

It's a Date

49 cool places to fall in love (or like)

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WANDER THE SAN DIEGO BOTANIC GARDEN

{Advice from a Local Expert}

“Dating is like surfing—it is good to have patience. You don’t just take the first wave of a set because you are tired of waiting (especially if it’s a crappy one). There might be better waves more suited for you behind it. Same thing with dating. Don’t settle because you are bored or lonely. Hang in there and the right one will come.”

»» Get cooking.

Topped off with wine and a candlelit dinner, each cooking class at **Hipcooks** in North Park is a date night in itself. If you’re looking for V-Day dinner ideas, try The Romantic Dinner for Two, where you’ll learn recipes for wild mushroom risotto and crème brûlée so you can replicate them at home. *Classes \$55, sandiego.hipcooks.com*

»» Smooch among the succulents.

Meander through dense bamboo groves and stroll along a waterfall in a mini-tropical rainforest at the **San Diego Botanic Garden**. Thanks to the microclimates on this hidden hill in Encinitas, everything from succulents to cork oak trees thrives on the 37-acre plot. *Parking \$2. \$12/adult. sdbgarden.org*

»» Catch the fever.

watch the kids for free,
show your appreciation in
other ways.

Stock the fridge. Grandma needs a glass of wine after she puts the kids down. Grandpa? Maybe mint chip ice cream. Just make sure there's something they like in the fridge.

Stock the DVR. If they're coming to your house, DVR one of their favorite shows or queue up a good documentary on Netflix.

Leave your driveway open, or a spot in the garage. The least you can do for free child care is move your damn car! Auntie with an Audi will appreciate it.

Deal with your pets. Keeping your kids alive and happy is enough work. Don't make them feed, walk, and wrangle Fido, too.

Buy them something. Gift certificate. Massage. Booze. Not every time. But every once in a while. Leaving your kid with trusted family—for free—is priceless.

first week of February. 619-283-3227, landmarktheatres.com

»» Create a signature scent.

Why should Khloe Kardashian and Lamar Odom be the only couple with a signature perfume? Attend a make-your-own workshop at **Tijon**, the new parfumerie in La Jolla, and choose from 300 oils to create a custom aroma. Love: It's all about chemistry. *From \$69, tijon.com*

»» Tour the sky.

Want a not-so-obvious reason to get kissably close? Share a telescope while exploring the night sky from the **Observer's Inn** in Julian. In what's known as a "sky tour," an experienced astronomer will point out prominent constellations, planets, and nebulas. Refreshments provided. *\$25 per person.*
observersinn.com/skytours.htm

»» Ride a horse, eat some cheese.

Escondido's **Ranch at Bandy Canyon** offers "couples rides," with post-ride wine and cheese. It's surprisingly peaceful touring the San Pasqual Valley in a saddle. *\$220; add dinner for two in the lodge and a weeknight stay in cottage, \$479 total.*
bandycanyon.com