

# Popular Threads on Solosez

## (Off Topic) Dating...Who Pays?

[Editor's note: Watch how this thread detours into the use of calculators, splitting the bill among friends, and paying for a business meal, becoming known as "The Thread That Wouldn't Die.]

i'm seeing a woman, a dentist. we've been on several dates (which i've paid for) and we get along very well. last night we went to dinner and a movie. i picked up the check for dinner and suggested that she treat for the movie (failure to launch, very funny, great date flick). today i get an email saying that she's confused by my asking her to pay for the movie. am i interested in her for a relationship or do i just want to be casual friends? i explained that we're both professionals with personal and family support obligations. if we share expenses we can afford to do nicer things and more often. she says no problem, it's just that the other men she's dated have always paid for everything and she wasn't sure what the implication of my request was. i'm far from cheap, always pay on the first date, but i'm not in the habit of paying for a woman's company. most women i've dated in the past have offered to pay without my prompting, including paying their way on joint vacations. not always 50/50, but a sharing of expenses. she says i'm

different...she should only know  i'm 46 and she's 43 if that matters. the female perspective is especially appreciated. so the question is ...

a man and woman (both working) are dating. should the man pay all of the time or should they alternate who pays?

### THE PERPLEXED GUY -----

When my husband and I were dating (42 years ago), we went to the theater in Boston about once a month. I would dress up - heels, nice dress, the whole thing. My husband wore a suit and tie. We both felt as though it was a "night out." [He ALWAYS paid, of course]

This past weekend, for the first time in many years, we were in New York for a couple of days and took in a show [Hairspray]. We were amazed at the outfitson the people in the audience - jeans, sneakers, t-shirts, etc. There were a few women in dresses and heels but they were a DISTINCT minority. In confess that my husband and I looked more like the majority . . . .

Nevertheless, my husband still paid.

Jo Fray, Massachusetts

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I'd love it if the man paid for everything, however I certainly don't expect it (and I will be 43 in July, if that helps with perspective). I generally offer to pay for certain things without any prompting.



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Jane E. Tate, Kailua, Hawaii

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I'd like to pay...and not tell my wife!

Scott Hodes

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Men pay. It's that simple. If a man can't afford to pay for himself and his date, then he can't afford to date. What you may have saved by asking your date to treat for the movie will end up costing you more than the price of two movie tickets. Being a professional and having other financial obligations have nothing to do with it. And that goes even more so if a man's interested in a relationship instead of a casual friendship.

The only exceptions are if the couple are young and impoverished students or if a woman is dating someone destitute.

And those are the black-letter rules.

jennifer rose, Mexico

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On the other hand, John Gray, of Mars & Venus fame, says this is a no-no.

This is a fascinating discussion. I'm pretty old-fashioned myself but I also realized we are operating in a very different environment these days. For lunch, for example, I think, the woman should at least offer to pay. Sometimes the offer is accepted, sometimes its not, but at least you have made the offer. One way out of the official "payment" issue, with someone you are dating regularly, is to invite him to your house for a home-cooked meal. I have found that invitation is always well-received!

Sharon Campbell, Texas

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I think you should pay. Maybe I'm old fashioned. Oh I'm 43 and not dating--because I'm married--and I like it when my husband pays when we go out.

Joan M. Swartz, St. Louis, Missouri

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As a single woman (and over 43 at that), I too think men pay. Jennifer is right that it is black-letter. The woman's option is to invite the man to dinner at her home or to get tickets to something if she chooses. And if she doesn't choose, the man pays or doesn't ask her out.

Fern Summer, New York

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Some things, despite "equality" of the sexes never change. I found that out early on in my relationship with my now wife, whom I once "insulted" by not offering to pay for her dinner. It's a fine line. It's part of the dance. On the one hand, you don't want to be taken advantage of, but on the other hand, women like to be "taken care of". It has nothing to do with ability to pay.

If you like the girl, and she likes you, I would suggest continuing to offer to pay. It seems that she is (as most are) an "old fashioned girl", who gets real mixed up and a little offended if you don't offer to pay.

This is where you have to judge. There was some movie, I think it was the comedy where Marlon Brando played himself playing the Godfather. The male lead said that when a girl reaches over and unlocks the car door for him after he's let her in, he knows that she really cares. In other words, if the girl in your case is out for more than just a free meal and movie, she will offer to pay some time, or perhaps some equivalent kindness.

David A. Silverstone, Hollywood, Florida

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I agree with COTE here. Shoot, I believe men should even pay for the wedding.

Madjel Musa, Illinois

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Perchance an unequivocal kindness?

Ed Lawson, New Hampshire

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I remember my first date with my now-husband. We were both poor law students. I didn't know what to think because we went to the movies and paid dutch. Was he really interested in me? Did he just want to be friends? I always liked it when the man paid, but if I invited him out, I would try to offer to pay (knowing that many men would not let me). Now that I am an old married gal, my husband still pays, granted, it is from our joint checking account...and since he is a student again and I am the professional, I am really the one paying.

Liisa R. Speaker, Lansing, Michigan

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Ugh. What David said really bugs me. Why should a man have to pay for everything on every date? If you've been out multiple times what's the problem??? I certainly am not dense enough to get "confused" by someone asking me to pay for part of a date, especially if it is not the first date. At 43 I think it is time for this gal to grow up! If a man wants to pay, I let him pay. If he says "hey, why don't you get the tip?" I have

absolutely no problem with that. I will even offer to pay for some things, especially if the movie or concert was my idea. I just think it is absolutely ridiculous that some "RULE" somewhere says that the MAN MUST PAY. What a load of crap.

Jane E. Tate, Kailua, Hawaii

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For what its worth, when I go to an event with a client or colleague I insist on paying, so I see a distinction even if it's not written.

Joan M. Swartz, St. Louis, Missouri

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Whomever asks should pay.

Justin Andrus

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Really, Jennifer...you've got to get away from that wishy-washy, beat-around-the-bush, shy-and-retiring, non-committal approach to things.

LOL!!!!!!!


Alan L. Inglis, Rancho Cucamonga, California

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I agree with Majdel on this. And COTE.

Ok. I am 38 and firmly believe that men should not only pay for the dates, but not even think twice about it. Don't show us that the thought has even entered your mind that we should pay for anything. They should open the car door, in fact, they should open all doors. They should call. They should email. They should do the heavy lifting until there is a commitment, when it then starts to get heavier. Don't get too comfortable, because she will get bored. Many professional women, particularly those who are strong, smart, etc. want to be taken care of and made to feel special on a personal level.

Asking for a \$25 chip in on a date does not make for special feelings.

But don't ever question her rights to equality.  Accept these things and all will be good. Don't try to understand it. Just accept it.

Camie Pickett, Arizona

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Not the Godfather, but A Bronx Tale. And it is true. There appears to be lots of traditional/old fashioned thinkers on this board.

Todd A. Vaughn, Alexandria, Virginia

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{Applause}


Todd A. Vaughn, Alexandria, Virginia

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My wife and I do the joint checking too, and if I don't have my debit card and ask her to use hers (the same account), I get a look or comment every time. I know it's in jest - but the response is hardwired.

K. Gordon Crawford

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a bronx tale. deniro, chas palmintari and that kid who played "C", great movie. the look on the biker's faces in the bar when the wise guys lock the doors and say...we asked you to leave nicely...now you can't leave. priceless. unfortunately a very effective test of the fairer sex has been eliminated by power door locks 

thank you to all of you for your opinions. i think the traditionalists outnumber the the progressives by a slight margin. she's been enjoying polling her patients between rinse and spits and has gotten a split decision as well.

THE ANONYMOUS GUY

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after hearing all of your opinions, pro and con, i still feel comfortable with my position. thanks to several of your insights, I now realize that i made the faux pas of springing it on her mid-date. my bad and not very tactful. i will apologize for that.

THE APOLOGETIC GUY -----

Jennifer, there are no black letter rules on this subject anymore. The only people that have rules are the ones making them for their own lives.

I agree totally with [NAME WITHHELD]. I am 64 and divorced.

I will always pay for the first few dates but after that i expect the woman to pick up the tab from time to time. It doesn't have to be even just some splitting. I always discuss the issue in full during the 2nd or 3rd date - not just spring it on someone. Women wanted equality, They don't have it yet but it's a lot closer -- so act like it.

If a woman won't split expenses once we are in a relationship I will not date her. This applies to vacations also.

I must say that I have never had a problem with this. No woman has ever

objected or just compromised. They have all agreed with the philosophy that if we were married our joint incomes would be paying, so if we are in a committed relationship why not the same?

