

Reader's Digest

The Perfect Valentine's Day Gifts for Every Stage of a Relationship

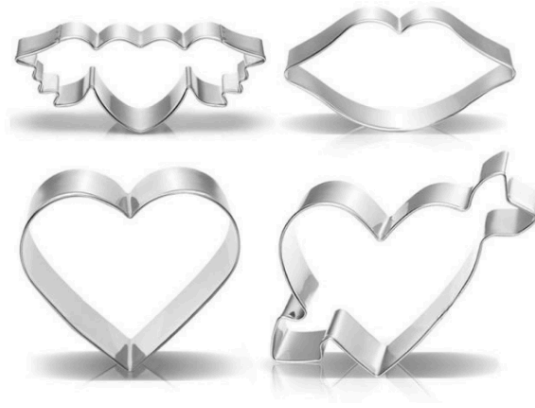
Is your heart racing just thinking about what to buy for Valentine's Day? Whether you've just started dating or have been together for years, you'll be smitten with this gift guide.

Love is in the air



February 14 is nearly here and that means it's time to show your better half just how much you love and appreciate him or her. Of course, that's a sentiment that should flow from your heart all year long, but today is the real show-stopper. "Valentine's Day can be very intimidating for couples in every stage of a relationship, but it doesn't have to be," say Rachel Federoff and Destin Pfaff, the duo who made a name for themselves on Bravo's *Millionaire Matchmaker*, and are now elite matchmakers with their own business, [Love and Matchmaking](#). "Whether it's an opportunity to profess your feelings to your crush, a thought-out gift she always wanted, or the perfect romantic gesture for him, Valentine's Day should really be your favorite holiday of the year—and the jumpstart you need to making every day Valentine's Day for your relationship!" Just be sure to avoid these [Valentine's Day gifts that send the wrong message](#).

For a budding love interest: Homemade treat



Too early to label someone a “boyfriend” or “girlfriend?” Then it’s probably too early to shower them with over-the-top gifts, too. “When you’re still in the early stage of growth, a small and inexpensive gift can speak volumes in letting someone know that you’re thinking about them on this romantic holiday while subtly communicating that you could be open to something more in the future,” says [Seth Meyers](#), PsyD, a licensed clinical psychologist who writes for eHarmony’s relationship advice blog. “Gifting something they can use on a regular basis, based on a hobby or passion they may have mentioned in a conversation, is a meaningful way to show that you are attentive to details about their life. Anything cooked, baked, or made by you is also a meaningful way to let someone know that you wanted to give them something special.” Bake a batch of sugar cookies in various shapes of hearts or choose one of these [totally original DIY heart-shaped food ideas](#).

Dating one to three months: Fine chocolates



Congratulations on being an official couple! Since your relationship is just getting started, gifts should be casual and simple—and it's the perfect time to show you've been paying attention to the things they like. "Chocolates and perfume are perfect for up to three months," says Susan Trombetti, matchmaker and CEO of [Exclusive Matchmaking](#). Consider a scented candle of their favorite flavor, a coffee mug with a cute saying filled with their favorite sweets, or a bottle of wine he or she enjoyed on one of your previous dates. If your new love interest has a sweet tooth, don't risk getting one of these [8 types of Valentine's Day candy everyone secretly hates](#) (including cheap grocery store chocolate boxes)—instead, choose a box of 19 assorted chocolates from Godiva.

Dating three to six months: Relationship game



"This is the time the honeymoon phase of the relationship comes to an end, and things go from fun to serious," say Federoff and Pfaff. "Make a romantic dinner and let the fun times begin. This is where gifts are great, but activities are even better!" They suggest a DIY Adult Jenga! game (where you write [sexy suggestions](#) on each block)—and setting up a date night behind closed doors. Or try Talk Flirt Dare Game by Artagia, essentially a date night in a box, with fun conversation starters to promote connection, and flirty games and dares to spice things up. This stage of a relationship might also be a good time to take a pulse check of the relationship; check out these [15 signs that your relationship is solid as a rock](#).

Dating three to six months: Modest jewelry



Jewelry is always good, but don't splurge too much. "A heart necklace might seem a bit cliché, but it's also a great gift because the price point can be on the lower end when you have only been dating for a few months," says Trombetti. To make sure there's no confusion about what this bauble means (hint: diamonds may send the wrong message), consider something like this dainty 14k-gold mini heart pendant from Nashelle—you can add her initial for an extra touch of personalization. These are [30 more personalized gifts that really go the extra mile](#).

