Blind dates are not for the anxious, controlling, or easily bruised when rejected by others. You have to go into them with a good sense of humour and an open mind if you are ever going to get over the barriers of meeting someone you don't know, especially when you have no idea what to expect. Whether it's sneaking out to the bathroom to fake an emergency phone call to get out of some seriously boring conversation, or two people falling madly in love after only a month of meeting through friends, blind dates can not only be fun and successful, they are the true beginnings of great date stories, and can open you up to the possibilities of meeting new people, and test the personal boundaries you have when it comes to dating.

The first rule of a blind date is to get as much information as you can about someone *before* you meet them for your date. If you are meeting someone through a friend, ask around. Do others know this person; does he have a dog, like to bar fight, are there any restraining orders you should be aware of? Be specific about the kinds of things you want to know; the more you know, the more comfortable you will feel when it comes to meeting for the first time.

Secondly, don't overdo the date itself. Keep it simple, good food and conversation, and perhaps a place to walk around after dinner or to sit and chat if things are going well. White water rafting, or an exotic new restaurant you are dying to try, are two things you should stay away from, especially if you don't know the person at all. There's nothing like a serious case of food poisoning on a first date to completely ruin the mood. And whatever you do, remember to always stay in public places. NEVER invite someone to your home, or agree to go to theirs. Kidnapping is not high on the list of fabulous first date stories.

The third most important rule of blind dating is to be yourself! Although you always want to make a great first impression on a blind date, don't go overboard, or show off all your goods the first time around. Wear something that is flattering, and reflects your best assets. If you intend on seeing this person again, you want to present the best and most honest impression of who you are really are, both inside and out. This also means not fabricating a job that has you owning the company, as opposed to managing it, or living with roommates, i.e. your parents. Whatever you do, don't create an elaborate lie that you have to keep up with if you decide you like this person and want to see them again.

Whether you're an expert or have only done it once, blind dates can be full of potential, be it romance, friendship or partners for life. Use your intuition when it comes to others and be yourself—you are a better judge of character than you think. And remember that blind dates don't always turn into successful relationships; be patient and positive about your experience, and keep in mind that total disasters make great stories afterwards! But whatever you do, don't give out any personal information before you really know someone. The last thing you need is a stalker to ruin your summer.