Bob Moss, Texas

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My personal opinion is that we can't (perhaps, shouldn't) intellectualize romance and courtship. I might be a professional in my job, but when it comes to attraction to the opposite sex, I have more respect and am more attracted to the man who wants to be the man (not that I'm on the dating scene). That doesn't make men and women unequal; it's just biology and what makes it so interesting.

Danielle Keister, Legal Assistant, Tacoma, Washington

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As a guy who has been in the dating game forever (I've never been married), my perspective is there are no rules. I always offer to pay for the first few dates. However, if a woman wants to go dutch, first, second, third date...then, she's an adult, that's her decision, and we roll with it. It doesn't sound like you made any mistakes by asking her if she could pick up the tab for the movie. The only thing I would question would your timing. Perhaps you guys should have discussed how the evening would go, in terms of what you would do and who pays, before you went out. But, beyond that, if she can't pay for a movie or feels insulted because you asked her to do so, I wouldn't want to date her anyway. Both parties should be making some sacrifices in the dating. If her idea is that you should just take care of her every need, then she's probably not your kind of girl. (nor mine) Bryan Bullock

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I agree with Jane. Why should the man get stuck paying all of the time. She works - why is her money more valuable than his?

I think it is selfish to assume that the man should pay every time you go out. It's one thing if there is a huge disparity in income but I still believe that she should at least offer to pay for the less expensive dates/activities. If you decide that you want to pay, then that is ok too.

I like to be "taken care of" (just as anyone does) but I don't expect a man to pay my way for me (not even my husband). I'm a big girl, I earn a living. If I want to go out, I expect to pay my way.

By the way, "taking care of me" does not mean buying me dinner, taking me to the movies or spending a lot of money on me. Spending money on me doesn't impress me, anyone can do that.

I guess I'm not old-fashioned.

Stephanie Konarski

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Now that I've read some other responses, I guess I'm not the only old fashioned girl. I agree with Jennifer, et al: the man pays. Even after years of marriage and everything is joint money, it feels "right" when we go out and my husband pays the bill.

Roxanna Kaz

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I think you have wisely decided to apologize. Good start.

Remember something else. She didn't enjoy the second half of the evening. She spent it either not really watching or at the least not enjoying the movie because she was wondering about if you were worth keeping and what you thought of her.

Also know that there is probably going to be a small unspoken discomfort between both of you for a long time. She will be on edge about whether she should offer to pay, and if she really was not comfortable with the arrangement in the first place, she may grow to resent feeling like she's been put into a situation she didn't ask for and doesn't want. Not saying that is a definite, but if she ain't modern, she ain't modern.

With apologies to the women who've weighed in here on your side, everyone is different and you need to ask HER how she feels rather than the rest of us. And ask her a lot until she indicates to you that you've gotten way past it. Neither we nor her friends or client matter here. It's HER feelings that matter, and frankly, your feelings won't matter either for a while until she is comfortable again - unless you are not truly interested in her. Just my 2 shekels.

Lyza Sandgren, paralegal, Suwanee, Georgia

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I am so glad I am married, and I'm so glad things haven't changed in the 28 years since I've been out of the dating loop.

I was raised "man pays". If you can't afford it, you don't take her out. And you get her car door, you let her sit first, etc. I thought all that would label me a dinosaur and behind the times. I am (according to my wife), but that's beside the point.

Barry W. Kaufman, Jacksonville, Florida

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oy vey !

this is a very typical client - lawyer situation you ask about !

client asks one thing, but really wants to know another thing !

what you *\*really\** want to know is;

at what point in a relationship does the all male payment stop !

and the answer is; \*NEVER\*

however you might get lucky ( pun intended )

and get a woman that will accept opening a joint bank account with a VISA card

Med venlig hilsen

Christian Vinaa, Gentofte, Denmark

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I'm 100% with Camie, Majdel, and Jennifer. I'm 46 and newly wed to a guy who did all those things!). This is after spending my early 20's trying to prove how "equal" I was by pulling out the wallet. It has nothing to do with "equality." It is about feeling honored and special. Sally Moore, 3L, Virginia Beach, Virginia

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I think it was wrong to spring it on her. I also think you should talk to her about it in a place that is comfortable for both of you.

It depends upon the person. I personally think it's okay because I have several brothers. Growing up I thought it was stupid that they couldn't go out if they had no money cause the girl expected them to pay. Of course that sometimes came back to bite me cause I always insisted on going dutch - no obligation; no indebtness, etc. (by the way my husband has no problem with this -- well at least after the first date or two when he was trying to impress me.).

If you spring it on a person even casually, the other person can be offended. Way before marriage I had a blind date and we stopped for hot chocolate before the movie. The place was crowded and he was trying to get his wallet. So I said let me take it. He didn't say no; I thought it was okay; heck it was a couple bucks. He minded. Okay when the movie suck that made matters worse cause he didn't like the movie (he chose it) and he knew I didn't like the movie; so he insisted we go to another movie. First and last date. Thereafter I always ask before the date if the person mind dutch or whatever. Some guys do; some guys don't. Just don't spring it on her.

Felicia McBride

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If it's a date, I always pay. I open car door (and other doors) etc., but don't make a big deal about it. Truth is, I open doors for all my gal pals anyway.

Back to the date. bill comes, I take it. She offers to split. I



appreciate it-- more women should OFFER. Our job is to say, "oh, no, thanks, I got this one." or something like that. And pay. Because even if she didn't offer, I would still pay because I asked her out, after all. (Query, what if she asked YOU/the guy out?)

On second and third date (assuming there is one), I still pay; however, by this time, I kind of feel that maybe-- just for show, she should offer to pay. I'll decline. Unless I don't like her that much and say, "Okay."

Gabriel Jimenez, Los Angeles, California

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My turn to opine-- I did not read all responses & apologies for repetition. My take is, If I ask(ed)--(happily married now)-- someone out, I pay. If "someone" asks me out, invites me over, etc., I think that is her opportunity to contribute financially. As for travel, it makes sense that if I ask, I should pay the airfare, etc & she might offer to pay for meals, groceries, some cabs. I think Peter should have discussed this, or at least explained his thinking. I also think Dr Dentist Damsel should have considered something other than email for her inquiry.

Robert Strupp

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I think you made an excellent point that the rest of us ignored- The most disturbing thing of all is that she expressed her concern by email- and not in person.

Lew Wienger, Corte Madera, California

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What I see from the inquiry and some responsive posts is somewhat a misdirection. The approach is the same problem I see in other avenues. The (faulty) supposition is that there is one universal truth, and one has to but understand and accept it. The problem is not who pays, but rather the parties expectations.

Traditional view is guy pays. Newer views are less certain. I am aware of a school of thought that guys should make the encounters expense free to flush out those that are just in the game for the monetary benefit (not saying I buy it, just that I am aware of it).

The "true" answer is one that works for both individuals in the relationship. One has to be careful in springing the discussion on anyone, at any point.

If the individual expectations vary, one has to address that through appropriate communication. Look at it as an opportunity to improve dialogue. If you cannot figure out a solution, the relationship is doomed for communication issues. The problem is communication, not who pays.

There is no reason that a professional cannot pay for some things, if they want to. If they don't want to (or at least offer), a question is raised as to level of commitment and what benefits are sought from the relationship. The money is the least important part of the discussion, if one is seeking a permanent soul mate.

Of course, like everyone else, this is just an opinion. I have been married for more than 21 years, and she has not thrown me out yet. I base my views of the current scenario on interviews of persons who come through this office. There is a wide variance in societal expectations on this issue, depending on age, area and upbringing. One needs to find common ground for a relationship to proceed.

Of course, on balance, if the views of life are too disparate, move on. Adjust where one can, and communicate clearly, in hopes that a long life together may be achieved.

Compromise and communicate. The second item is of greatest import, followed closely by the first item.

Darrell G. Stewart, San Antonio, Texas

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My first impression was that your dentist really thought that your suggestion of going dutch was your way of putting the brakes on and being "just friends", which made her unhappy. If 'several dates', means 3 or more, and you want to move the relationship along, I would tell the dentist that, and that your suggestion of going dutch was simply what you were used to based on your prior dating experience, and you didn't mean to suggest anything else.

Michael Blake

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The problem is that if the man REQUESTS that the woman pay, not that he does or doesn't pay. If the woman OFFERS to pay, then I think it's probably okay (though I would probably still pay.)

