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LOWER





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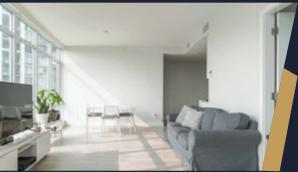


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DOLLARS & SENSE

Love on a Shoestring

by Danielle Robbertze

Valentine's Day can be expensive. We would all like to give our partner the world to show our appreciation, especially on the day dedicated to love. But that is not always possible. Valentine's Day is said to be the fifth largest consumer spending event in the world. It is estimated that \$25.9 billion (USD) was spent on Valentine's Day in 2023!

There are a few ways in which you can show your love without breaking the bank. Firstly, it would probably be wise to ask your partner what they would like for Valentine's Day. This may take away the surprise element of the day, but you could be surprised about what they want and how cost-effective it could be. Often you will see that all they want is some quality time. So set up a movie night at home or a lovely homecooked dinner. It is often the romantic gestures that count more than a diamond necklace or bouquet of roses.

Valentine's Day on a budget is a time to think creatively. Test out those DIY skills. You never know how much a handcrafted gift could mean to a loved one. Check out ideas online on how to make the perfect gift. You could make a special collage or photo album of all your favourite moments together. As cheesy as it might seem, you can never go wrong with a heartfelt love letter, one that your partner will cherish for years to come.

It is important to set a budget for your self and your partner. This way you do not create too high of expectations for yourself or your partner. Plan ahead and plan together. The day is dedicated to spending time together so why not put in some money together to do something truly special like a weekend getaway or a romantic dinner at a swanky restaurant.

Consider celebrating the weekend after February 14, that way you and your partner can score some great deals with marked off items. This may seem unconventional, but it could be more special to set out your own Valentine's Day, away from the hustle and the bustle of the actual day.

There are so many ways in which you can save money on Valentine's Day whilst still expressing your love. Take away the pressure and expectations of stereotypical gifts and set your own path to celebrate this day. A path as unique as your relationship and love for your partner. Love is not chocolates, roses, or jewellery. True love is being with one another and cherishing that person for everything they are, flaws and all.

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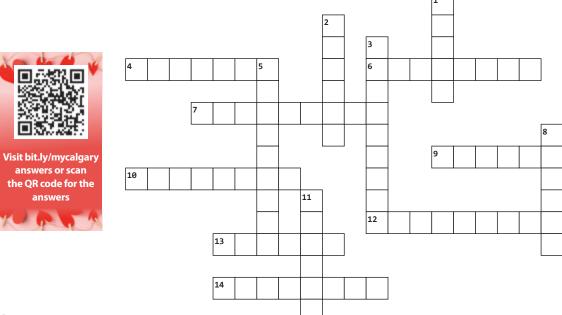
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February Crossword



Across

- 4. This historical fiction novel was released on February 10, 2009, and made into a major motion picture starring Viola Davis, Octavia Spencer, and Emma Stone.
- 6. A ring made with this birthstone had a carved image of Cupid and is said to be worn by St. Valentine.
- 7. This American painter, well-known for his artwork "American Gothic" was born on February 13, 1891.
- 9. On February 15, 1965, this country officially received its flag, 100 years after becoming a country.
- 10. Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir won gold in this category in February 2010 at the Vancouver Winter Olympics.
- 12. This well-known annual league championship takes place every year on the second Sunday in February. It will be played on February 11 at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas this year.
- 13. The official flower that represents birthdays in February.
- 14. The popular heart-shaped candies with cute messages were originally used as

Down

- 1. This dwarf planet was discovered on February 18, 1930, and was named by 11-year-old, Venetia Burney.
- 2. February 10, 2024, marks the beginning of the Year of the
- 3. This festival, which takes place on the same day as Shrove Tuesday, celebrates the end of the pre-Lenten season with colourful masks and parades.
- 5. Released in February 1940, this Disney motion picture featuring the beloved character Figaro, was the first animated feature to win a competitive Academy Award.
- 8. In 1990, the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Helen Hunley, introduced this day to celebrate and honour loved ones.
- 11. Abel Makkonen Tesfaye, better known as The _____, was born on February 16, 1990, in Scarborough.

Seven Key Things to Make Your Relationship Work

by Nancy Bergeron, R.Psych. | info@nancybergeron.ca



What can you do to create a lasting relationship? Get a copy of John Gottman's *Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. Below is a sneak peek:

Enhance your love maps. Happy couples are very familiar with their partner's world. According to Gottman, these couples have "a richly detailed love map — my term for that part of your brain where you store all the relevant information about your partner's life." You know everything from your partner's favourite movies to what's currently stressing them out, you know some of their life dreams, and they know yours.

