

Dinner for \$2

Cash-strapped college students discover ways to save while they act suave

BY MELISSA PANTANO
The Battalion

A student flashes a smile as he finishes a day of classes. Tonight is the one he has been waiting for, a date with that cute girl from English class. Horror strikes, however, as he opens his wallet to find only a \$10 bill. As Thomas Jefferson stares back at him mockingly, he panics, trying to figure out what to do on such a tight budget.

College students usually are strapped for cash, but there are a lot of ways to have a great date for under \$10.

Jeff Carawan, a senior journalism major, said the key to a cheap date is romance.

"One cheap thing that is also romantic is to buy a bottle of wine, nothing fancy, and drive out to Lick Creek Park,"

Carawan said. "Take a picnic blanket and watch the sun set. It's a really peaceful place, and if you really don't have a lot of money, drinking from the bottle saves stemware and adds extra class."

Brandon Kasper, a freshman computer engineering major, said money is not a concern, as long as the date is free.

"Aggie Bucks come in handy," Kasper said. "It doesn't matter what you spend as long as your parents are paying."

A good date can be found almost anywhere, especially around the campus.

Mike Malon, a junior business major, said he prefers tradition-based dates.

"Take a girl to Midnight Yell or to a game at Kyle Field," Malon said. "They are completely free dates that are a lot of fun."

Larry Brooks, a senior agricultural economics major, said a date away from the hustle and bustle of the city is sometimes the best kind.

"I like to get some beer, go out to the end of the runway at Easterwood [Airport] and watch the planes land," Brooks said.

Packing a meal is a cost-cutting move to make any pennywise person proud.

"You can bring dinner from home, and just sit and talk for hours," Brooks said.

Lovebirds can also find refuge in the arms of Mother Nature.

Leann Johnson, a sophomore business major, said she likes to be around nature.

"I like to walk out to Simpson Drill Field, take my shoes off and walk in the grass," Johnson said. "Research Park is great, too — anywhere there is shade is good for me."

"As far as food goes, CiCi's \$2.99 buffet is God's gift to college diners."

Jennifer King, a senior education major, said simplicity is the key to a successful date.

"The [Dixie] Chicken is a pretty cheap date," King said. "But it's crowded, and it's hard to pay attention with all those distractions."

Other students like to just rent movies or get coffee, utilizing dates that are low-budget and personal.

Katie Simpson, a freshman meteorology major, said a date does not require a lot of thought.

"Just go and rent a movie," Simpson said. "It really doesn't matter as long as you like each other."

Jocelyn Sprinzl, a freshman business management major, said girls do not care about the price of a date, as long as it is with somebody they like.

"Even if you just go to a party and have a good time, it's sufficient," She said. "I don't expect expensive dates around here."

King said cheap dates are possible, even though they might not seem like typical dates.

"Just go to a party," King said. "You get to hang out together and meet other friends," King said.

Greg Yezak, a senior industrial distribution major, said he does not think a cheap date exists.

"There's no such thing as a cheap date anymore," Yezak said. "If you don't take a girl out and treat her to an expensive meal, they're not happy. You don't make an impression."

Yezak said potential dates expect a little something extra on their night out.

"If you ask someone out, they don't expect something they can do themselves," Yezak said. "They like to be treated."

Carawan said cheap dates do not work for some people.

"Cheap dates are great, but don't expect them to work with the sorority types," Carawan said. "My experience has been that they want to be taken out all the time."

Dr. Ted Stachowiak, associate director of Student Counseling Services, said some students stress about dating though they have no reason to.

"There are students who put the main priority on just spending time together and having fun," Stachowiak said, "while there are others who feel that they need to impress a date with expensive plans. I think it goes both ways."



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