By having the guy request, he may come off as broke, which might be a major repellent.

David L. Leon, Dallas, Texas

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You all are missing the grand point of it all--if the woman thinks you're wrong, YOU'RE WRONG! Get used to it. Resistance is futile.

(I had four sisters growing up and I've been married for the past ten years...) David L. Leon, Dallas, Texas

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I think the asker should pay, or make the effort to do so. I wouldn't want to be asked out to somewhere someone else chose and be expected to pay. And I believe in offering to pay now and again.

OTOH, if you having been "dating" for a very long time, things could be different.

Veronica Schnidrig

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I agree if you ask you should pay. After all if you're picking the activities you're in control of what it costs.

John A. Davidson, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

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In all fairness, if EITHER PARTY thinks the other is wrong, the relationship is finished. I don't know if that means that the person is "wrong", but what difference does it make if a relationship is terminated. Same is true with statements and discussions with clients. I can be entirely correct, but if a client walks when I did not want the client to walk, I lose. You not only need to be careful what you say (if the I approach a subject as carefully as I can and present it properly, and the relationship terminates, maybe it was not the right relationship anyway, as long as I accurately expressed my feelings) and you also need to be careful how you say it (don't raise the subject of who pays with "Enough is enough! I've been paying for all this time and your cheap butt can't even pick up a tip! . . .)

James D. Mills

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So you are saying that strong, professional women want to be taken care of, while weak, non-professional women don't want to be taken care of? That sounds backwards. Besides, if a man can't make his date feel special without paying for everything, then he has some serious personal problems.

Christopher Bumgarner

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No. That is not what I am saying. I am not speaking for non-professional women at all. And I am in no way speaking for all strong, professional women. I am speaking for myself and the women who are my friends. Most of whom are strong professional women. We work damn hard and are tough during the day and want to feel special when we are actually not working.

The question presented had something to do with a third date. And asking for a woman to pay for part of it during the date. One thought that crossed my mind was this: are you kidding me??? This is the third date. Are you

a guy? Do you think I finally get it that you are sort of a visual creature? Do you think I am pretty?? Do you like my manicure? My pedicure? My hair?? Do you think about any of the other pre-date maintenance / primping that goes on? Do you want to pay for ANY of it? Because if we are keeping score, and we shouldn't be, I can assure you I have more money invested in this date than you do.

So, the next time you think about asking a woman to pay for part of the date, particularly during the date, take a look at her. Did she do any pre-date maintenance/primping?? Does she make you feel special? If the answers might be yes, then quietly pull out your wallet and be happy.

Dating should not be about money. Period. For either party. Neither party should be seen as an open checkbook or a closed one. But these are not questions to be presented during a date.

Dating should be about feeling special and making sure that it is a mutual kind of special. For me. Any mention of a business transaction will ensure it is the last date. For me. And my friends. I speak for no one else.

(I told you not to ask, but just accept it. Sigh . . . ) Probably shouldn't hit the send button . . . .

Camie Pickett, Arizona

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Geez, do any of you "old fashioned" women have the opinion that a woman's place is not in the workplace, but at home taking care of the kids? Or that women should not be on the street unaccompanied by a man? Or that a women should never wear long trousers/pants? Feeling honored and special should in no way be effected by financial things. If that were the case, ladies of the night would be the most special and honored women on the planet.

Todd A. Vaughn

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I am 67 and in my experience, the man - date or husband - always paid when he asked someone out.

When I was dating, a boy/man invited the lady only for those activities that he could afford. If he couldn't afford dinner, a movie, or the theatre then they would go on a picnic, a walk on the beach, canoeing, mountain climbing, the zoo, or even a visit to a free art gallery. They were all lovely dates.

In fact, many of the no- or low-cost dates were more romantic than the expensive ones. What's more, you really get to know what someone is like when they are struggling up a mountain-side while being attacked by black flies!

The lady paid ONLY when she did the inviting.

Jo Fray, Massachusetts

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I guess I'm another old fashioned gal. I think it's polite for the man to offer to pay, just like it's polite for the man to open the door, pull out the chair, etc. If a guy were to ask me out and then ask me to pay for my dinner, it would be a huge turn-off. I would spend the entire rest of the date wondering if he couldn't afford the meal (bad), or didn't think I was worth spending money on (worse). That being said, I think it's impolite for the woman not to at least offer to pay for something after the first few dates.


LaLisa Semrad, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

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Men pay. That's really it. Call me a diva. I'll take it as a complement. If the woman decides to change it up every now and then that is her prerogative. But there are other things for her to consider... I once dated a very wealthy man who always took me ALL CAPS Zagats restaurants in New York City every time we went to dinner. Once we were planning to go to a mid-priced restaurant and I was tempted to offer to pay. Luckily I talked to a southern girlfriend of mine. She reminded me that taking me to fancy restaurants is his thing, It makes him feel good. That's why he does it. What am I, in a competition with him? Don't take that away from him. So instead I picked up a couple of CDs of a musician we had been discussing & gave to those to him during desert. He seemed to really appreciate it. Might I also add that dating this man was not cheap for me either!!! Our first date I dropped about \$200 to hold up my end of deal and look amazing on our date. My entire Saturday was shot as I went from manicure to pedicure to hair stylist to shoe retailer, etc. I actually got off pretty cheap since I already had the dress and accessories. I figure THAT'S my contribution. To make it clear that I appreciate our time together on these dates. (No, gentlemen. The other thing is not a quid pro quo in my book).

Tanya Robinson

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carnie, i LOVED this. frankly it never occurred to me. thanks for opening my eyes and rubbing my nose in it  a real aha moment for me. i'll shut up now...

THE THANKFUL GUY

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You are a good man. Anytime you need any more dating questions answered . . . I had lotsa laughing offline and on the phone yesterday . . . What would we do without Solosez???

Camie Pickett, Arizona

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I agree!!!

I think many men fail to realize one thing and of course, I am not speaking for all women. In my personal experience, and based on the experiences of my girlfriends, we don't really care how much money the guys have paid or spent on us. Women care more on the quality of the time rather than what they do during the date. Of course, able to enjoy a nice meal, a movie, or a theater is nice. However, these activities do not have to occur on a regular basis. Make that a treat rather than the expectation. Rent a movie, cook at home, etc., may not only just be inexpensive and romantic dates, but guys would get just as many points as if they were taking women out for a \$100 opera or a \$200 meal.

My two cents.

Christine Chang

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This shouldn't be so difficult. Learn the current custom by asking around (like here), read some hip rag like Esquire, use common sense, relax.

Cami's right about the timing of a money discussion. It shouldn't be part of a date, but perhaps during the get-to-know conversations. If it's a matter of not having enough money, don't pretend you (not You, but "one" or "a person") should stick to invitations one can afford to pay for.

I like the CD gift idea when the other person clearly likes to go places that might be out of the date's budget. So many factors to balance! I asked you out, so I assume I'm paying. But if I bought the tickets, I'd be comfortable with you suggesting dinner as your treat.

CJ Stevens, Lolo, Montana

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Ya know, all (some of) the women in this thread are making a big deal about getting all dolled up for the date. That probably works on weekend dates. Not all dates are on weekends. What about the mid-week dates where it's straight from work to date or maybe he picks you up at home right after work? Time and money "invested" in the date---\$0.

Yes, I'll admit that women sometimes go to extraordinary lengths to look good, but, and I know I'm gonna get hammered here, but in many instances the guy doesn't really care if you spent \$200 or \$20 to get ready. He's taking you out because he likes you, not your hair, not your nails, etc. My personal preference is less is more. Little if any makeup, lip gloss not lipstick, etc.

And yes, most of the time I pay when I go out.

Tom Simchak, Houston, Texas

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Midweek date? Few and far between. If it happens it is low-key. That's why Saturday counts

Tanya Robinson

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That's kinda interesting because I recall many a dad in my old office jockeying for position because HE wanted to be the one who got to be home with the baby.

Tanya Robinson

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Yep, that's our CJ. She buys a pitcher of beer and before you know it all the former Marines are at her house the following morning to chop firewood..... <G>

Bruce Dorner, New Hampshire

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It goes without saying that in any relationship, business, romantic or otherwise, the inviter always pays. That is just plain common sense. I think the real issue here is whether the invitee should pay. It is my belief that the inviter always pays. Many traditional/old fashioned thinkers, however, are of the opinion that a man, even in the role as invitee, should always pay. That is absurd and selfish in this mid-30s guy's humble opinion. Todd A. Vaughn

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I'll be the first to admit that I LOVE an excuse to get dressed up, have pretty nails and hair, etc. But I will also say that, this past Valentine's Day, my boyfriend made a (surprisingly wonderful) pasta meal, complete with wine, flowers, AND desert. This is the second time - he claims the third - in almost three years. The fact that he planned it out, did the prep work, (thought of it, in the first place?!) etc., meant so much more to me than going to the nicest restaurant, theatre, or whatever. It was the fact that he thought of it, put the work into it (which, considering his experience or lack thereof was a LOT), and all for me!