Nurture fondness and admiration. Happy couples respect each other and have a general positive view of each other. Fondness and admiration are two of the most important elements in a satisfying and long-term relationship. If these elements are completely missing, the marriage can't be saved. A helpful activity to remind couples of the partner they fell in love with is called "I appreciate." List three or more of their partner's positive characteristics along with an incident that illustrates each quality. Then read your lists to each other.

Turn toward each other. Romance isn't a Caribbean cruise, an expensive meal, or a lavish gift. Rather, romance lives and thrives in the everyday, little things. "Real-life romance is kept alive each time you let your partner know they are valued during the grind of everyday life." For instance, romance is leaving an encouraging text for your partner when you know they are having a bad day. Or romance is when you are running late but take a few minutes to listen to your partner's bad dream and saying that you'll discuss it later (instead of saying "I don't have time"). This might seem boring but turning toward each other in these ways is the basis for connection and passion. Couples that turn toward each other have more in their "emotional bank account." This account distinguishes happy marriages from miserable ones. Happy couples have more goodwill and positivity stored in their bank accounts, so when rough times hit, their emotional savings cushions conflicts and stressors.

Let your partner influence you. Happy couples are a team that considers each other's perspective and feelings. They make decisions together and search out common ground. Letting your partner influence you isn't about

having one person hold the reins, it's about honouring and respecting both people in the relationship.

Solve your solvable problems. There are two types of marital problems: conflicts that can be resolved and perpetual problems that can't. It's important for couples to determine which ones are which. According to Gottman, "One way to identify solvable problems is that they seem less painful, gut-wrenching, or intense than perpetual, gridlocked ones." Solvable problems are situational, and there's no underlying conflict. Gottman devised a five-step model for resolving these conflicts that can be found in his book.

Overcome gridlock. The goal with perpetual problems is for couples to "move from gridlock to dialogue." What usually underlies gridlock is unfulfilled dreams. "Gridlock is a sign that you have dreams for your life that aren't being addressed or respected by each other." Happy couples believe in the importance of helping each other realize their dreams. The first step in overcoming gridlock is to determine the dream or dreams that are causing your conflict. The next steps include talking to each other about your dreams, taking a break (since some of these talks can get stressful), and making peace with the problem. "The goal is to declaw' the issue, to try to remove the hurt so the problem stops being a source of great pain."

Create shared meaning. "Marriage isn't just about raising kids, splitting chores, and making love. It can also have a spiritual dimension that has to do with creating an inner life together. A culture rich with rituals, and an appreciation for your roles and goals that link you, that lead you to understand what it means to be a part of the family you have become." And that's what it means to develop shared meaning. Happy couples create a family culture that includes both of their dreams. Being open to each other's perspectives and opinions, happy couples naturally come together.

Bonus: Intentional date nights. If you struggle with ideas for date nights, grab a copy of Gottman's *Eight Dates*. Being intentional about having regular date nights is an important factor to continued connection.

If you need some help along the way, look for a level three trained Gottman therapist to keep you accountable and help your relationship thrive.



Eggplant and **Sundried Tomato Pasta**



by Jennifer Puri

Simple, healthy, delicious eggplants, also referred to as aubergines or brinjals are used in the cuisines of many countries around the world, especially in China (Sichuan Eggplant) and India (baingan bharta).

Glossy, purple, green, or white in colour, the eggplant is a member of the nightshade family and has white flesh and small edible seeds. Due to its "meaty" texture it is sometimes used as a meat substitute in vegan and vegetarian dishes.

Eggplants are a high fibre, low-calorie food rich in nutrients and vitamins, which can help control blood sugar and aid in weight loss. Antioxidants such as lutein, which may help prevent age-related macular degeneration and zeaxanthin, along with natural plant chemicals called polyphenols are also present.

There are many tasty ways to eat eggplant as it can be steamed, stir fried, roasted, stewed, curried, pickled, or added to pasta noodles with whipped ricotta cheese

and sundried tomatoes as shown in the recipe below.

