



Check, Mate

MORE SINGLES SHOULD RETHINK HOW TO SPEND ON DATES—FIND OUT WHY **GOING DUTCH** MAY BE THE BEST OPTION FOR YOUR LOVE LIFE **By ALISHA TILLERY**

“Let’s split the bill.” How often have you heard this on a date after the check arrived? If

the answer is seldom, don’t be surprised if you begin to see a change. According to a 2014 study by financial site NerdWallet.com, gender roles are losing their firm hold on rituals for the dating world: 23 percent of singles polled felt the man did not have to pay for outings. That number may seem small, but it’s indicative of a

transition in what it means to “court.” For some, “going Dutch,” or paying your own way on a date, evens the budding romance playing field by ensuring each excursion is

a mutual investment of time and money. Guys won’t assume a potential paramour is angling for a free meal, and women can nix the idea that ordering the steak and lobster will relegate them to an uncomfortable round of “dodge the d***.”

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women make the effort to initiate creative ways of sharing the tab. EBONY asked Hoffman to give readers a few dating do’s and don’ts of opening their wallets.

Do’s and Don’ts

DO

➤ **Seek out like-minded singles.** Use apps such as *Go Dutch Today*, developed by three African-American women, which lets singles set up dates with the understanding that both parties “will be fiscally responsible for their portion of the date or outing.”

➤ **Discuss pay setup before your date.** The best way to ruin a fun-filled meeting is by insisting on dividing the bill. Before the date, briefly explain your courting style when you are finalizing details. Make it clear that regardless of who initiates the meetup, you’d prefer that each person cover his or her portion.

➤ **Invest in interesting activities.** Paying your way isn’t an excuse for lame dates. Figure out activities you both enjoy, and especially consider activities that allow you to interact with each other, such as cooking classes, tours and games.

➤ **Play fair.** Taking in a concert or an all-day vineyard tour is fun, but there’s nothing romantic about being inconsiderate of your date’s financial reality. Suggest low- to mid-range cost options for initial outings.

DON'T

➤ **Make snap judgments about pro-Dutchers.** If your date wants to split the check, dismiss your preconceived conclusions that he or she is cheap or simply isn’t interested enough to pay the entire tab. Remember that the two of you may come from different cultural backgrounds and have had unique dating experiences. Be clear about your expectations.

➤ **Flip-Flop.** If you are committed to seeing where going Dutch takes you, stick with it. Set a specific number of dates, then evaluate the results.

➤ **Maintain a rigid stance on what parity “looks like.”** Once a rapport is established, both parties may alternate in covering the entire tab. Offer to pick up the dinner check and suggest your date treat the next time. This creates a sense of partnership and trust.

➤ **Give finances too much power.** If sharing the bill no longer works in a rooted relationship, ditch it; the same applies for traditional roles. Layoffs and underemployment are issues that can impact cash flow.