Adrienne S. Davis, Nebraska

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I agree with Tom. The fact that some women get glammed up for a date is not persuasive in this debate. Many women I know get glammed up in part because it makes them feel good, the fact that their date enjoys it is icing on the cake. Tom, no worries. I have your back in this argument/debate...LOL Todd A. Vaughn

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I remember getting hammered on several dates in my college years when I offered to pay or open doors for my date. I mean, these dates got positively offended at my supposed chauvinism. Personally, I'm pretty mellow about the who-pays issue. I go with whatever makes my date comfortable. Not that it matters any more, since I'm married.

Nevertheless, I still think it's all part of the mating ritual. I've always thought it a mistake to interject too much intellectual analysis or policy rationale into the realm of dating. Question current social convention all you want; in the end, it's generally wisest to go along with them.

Cheers,

Gene Lee

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It appears that the consensus is that you should pay but if she asks a legal question during a date . . . bill her!!

Peter Turai

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FWIW, I agree that getting "glammed up" is kind of part of the deal and personally, it's more to make myself feel good than for the BF (don't tell HIM that). In the beginning of the relationship or for the first few dates it's probably more about impressing the other person, but after a while, it's simply about self esteem, feeling good, and maybe, just maybe turning a few heads - other than the one you're with?? Again, don't tell HIM that!

Adrienne S. Davis, Nebraska

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I paid when I was dating, but that was a long time ago.

Although I am not in the dating scene anymore, and haven't been for over thirty years, my guess is that if a female gets upset because you offer to pay or because you suggest going Dutch, then maybe that is a sign that the female is "high maintenance," and it is best to pass on this one.

Ernest Schaal, Japan

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While most of us can distinguish between a date and a business meal with a client or a gathering with friends, but what about splitting the bill during the latter occasions? The invitee, IMHO, should clearly pick up the check for the business meal, and many gatherings which do not have romantic connotations seem to mean splitting the bill.

But what about those times when a group gets together for dinner, everyone else in the party ordering a few cocktails, wine, appetizers, salad



and expensive entrees, while you've only had a single Diet Coke, an appetizer and a salad? You've ran up perhaps a grand total of \$29, including tip, but your share is declared to be \$70? I feel churlish asking that I only pay my share, but at the same time, it burns me up to subsidize everyone else to the tune of double what I consumed.

I'm back from a lunch with an American friend in Mexico, and we discussed whether men should pay on a date. Most definitely, she said. Unless, of course, the man is at least two decades younger, which makes it a somewhat different proposition for women over 40. We hung around the restaurant long enough to watch the bills being paid by five other tables of couples. And sure enough, the man automatically paid. She reminded me that even among casual friends of either gender in this country, the one who does the inviting automatically pays without question. "Let's go lunch" makes it a shared endeavor.

jennifer rose, Mexico

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FWIW SWMBO says "Run. Run as fast as you can. Anybody who has a problem paying for a movie after you've already paid for two nice dates is just wanting to be taken care of. Consider whether you want a relationship with such a person."

Now if I can only convince her to get me a Harley for my 50th birthday....

Wendell Finner, Florida

----- Finally. Some sanity.

Justin Andrus

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I agree. Is this is another one of those men/women differences? It seems to me that if it is a group of women, they are much more likely to divide the bill according to what people had, whereas the men tend to go with the even division. I had that happen a couple of weeks ago; I decided it was not worth the \$25 I would have saved, especially since I have to work with these fellows in the future on drafting some legislation and I want them to adopt my point of view.

Lisa Runquist, Los Angeles, California

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The man pays. Period. Whether it's for your wife, sister, friend, whomever...when a man is out with a woman, the man pays. Now, if the woman offers to pay, decline her invitation, but if she insists, then be gracious and let her pay. Never ask a woman to pay. Never...

Steve Satter

----- Not A Bronx Tale. The Freshman. I just remembered.

David A. Silverstone, Hollywood, Florida

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Seinfeld : a date and a job interview are the same. The only difference is there's no expectation of taking your clothes off at the end of the latter.

Charlie Abut, New Jersey

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All of this invitor-invitee stuff sounds very unromantic. Sounds like a bunch of lawyers.

A few things I have gleaned from both sides, mixed with my opinions: Certain premises. Why is a woman there on a date? Because she's bored? Because she likes the guy? Because she likes the way the guy treats her? Because she wants to find out more about the guy? Looking for a relationship? Looking for sex? And you could ask the same questions of the guy. Each is checking the other out, seeing if they meet certain criteria.

Further, part of the "traditional" view of dating as ritual is that the man is there to show he can be a good provider, and the woman is there to look attractive so that the man will marry her and have babies.

If you're there because you like each other, or that you like the idea of a relationship developing farther than just having a date, then you are checking each other out for signs that the other may be a good match. The traditional criterion is often used to make those decisions. I believe paying for a meal is just one form of etiquette or politeness that women look to in seeing if a man is worthy of going the next step.

And guys have criterion too. However, the woman's willingness to pay is probably below some other criterion which are more significant to men, such as physical attractiveness.

Uh oh. I'm sounding like a lawyer!!!

David A. Silverstone, Hollywood, Florida

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Agree. I am paying even if my date is Andrea Dworkin or Teresa Heinz Kerry.

If for no other reason, pay if you like this person and want her to like you. From the women I know, and from the stuff I hear my wife and her friends say, if a man is not paying on dates, then it isn't a date and it tells the woman the man does not value her (or he is cheap or has other issues). Doesn't matter how educated/liberal/progressive/wealthy they are. They expect the man to pay and if he doesn't, it's a red flag.

Robert Weiss

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I have no problem paying and accept that if I want to go out then I at least should be prepared to do so, especially when I do the asking. However, it appears this list is not (or at least some caution should be made that it is not) a fair representation of the larger culture.

Nothing against any of you personally, but that old fashioned crap is just that: old fashioned, passé, obsolete.

It made sense in a time when women didn't work commonly and certainly not when they only did menial and clerical duties, paid barely enough to feed themselves, let alone someone else. This case is not that: we're talking about a dentist. If she has a viable practice, these old justifications fall flat.

Where it affects us today is that clearly there are significant pluralities that have values and attitudes informed by, if not complete copies of, those in previous eras. Some women expect old fashioned treatment and more power to 'em. There are plenty who don't ascribe to that way of thinking any more. It is unchanged that money will be a huge potential source of irritation between couples; and it will continue, forever. Further, if couples don't learn to share (especially when they each have their own resources) before they commit to each other, how can it be expected that sharing will magically come after a wedding? Again, we are talking about 2 people who both (presumably) have their own resources.

Now, that's not to say I demand equal sharing, as I said, I am prepared to pay and with my girlfriend, I do pay without hesitation, unless she insists that she pay.

In a hypothetical relationship, however, if there is a question about this kind of thing, then any individual would be well served to consider whether the issue at hand is worth the trouble. If not, then move on and find that person more to your liking. If you think the issue is not so important, then work it out, make a compromise, simply accept it knowing the other benefits of being with that person significantly outweigh the downside. I would certainly suggest talking about any issue that seems important, before deciding to move on, or to stick it out. We all have idiosyncrasies that rub someone the wrong way; money questions are not the only things that people can sometimes find no common ground on.

But to say that there is simply a hard and fast rule of this or that is silly. No such thing. Let the women who expect the man to pay all the time find that man, he is out there for them. And let those willing to share early find each other. They are out there as well.

Frederick Mischler, Dayton, Ohio

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i took an informal survey here in my office. 31 year old single female says alternate, not dutch (too much like friends) 35 year old married female says man pays. my money is my money and his money is my money too. having been married, in actuality, i know she speaks the truth

## THE ANONYMOUS GUY

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Whoever asks the other person out pays. If you ask her out you pay, if she asks you out she pays. If you make the plans together, then you need to discuss going dutch in advance. It is very unmannerly to be on the date, especially if you did the asking, and then ask her to pay any part of it.

That said, when my husband and I were dating, he paid. But that was about 25 years ago.