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Servings: 3 to 4



Ingredients:

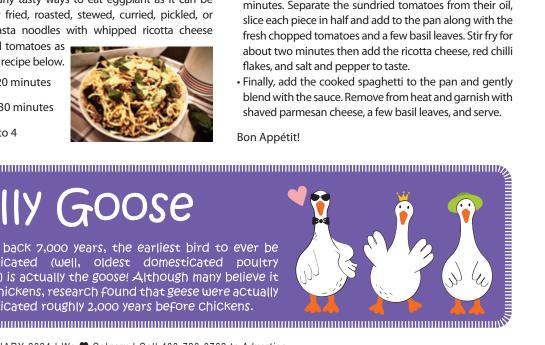
- 1 large eggplant
- 2 small shallots, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 small jar oil packed sundried tomatoes
- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 500 g cooked spaghetti (al dente)
- 1 cup whipped ricotta cheese
- ½ cup fresh basil leaves
- 2 medium sized tomatoes chopped
- Salt to taste
- Black pepper to taste
- 1 tsp red chilli flakes
- 1 cup shaved parmesan cheese

Directions:

- Heat oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Arrange eggplant slices on a foil lined baking tray. Brush each slice with a little olive oil and then flip over and repeat. Place the tray on the middle rack of the oven and bake for about 20 minutes or until eggplant slices turn a light brown. Remove tray from oven and set aside.
- Add 2 tbsp of olive oil, chopped shallots, and garlic to a large frying pan and sauté on medium heat for two minutes. Separate the sundried tomatoes from their oil. slice each piece in half and add to the pan along with the

Silly Goose

Dating back 7,000 years, the earliest bird to ever be domesticated (well, oldest domesticated poultry species) is actually the goose! Although many believe it to be chickens, research found that geese were actually domesticated roughly 2,000 years before chickens.





Mount Royal Real Estate Update

Last 12 Months Mount Royal MLS Real Estate Sale Price Update

	Average Asking Price	Average Sold Price
December 2023	\$ 2,500,000	\$ 2,432,000
November 2023	\$ 1,999,900	\$ 1,950,000
October 2023	\$ 1,535,000	\$ 1,482,500
September 2023	\$ 1,972,500	\$ 1,950,000
August 2023	\$ 962,450	\$ 1,067,500
July 2023	\$ 1,059,616	\$ 1,012,500
June 2023	\$ 1,695,000	\$ 1,650,000
May 2023	\$ 1,507,500	\$ 1,472,500
April 2023	\$ 2,599,999	\$ 2,400,000
March 2023	\$ 1,825,000	\$ 1,750,000
February 2023	\$ 1,015,000	\$ 880,000
January 2023	\$ 2,495,000	\$ 2,750,000

Last 12 Months Mount Royal MLS Real Estate Number of Listings Update

	No. New Properties	No. Properties Sold
December 2023	3	3
November 2023	4	3
October 2023	3	6
September 2023	8	8
August 2023	8	2
July 2023	4	8
June 2023	10	7
May 2023	7	8
April 2023	11	7
March 2023	7	3
February 2023	4	2
January 2023	3	1

To view more detailed information that comprise the above MLS averages please visit **umr.mycalgary.com**



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YOUR CITY OF CALGARY

Stay Safe, Stay Off Storm Ponds

by the City of Calgary

With more people heading outside for winter activities, The City of Calgary wants to remind kids and their families to be safe while enjoying outdoor skating.

City of Calgary or community-designated outdoor skating rinks offer fun, free skating for all skill levels. Rinks maintained by The City are checked daily for ice thickness and quality, and surfaces are flooded as needed to make sure they're safe for skating.

While your community storm pond may look inviting, recreational activities are not allowed on them. These ponds are part of your community's stormwater infrastructure and are there to reduce community flooding and clean stormwater before it returns to our rivers. Ice on these ponds is less predictable than ice on regular ponds and can be unstable even when it looks solid.

Here's why:

- Storm ponds contain sediment and contaminants (e.g. bacteria, fertilizers, pesticides, vehicle fluids, metal, road salt) that are collected as water travels through the community on their way to the storm pond and can weaken the ice.
- Water levels are also constantly changing as water moves between inlet and outlet pipes creating unpredictable ice conditions.
- Although the ice may appear thick in some areas, other areas may have little to no ice and often snow can cover visible hazards.

Instead, find a safe City or community outdoor skating rink near you at calgary.ca/rinks.



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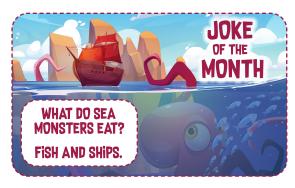
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Saturday: 8:30 AM-7:00 PM Sunday: 7:30 AM-7:00 PM



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