Marion J. Browning-Baker, Stuttgart, Germany

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All right, I'm speaking here on my own behalf and not as list manager.

The idea that the man pays for date isn't old-fashioned or traditional. It's an attitude that's on the rise among women over the age of 35, when they've finally come to their senses. We were a part of those times when women forked over their share to show that they could, and we learned that it just didn't work. We played ourselves for suckers. And now we've wised up. Women still -- and that includes AV-rated lawyers -- bring home less money than men, women still assume responsibility for birth control, and women still are the only gender birthing babies. The fact remains that, despite changes which have put women on the battlefield and in the firetruck, men have qualities and characteristics not possessed by women. Men still carry the conversational lead. All the legislation in the world isn't going to change that.

That men pay creates a distinction between an outing with buddies and business associates and a relationship which has romance as its goal. It's symbolic of a man's ability to support a woman, even if their financial abilities are even. It's a public transaction, showing the waiter at a restaurant and the ticket-seller at the movie that the couple is in a relationship other than casual friends.

In a dating relationship, as others have mentioned, women can even the financial score by giving boyfriends gifts, and I think that most do. If a man really wants a girlfriend to start paying her own way, then he can commit to or even marry her.

We haven't even addressed whether a man should pay for his date's children's babysitter, a not insignificant expense for many single mothers. (Yes, those who do get extra points.) Nor have we addressed how gay and lesbian couples handle this. (I have not the slightest idea.)

But I really wish someone would help me with my quandary over splitting the bill with casual friends who eat and drink more than I do!

jennifer rose

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Re: your final inquiry:

My best friend and I go through phases where we alternate paying for lunch, and phases where we split the check. When we split the check, we approximate (I always spend less).

When my wife and I are out for dinner with one or more other couples, we always split the check evenly, even though my wife doesn't drink and we usually eat less than others. Typically, each of the husbands takes out plastic and we direct the waiter to split the check evenly. We're out for a social occasion and it's not a time for "you had steak," "how much of that wine did you drink," or "Grey Goose is more expensive than Absolut."

Mark Rubin, Tucson, Arizona

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Eat and drink more. 

Gary F. Witting, Scottsdale, Arizona

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I actually had dinner with 2 people who were then attending Harvard Business School, who actually took out their calculators, estimated the relative portions people had ordered and then tried to allocate the bill pro rata. They ended up arguing vehemently about how much tip (10% or 15%) to leave. The rest of us sat there with our mouths agape. I was busy trying to send back some food (just kidding). Eventually, someone who had had enough, took out her credit card, paid for everything and essentially shot the two students a glare that said, "shut up". She remains my hero to this day.

Gene Lee

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Re: casual friends who eat and drink more than you do:

First an analogy: the hiker asks how to respond to the presence of a bear. The bear expert replies that it depends on the age, sex, condition, and social status of the bear. The hiker often finds this of no use, because these things are not apparent to the hiker.

When dealing with humans, however, we can factor these things in.

Are you the highest status person at the table? Are you in a position to dictate the rules of the transaction, or is someone else? Is this a group of peers? Are the majority of people in the group men (use men rules) or are all or almost all women (use women rules). Is someone promoting equal splitting because we can all clearly afford it and it makes life simpler, with the assumption that there will be other occasions and it all works out in the end? Do you spend less regularly, and by choice, and are you assuming that anyone else notices this?

I find good guidance from the underlying principle that social rules are to make people comfortable and transactions flow easily. If you take on the burden of assessing these more complex situations and maneuvering the results to make people comfortable, you will be respected and welcome, even if people don't really see what you do. This doesn't automatically mean that you pay - you may find others feeling guilty but trapped in the belief the bill has to be split evenly. It just depends on the age, sex, condition, and social status of the bear.

Rebecca K. Wiess

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You're a little confused but closer than you know.

It's homemade soup. It's a retired AF JAG/FBI/Lawyer who comes to my house with his chainsaw to cut, not chop. Ron and I split, I stack. Warren eats two or three bowls of soup. Fave is beef barley, but he'll stick his face into anything in a bowl on my table.

The former Marines are my bar rat friends. Because that's where I go, I must also be a bar rat in this instance. They're a good bunch.

PS: I've never seen a buncha guys run chainsaws after drinking beer. (Here, hold my beer and watch this. I saw it in a cartoon once but I'm purty sure I can do it.) What I do know is I'M NOT CLEANING THAT UP!

CJ Stevens, Montana

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I find this thread amusing because, as I thought of it, I don't think I've paid for more than a dozen or so dates in my life. My rule of thumb is that if a girl is into me, the 'is it a date' question doesn't matter because meeting for happy hour constitutes a date in her mind. Then if you buy her drinks, it's only to send the message "I'm trying to get you drunk."

Also, my take is that if a girl specifically expects a guy to pay it either means she's high maintenance or she's going out with the guy as a concession because her other alternative is to stay home and watch "Sex in the City". But, if it truly is a "date", as in "please accompany me to dinner and the theatre" (I shall pick you up at 8 as my wig is being powdered at 7), then whoever asked should probably pay (unless of course the date is with a stripper, because you always make them pay).

Tom Appelbaum

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jenn, you are sort of begging for a political discussion here.

Most decent economic studies have found that once you account for voluntary absences from the workplace and absences related to childbirth and child care, and moves or changes in employment which women routinely do to accommodate their husband's careers or the care of parents,

women earn just as much as men do. The wage gap is NOT a result of anatomy or prejudice over anatomy.

Jes Beard, Tennessee

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1. IMHO, ambushing someone about paying for part of the date, halfway through the date, was improper. If you want someone to pay for all or part of the date, said expectation should be made clear *\*before\** the date, not during, especially a female someone over say 40 in our culture. That's my opinion.

1a. Realistically, what if she left her checkbook at home? What if her card is maxed out? Some women carry mighty small purses on dates. I had a friend who put \$5 dollars in "mad money" in her purse. It was all the cash she ever carried on dates. It was for the taxi if she got "mad" at her date (i.e., her date stepped over the line). Obviously, this was back when \$5 would get you a cab, and women didn't carry credit cards. Personally, I don't carry credit cards, so it's a question of "What's in my wallet?" which might not be enough without warning.

1b. On the other hand, the whiny email was just that--whiny. Plus cheap. Plus cowardly. Such a concern would have been better addressed in person, over coffee and desert, and she should have paid for same. So we have two wrongs here, which have sort of balanced out.

1c. I might also add, unsolicited, that asking "where do you see this relationship going" after only three dates seems a bit much. Especially for an email. But that's a personal observation, not based on where your relationship actually is at this point.

2. IMHO, women should pay some of the time, and men should pay some of the time. Which time is which is the question, and there is no bright line, sadly.

2a. The chooser or suggestor of the activity would pay, therefore the man who suggested dinner and a movie would pay for both, whereas a woman who suggested a movie after the dinner would pay for the tickets (and choose the feature, she might very well prefer "16 Blocks").

2b. In general, the asker pays. You ask, you pay. She asks, she pays. "But she won't ask," you say? Then you pay. If she doesn't value you enough to ask after a few dates, then that tells you something (not necessarily that she isn't interested, either).

This particular theory leaves much to be desired with the over 40 crowd, however, as many women over 40 would never consider asking, or paying. Good girls don't, you know. Or at least, didn't when I was a girl.

It would take a very secure woman, or a very experienced dater, I would think, to be willing to be the asker before more than, say, 7-10 dates, where she was not an active chooser (see below).

2c. I am of the opinion that the person in the best position financially to

pay should pay in most circumstances. In general, even in our culture, that is usually the man.

2ci. Keep in mind, when dealing with a "professional woman" you are often but not always dealing with a woman who actually went back to school and got her degree after age 35, paying her own way rather than the M&D scholarship, and is not nearly as "established" as a male professional of the same age.

2cii. If you are dealing with a single parent, in most cases custodial single parents (and particularly female ones) have many fewer monetary resources than non-custodial single parents, and in general, women would begrudge spending those monetary resources on themselves (or you!) when there are shoes to be bought.

2ciii. I agree that if the woman is dating jail bait, she would pay under this rule, as theoretically she would be the asker and have more resources.

2d. There is some woman whose name escapes me who now owns a large corporation who is of the opinion that if she marries a rich man (which she has), he should pay for the house, the cars, the kids' education, and the entertainment, simply because of the two of them, he has far more resources than she does, even though she now has ample resources of her own.

Her theory was that the person whose resources will be least impaired should be the one footing the bills. Equal impairment means equal payment, unequal impairment means unequal payment, off the charts means that partner with the riches carries the entire load. Furthermore, the person who values the activity more pays--if I want to go to England on business, and you go along for the ride, I pay.

I don't see anything in the least wrong with this theory, especially as large differences in income mean large differences in living style (if you make \$20,000 a year, you eat at McDonald's once a week, not Chili's daily, and someone making \$2,000,000 eats at Chez Louis'--to expect the person making \$20,000 to pay for that is ridiculous).

2e. Another woman who has written on this issue states that the spending of money, particularly by wealthy persons, is one way of showing real interest (or "care" or "love" or "respect" or whatever you want to call it). And that some women perceive the spending of money upon them as "interest." Therefore, paying the entire tab for a vacation would show that you value you someone you are dating, whereas dutch would prove you to be one cheap b\*\*\*\*\*d. Better to pay for an entire night at the theatre, than go dutch to the Caribbean with such a woman.

2f. Assuming you had the resources. No woman that I am aware of thinks of overspending your personal resources as a sign of anything but stupidity. Now, there are women beyond the asset range of most men. That's another issue entirely, which I am not competent to address.

2g. Personally, I'm looking for your time, but all kinds of resources make the world go 'round. Money is one resource you have to spend. This is a resource your particular date valued. Time is another resource.



Knowledge/originality is a third. Humor is a fourth.

My point being, differing understandings of what constitutes interest abound in the dating world. You are concerned that she values your money too highly. She is concerned that you don't value her highly enough to pay. I say, take her on some less expensive dates, and pay full freight. Then, you aren't overtaxing your resources, which she will see as smart, but she will still see that you value her enough to be the payer.

3. There are some women who earnestly believe that men who do not pay are not serious about dating them. Also, that the harder or more expensive it is to date her, the more valuable (ergo marriageable) she is perceived to be. Since I know men who believe this too (whether they admit it to themselves or not), I understand where this belief comes from. This belief is often ingrained, and not something they (men or women) are aware of consciously.

3a. Some women believe that any man who wants to go dutch is just looking for sex at the least expense (and given the way some men act after a first date, this belief might be warranted). Insisting that the man pays weeds out the very worst offenders, and at least ensures that if she is wasting her time dating such a loser, she's only out her time, and not her money. If he is such a loser, he should be out his money.

4. I am confused about where the attitude comes from that professional women with their own resources *\*should\** pay their own way, but women who are too stupid to develop their own resources should be exempt. Either women should pay, or they shouldn't, and resources or the lack thereof should not enter into the equation (it doesn't for men).

4a. Resources, or the lack thereof, *\*would\** enter into consideration of how often one would be expected to pay, or how extravagant the entertainments would be. A person making \$25,000 as a teacher would not be expected to pony up for final four tickets, but a picnic at the botanical gardens is nicer anyway. Again, this enters the territory of who has more resources, and how those resources are deployed--if the teacher's father is Red McCombs, final four box seats might be part of the package.

5. I would no sooner expect a man to pay for my child care than I would expect him to pay for my jewelry. That is, the only time it is appropriate to expect one, is when I already expect the other. Even so, if it is some other male's child, I'm unclear that I would ever consider it an appropriate expectation unless there were extenuating circumstances.

5a. As the datee in a situation, I would expect to pay for my own clothing, sun block, and secondary expenses (child care, car fare, etc). Primary expenses occasioned by the date, such as a rented helmet, rappelling gear, scuba equipment, theatre tickets, etc., would be borne by the dater (as the chooser of the activity).

5b. Most women in this world do not actively choose. They do not actively choose where to go to school (or even *\*to\** go to school). They drift into a profession or a job (and sometimes, yes, even a marriage). They do not actively choose whom they date. They do not actively choose where to go. This is cultural--even in the seventies and eighties (and

probably today), the clear, clear, CLEAR message was that girls who made choices about who they dated, rather than waiting to be chosen, were forward, loose, less desirable, not smart.

Women who do not actively choose wait by the phone to be chosen, and frankly, most men prefer to \*BE\* the chooser, the chaser, the hunter.


This means, as a practical matter, that in most cases, you will be the chooser, and therefore, under the rules above, also the payer. If this bothers you, you have to look for women who choose. They are not common birds (no brickbats, please), and are frequently camouflaged to avoid social censure (yes, it still exists).

6. As to jjrose's question, my answer, on the one occasion it happened to me, was to state that I did not drink \*any\* of the bottles of \$140 dollar wine or have the steaks the men had, and would therefore prefer to pay my \$30 tab (with tip) without splitting the tab. This pulled it up right and proper, and the persons who actually incurred the expenses (and were on expense accounts to boot) paid their share.

Please note, I did not fuss over pennies, nor am I given to, but I was not going to pay \$100 for my \$20 meal, either. It literally did not occur to the dunderheads I was sitting with that some of us a) weren't on expense accounts; and b) didn't spend \$150 on a meal as a matter of course.

I frequently see this problem, because I do not drink, yet am in a profession full of drinkers who add alcohol to the tab as a matter of course. Most of the time, they recognize the issue themselves, and I don't have to bring it up. Often, my meal gets picked up as part of the split, and all of my cash (plus some) goes to the tip. Mostly, though, I hang out with other solos, and we split the bill and tip accordingly.

One thing I have found, is that many attorneys are very miserly tippers, and I \*do\* often find myself laying extra cash on the table (especially if there were a lot of us) because of a clear undertip. The worst offenders are groups of Big Law attorneys (either gender) and groups of male prosecutors or judges. And my mother, but she's not an attorney.

At any rate, this is one of those situations where speaking up resolves the problem, and not speaking up will leave you to stew. You get to be the chooser. 

Becki Fahle, San Antonio, Texas

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See, this is a perfect example of being educated beyond the point of usefulness. No school can teach book-larned folk how to behave in decent company.

CJ Stevens, Montana

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Interesting. I have a 34 year old friend from Switzerland. She told me the

man should ALWAYS pay no matter who invited, no matter what the relationship (she is married) and no matter who has more money. I wondered, to myself, if that is a European thing, then again maybe it makes a difference that she is VERY attractive.

Veronica Schnidrig

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WOW, the great Becki Fahle returns in fine form! Maybe it's just me but I haven't seen Becki post for awhile. It's great to have you back!

Gene Lee

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I always figure if I go with a group I'm probably going to be paying the "cost" of being with the group, even when more than my share. However, the group member who pipes up and says, "Jennifer only had ice water and a side salad so hers should be less" should be praised and invited often. Reminds me of an old SNL skit with "Father Guido Sarducci" where he tells that they discovered the check for "the last breakfast." There were 12 orders for steak & eggs and one for toast and coffee, but from the math on the back it was obvious the bill got split evenly 13 ways. "There's a lesson to-a be-a learn-ud here," says Father Sarducci. "If you go out with a group, be sure to order the mosta expensive-a thing on a tha menu, or your-a gonna get stuck payin' for everybody else's steak & eggs." Sally Moore, 3L, Virginia Beach, Virginia

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Be careful with "business" meals. I was asked, by a colleague, to talk with a Frenchman who was trying to establish his insurance annuity business in the US. The idea was that I could give him casual legal advice, not case specific, just ideas about things to be aware of. We met in Paris and, after waiting for him for an hour, I had a salad while he extolled the virtues of his company. Not once did he ask a legal question.

At the end, in a too casual manner, I said that we could meet for dinner if he was ever in Chicago. He followed up on it and threw a fit when I expected him to pay for the meal. My thought was that I was available for "free" legal advice, so that he should pay. He thought that I had "invited" him and was interested in learning about his business. I ended up paying to avoid problems with the restaurant (it wasn't their fault). Lynne Ostfeld

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Here is some fodder for light conversation on, say, the next date. Is that too early?

Love & Money

Nine questions partners should ask each other before getting married

By JEFF D. OPDYKE WALL STREET JOURNAL March 27, 2006; Page R1 [snip]

Rob Robertson, Texas

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Is there something newer than a calculator? Other than, say, a PDA with a CALCULATOR, or a cell phone with a CALCULATOR?? Doesn't everybody always have a calculator with them? Any lawyer who can calculate sums in his head is somewhat unique in our field. I've seen whole rooms of lawyers freeze like deer in headlights when asked to calculate simple arithmetic. Sally Moore, 3L, Virginia Beach, Virginia

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Come up North sometime:)) I do it all the time. I guess I am calculator-challenged, or whatever the PC term is:)) And I have always been able to calculate in my head quickly and accurately. I do admit age is finally slowing me down:((

Alan P. Bernstein

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and I thought various handhelds had replaced pure calculators by know. Perhaps it is mere terminology. For example, I had a client with the largest music store in the metro area. I repeatedly showed my age by referring to it as a "record" store:))

Sally Jean Moore

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I can. It's easy if you go backwards and chunk things (split sums to be multiplied into easy components, multiply those, add the results).

Mike Koenecke, Richardson, Texas

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In Japan, things are a tad easier, in that there is no tipping and groups usually divide the total sum by the number of participants and each one pays that result.

Ernest Schaal, Japan

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For someone like me, that is a really bad deal since I don't drink alcohol at all.

Veronica Schnidrig

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Part of the reason why the Japanese do often split the bill in parts is that usually everyone drinks and everyone is sampling each other's food, especially at bar/restaurants. For instance, you might order yakitori (skewers of chicken) and get only two of the five pieces on the plate.

If you tend all to eat your own food, another possibility is to ask the waiter or waitress to split the bill according to who ordered what. I haven't tried that yet, but I am told that restaurants will do it willingly.

A third option, which I saw in one computer group outing, was to do a separate calculation for those who drank and those who did not.

Ernest Schaal, Japan

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I think it is funny and interesting how times have changed. When I was in college in the early 80's walking around with a calculator, especially attached to the belt was the epitome of "nerd". Now, you are a freak if you *\*don't\** have some gadget or other attached to you some how (along with attendant body piercings, etc.), with some other parts hanging from your ears, etc. I know it's different now, but it's still funny.

Regarding head calculation, back then I was in engineering school and had a contest with a room mate where I said I could divide a 3-4 digit number by a 2 digit number to 3 decimal places in less time then he could punch it into a calculator.

I won every time, but I can't do that now. It all comes down to practice and recognizing the shortcuts, like Mike mentions below.

Frederick Mischler, Dayton, Ohio

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T'Hell, I still gots my slide rules.

Back in law school, our Torts professor told us to bring a calculator to the final exam; because we were going to be calculating damages. Everybody else showed up with calculators, I showed up with the slipstick, and the proctor just walked over, picked it up, looked at it, made a face, and walked away.

Ronald A. Jones, Florida

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You all seem to have very forgiving friends. When I go out with a group, there are always two or more (females usually) who are writing initials next to items on the bills and whipping their calculators or their purses.

Jon Egan

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What a retro group. I admit I do not remember knowingly even seeing a

woman who had a calculator in her purse in years, much less use it at a restaurant. I admit people I know realize that if they want I can calculate the bill in my head faster than they can with a calculator, but... A calculator???

Alan P. Bernstein

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Yup. A Bronx Tale. Love that movie. And I always unlock the door unless it is an SUV. I draw the line when one needs gymnastic skills in order to be polite.

Tanya Robinson

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The fact that she used e-mail just indicates fear to me. A desire to avoid face to face confrontation in a sensitive situation. I give her points for being straightforward and letting Peter know what she was thinking rather than just letting it fester. I give Peter points because obviously he has been open & communicative enough for her to feel that she could discuss this with him.

Tanya Robinson

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Here is a dilemma that is sure to confuse you guys. Yes, I have come out strongly on the side of the male paying. But... I have a male friend who says he is "Old-fashioned" and every time we go out he insists on paying for me (and any other woman in our group). I've known him for years. He has always done this. It bugs me because we are not romantically involved and I don't think he should pay for everything I eat and drink. I suspect that this must factor into how frequently I'm invited to go out with him. We almost always hang out as group). I know that having to pay for someone every time I saw them would be a factor for me if that person was not a romantic partner. Heck, there are relatives who never see me for that reason! I really enjoy hanging with him and the group and I'd prefer to pay my own way - especially if it meant we got to hang out more. Yes, I have mentioned this to him. He stubbornly stated that any woman who is with him when he is socializing will never pay for anything! OK. But I don't see why. Tanya Robinson

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That's very sweet! Sally Moore

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...because that's just the way it works. Sometimes, people just enjoy being generous. Accept it for what it is. In my not so humble opinion all of this discussion is hogwash. Men buy...unless of course the woman is using the guy, then all bets are off. But to ask any woman to pay, is a sure fire way to blow the relationship.

I mean, if a man were out drinking with the boys, would he ask his pals what the order of who was buying the round? No. Everyone buys a round and if a guy has alligator arms, he doesn't get invited out again. Real simple rules.

Steven Satter

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Send him a gift. Something that won't be misinterpreted like an Audible.com subscription with a note that says "since you won't let me pay for dinner" or a gift certificate to a local restaurant with a note that says "You can't keep me from paying this way." You'll both feel good about it.

Jim Calloway, Oklahoma

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Good suggestion Jim. Thanks Can't believe I didn't think of that myself - especially since I just said I had done something similar with a man I used to date.

Tanya Robinson

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A one word answer - Chivalry. It is not dead, but it is not appreciated by many.

Gary F. Witting, Scottsdale, Arizona

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This topic got a lot of responses. Ladies, maybe I should announce that I'm available and we could see how all these theories work in actual practice.

Tom Mattiacci

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Are you going to pay???

Veronica Schnidrig

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I have to weigh in here because I am behind in my Solosez reading, and I am shocked that there isn't a single female on this list who mentioned the effect of the women's liberation movement on their attitudes.

Now, I am 46, and I never assumed anyone was ever going to pay my way for anything. I admit, I have been married for over 23 years, and before that, nobody actually dated anyway. I even thought it was ridiculous for my husband to consider buying me an engagement ring, because we were broke, and I wasn't going to be buying him anything.

If someone invites me to be their guest, they should pay. I frequently invite others for coffee or lunch, and if I am the more "senior" person, I pay.

I have never thought my husband should pay for me, since our money comes from the same account. In fact, I usually have cash and he never has any.

As far as business dinners are concerned, I attend at least two per month minimum. If the check is being split, I usually get "burned," because I eat less and drink less than most of the people I know. I just consider it part of the cost of professional networking. I do wish people would offer to subsidize the bill on occasion if they are drinking single malt scotch, but it is not worth it to even raise the issue in a professional situation.

I had no idea I was such an anomaly, but I have never based my feelings about someone on whether they offered to pay or not. Of course it's nice to be treated by someone else, but then I also feel that I should offer on occasion.

I guess we lefty liberals in the northeast really are different from the rest of the country!

Go Stephanie!

Andrea Goldman, Newton, Massachusetts

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Andrea

I am a righty conservative on the west coast and I agree with you ( on this subject anyway)

Lew Wiener

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I will defer to NO ONE in my lefty-liberalism, and I STILL say, if he invites, he pays, and whenever we go out, wherever we go, and whoever suggested it, my Husband pays - even if the whole family (all eight of us including grandchildren (so far) invites HIM out to celebrate his birthday.

In my days of high school and college dating, (we're talking the 50's - pre women's liberation) the issue of how to pay for a date was a frequent subject in the advice columns of women's and girls' magazines.

One was advised to invite the gentleman out for a date to a movie or the theatre, buy the tickets in advance, and then discreetly pass them to him before one entered the theatre.

If the lady invited a gentleman out for dinner, she would make clear in her invitation that she was paying by saying, "Will you be my guest for dinner on Saturday night?" That way, there was no confusion whatsoever.



In those days before ubiquitous credit cards, there was even a polite way to pay without embarrassing the gentleman. (In those days, he was presumed to be embarrassed if she paid for him) AFTER both people had ordered everything they were going to eat, the lady would excuse herself (supposedly to go to the ladies' room), locate the Maitre d', and settle up on the bill and tip AWAY from the table. Her date would never even see the check.

In order to assure that her date didn't order something way out of her price range, the lady would say something like, "I understand that the surf 'n turf is really good here - naming the most expensive item she could afford. He was supposed to pick up on her cue and order nothing more expensive than that.

It is amusing now to remember the gentle ballet we danced to be sensitive to each other's feelings! It was excellent practice for marriage - the dance continues!

Jo Fray, Massachusetts

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Whoa! sounds like a freakin' bridge bid process . . . .

Frederick Mischler, Dayton, Ohio

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As an intellectual discussion, this has been fascinating. And, as someone who "gets to pay," it sometimes bugs me. Especially when she makes more than I do. However, when you get to the basics, I think that it's a law of biology. Women get pregnant, men don't. When you intellectualize it, woman who found men willing to provide survived. Those who didn't reproduce or survive. It is ingrained. Saying that it ought to be the other way is like saying that real property ought to sell for what you need to get, not what someone is willing to pay for it.

Marc S. Stern, Seattle, Washington

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Well I always let anyone pay for me if I can possible wangle it because I am cheap and shameless.

Jimmy Verner, Texas

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Just catching up on my Solosez, so this is actually a response to the earlier question about a group of people going out. My husband and I don't drink much, and we were going out with a group of couples who would do the drinks before dinner, the drinks during dinner, after dinner brandy, etc. It felt even more awkward not wanting to split it evenly by couple, so our bill would frequently be over \$150, exclusive of tip, for 2 dinners, 2 glasses of wine, a shared appetizer and coffee. We finally just stopped

going out with these couples.

What do any of you do when you go out with a group of couples?

Madeleine Butterfield Bass, Providence, Rhode Island

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My wife and I and two other couples have had season tickets for the San Francisco Symphony for over 30 years. We usually all go out to dinner together before the symphony. My wife doesn't drink and I limit myself to one drink before the symphony or else I will fall asleep .The others drink more. When we go out alone because either we or they changed tickets to a different performance our dinner usually runs about \$70.00 - if we go with them it is about \$100.00.(in part because of the drinks and in part because people seem to order more expensive items when everything is split) The couple that drinks the most has on occasion offered to pay more but we always turn them down. They are actually a very generous and delightful couple and when he and I go out for lunch or drinks he has picked up a lot more tabs than I have so I don't mind splitting the dinner bill- although I must admit that there have been occasions when I was feeling tight and wished that we didn't have tickets on the same night as them so we could get off cheaper- but those occasions are really quite few in the 30 plus years we have been doing this.

I don't know who is ahead or behind in this deal over the years- but I certainly don't feel I am being taken advantage of.

Perhaps I have been lucky but the people with whom I associate have typically been fair- there have been occasions with others when persons or couples have had bills that were substantially higher than ours have throwing extra money ( usually over my protest).- and on those few occasions when our bill is substantially higher than others I will throw in something extra.

Lew Wiener, Corte Madera, California

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Now this discussion is almost more interesting than the one that spawned it. And I find it interesting how many people comment, even perchance complain, about having to split bills with friends. I am not criticizing, I have been there myself on all sides before. I am not, though, a particular cheap ass, but in the end, I do believe people need to be responsible for themselves. (I am also a CPA, so calculations and numbers are "fun" whoooo wheeeee)

Where this matters here, is that most here commented about paying for others' drinks. I say, to hell with that, and you should each feel completely in the right to say so with people you consider to be friends.

I enjoy a good beer or whiskey now and then, so I am not talking temperance (Though my girlfriend is a professor at a Methodist seminary, which denomination is the source of much of the temperance movement in US history. She and I share a particular interest in dark beers, so a trip to a

local ale festival was one of our first dates).

I am also a person who has been affected by alcoholism, not my own. After a bit of reflection on the posts in this thread, it occurred to me that if I found myself with friends who in my estimation had consumed a greater portion of the tab value and much of that was from drinks, I would feel no reluctance to say, "I am sorry, I certainly would like to ease the division of the tab, but I am not going to pay for your alcohol."

I imagined such situations as described by several posts were invitations to encourage drinking, either to get others to pay for yours or to increase your own simply to even the tab. Neither case is a tenable situation in my view.

If something like refusing to pay for drinks became an issue between me and some friends, then I certainly have other friends to spend time with.


Frederick Mischler, Dayton, Ohio

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You wouldn't happen to be related to an Ed Mischler (ex-cop, ex-truck driver)? Ed was a good friend of mine at one time, but I haven't heard from him in quite a while. I agree with your sentiments regarding splitting 50/50 when the benefits received were not 50/50. On the other hand, if I am socializing with someone, I would not value logic and fairness over friendship and graciousness. If someone were to continually take advantage of my gracious nature, I may reassess the value of the relationship, but I would never make an issue of whether the tab was properly apportioned.

D.A. "Duke" Drouillard

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Don't know any Eds in the family. I thought Mischler was a fairly rare name, but as time goes, more and more people seem to ask this kind of question (not particularly about Ed, however.) 

I agree with you that friends deserve a greater level of respect and latitude. Difficult thing with this kind of issue. Friends are the ones for whom you are willing to fudge a bit on the tab, and they are also the ones with whom you should feel comfortable raising somewhat sticky issues.

I guess I was responding to the expressed frustration with always paying more than one's fair share and recognizing this was usually caused by the drinking habits of the companions. I have a fairly absolutist approach when it concerns issues of alcohol. I don't want to be someone's enabler . . .

Frederick Mischler, Dayton, Ohio

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I never thought this a big problem, I admit. Is it that many of my friends are Jewish and traditionally drinking is not a big deal? Anyway, splitting a

bill was always ok with me, even though I drink very little. Friends never took advantage and there was one couple who always asked for a separate bar bill, which they paid. It was never a problem for a restaurant to do this. If it had been, I guess we would have adjusted for it if we wished, but no one ever thought to raise the issue.

Alan P. Bernstein

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....in the splitting of the bill context, I've always looked at it this way. As between friends, there is usually a "floating" \$100. In other words, sometimes I pay more, sometimes they pay more and as long as there is that give and take, I have no problem paying more. On the occasion that my wife and I are the big offenders, I'll pick up the bill to avoid any weird feelings....

...I've never been stiffed yet, oh, except for once in law school....

That guy paid for it for the remaining two years. I was an older student and had more disposable income. So, instead of drinking the house special pitchers, I would order good beer and everyone would kick in what they had or I would pick it up. Well, long story short, late into our second semester, my wife was down visiting and one Saturday night we picked up the beer tab. After leaving that bar, we went to another bar. One of the guys who drank for free all night, on my wife's generosity, then ordered himself a beer and didn't offer to buy my wife a drink. I asked him about it when he came back with only his drink. His response was that he only had enough money to buy himself a drink. For the next two years, whenever we went out and I would pick up the tab, I would tell the bartender that I was buying for everyone .....except for him and I would point to him.

Steve Satter

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Actually, I am not particularly concerned about splitting the bill with friends (actually, if we are going out with friends, we normally pass the bill around, everyone puts in what they think they owe, and then someone makes sure there is enough to cover the bill plus a tip -- rarely have a problem). The times I get annoyed is when I am at a semi-business type dinner - not with a client (e.g. we go out with a group of other attorneys who have all been at the same bar program) and there are some who eat and drink more than others, but think that the bill should be split equally.

Lisa A. Runquist, Los Angeles, California

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I went to school with that guy, too. He's the kind of guy who winds up prosecuting deportees - which he does. We solved it by going out to decent restaurant, racking up a tab, and all getting up and leaving him and his finance alone at the table. Good times!

Justin Andrus

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Well, you could call it a "bridge bid process." My term was a ballet. Actually, we used to call it "manners" or "etiquette." On the other hand, you may have hit on something: I studied ballet; my husband is a superb bridge player (even accumulated some master points) and got his varsity letter in high school for playing chess. So, ballet, bridge, chess, the idea is that one thinks ahead about how to make the other person comfortable and happy. I don't think I would ever have married a man who got stuck on the issue of "who pays."

But then, perhaps getting married is not the objective in today's dating . . .  
. . . Things certainly have changed.


Jo Fray, Massachusetts

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Does anyone have a silver bullet, or some garlic, or a wooden stake, so that we can put this thread to rest? Anyone . . . help . . . please help . . .

Andrew Calvelli

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Darn; I recently sold the last of those items on eBay.  But if you're using MS Outlook, you can use the Rules Wizard to send all emails containing the above subject header to permanent deletion.

Susan K. Ashabraner, Fullerton, California

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I have an even better method - I simply haven't read 90% or so of the posts. I'm just quite amazed at the staying power of this particular thread. It's a thread on 'roids, it's from the same producers who brought us "The Guests that Wouldn't Leave".

Wish I'd known of your eBay sale, I would have bought your stake and drove it right through the heart of this thread.

P.S. As I've now (apparently) been officially drawn into this thread, I might as well throw my hat in the ring: the answer is that the man pays, unless the lady offers to pay, in which case the man says, "no, that's fine thank you", in which case if the lady then says "no, I insist", then, and only then, does the man relent and allow the lady to pay.

Seems pretty simple to me.

OK, still searching for a silver bullet, garlic, or your former wooden stake

Please. . . help . . . someone . . . help. . .

Very Truly Yours,

Andrew M. Calvelli, Wayne, Pennsylvania

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