Dating three to six months: DIY cocktails



If your Valentine is a budding mixologist who likes to recreate favorite bar cocktails at home, then a mixology bartender kit is a great gift idea. The starter kit from Modern Mixology comes with everything they need to look just like a pro, including a martini shaker, jigger, strainer, bottle opener, various utensils, and recipe cards to create the perfect cocktail.

Dating three to six months: Slipper socks



You know the saying, “Cold hands, warm heart?” Well, hopefully, that applies to feet as well. If she’s always shivering or putting her cold feet next to yours to warm them up, a six-pack of fuzzy heart-covered crew socks is not only budget-friendly but guaranteed to knock her socks off (er, on?). Besides, you can never have too many socks. If you’re worried she won’t be impressed with this genius idea, don’t miss these [Valentine’s Day gifts women actually want](#) for more inspiration.

Six months to a year of dating: Gemstone jewelry



“Welcome to engagement territory,” say Federoff and Pfaff. “We’re not saying you *have* to pop the question, but giving a real piece of jewelry is a fantastic way to show how important the relationship is to you. Think Tiffany’s, because that little blue box makes a big statement.” Another option is a cushion-cut sapphire, blue topaz, or amethyst pendant necklace and stud earrings set from Victoria Townsend.

Six months to a year of dating: Framed memory



By now, you've likely gone on a trip together. So how about a personal keepsake that shows how much you cherish those memories? A framed picture of your favorite vacation moment will be the perfect addition to his or her desk or fireplace. For instance, if you spent a week relaxing on the sand in the Caribbean, choose a creative frame that combines your heartfelt sentiments with those romantic, beachy vibes. And if you haven't yet taken a couple's vacation, now's the perfect time to plan one of these [15 romantic weekend getaways to celebrate Valentine's Day](#).

Six months to a year of dating: Plant



Forget flower deliveries; everyone does that. A fun idea for someone with a green thumb is to treat them to fully grown plants. A triple-heart-shaped bamboo arrangement will send a romantic message. Other romantic ideas include greenery that helps recreate a magical moment shared on vacation (such as a sago palm bonsai tree) or an orchid, which also

represents love. If you insist on flowers, at least know the [meaning behind each kind of color rose](#).

Six months to a year of dating: Headphones



Is your partner an audiophile and a gym rat? Share their love of music by gifting Jabra's Elite Active 65t wireless earbuds—they have a two-year warranty against sweat and dust, come with a pocket-friendly charging case, and Alexa is built right in. To kick up the romance of this present, combine it with a customized Valentine's Day-inspired playlist of love songs and choose the Copper Red color headphones. These other [cool tech gifts will also score major points](#).

Dating one year: Subscription box



“One year is the first big milestone of a relationship,” say Federoff and Pfaff. “To keep things fresh and assure them you’re in it for the long haul, get them a subscription service for something they enjoy. It’s a long-term gift that has the opportunity to signal that you believe the relationship is budding into a lasting love.” Here’s an option with the word “love” built

right in—a Love With Food subscription box, which delivers delicious, healthy snacks to the love of your life every month. These are more of our [favorite subscription boxes](#).

Dating one year: Gourmet steak dinner at home



You can do a little more at this stage, but aim for something more thoughtful than ever before. “Gifts for all senses such as a romantic dinner, music, flowers, and a massage are sure to delight,” says Trombetti. “You can create a whole day and night out of it.” For a fancy, at-home feast, treat yourselves to a Harry & David Valentine’s Day Dinner for two package that includes 36 pastry appetizers, two bacon-wrapped filet mignons, gruyère and garlic red mashed potatoes, black truffle and almond green beans, and chocolate decadence cake for dessert. It’s a complete meal for two and you can enjoy it over candlelight on February 14. Here are more [creative date night ideas](#) to inspire you for the rest of the year.

Dating a few years/living together: Espresso machine



If your significant other is on the moody side before his or her morning coffee, then an espresso machine is the answer to household bliss, because it's secretly a gift for both of you! The Sowtech espresso machine with steam milk frother has a compact design to save counter space and quickly makes up to four cups so you can both indulge. And since your morning espresso is so inexpensive now that you won't be running to coffee shops on the daily, your budget will allow for more date nights throughout the year. Win-win! Find out [25 of the best Valentine's Day gifts for him.](#)

Newlyweds: Engravable cuff



“After a wedding and a honeymoon, many newlyweds have already been gifted the items they wanted for their life together,” says Meyers. “An item—whether it be a canvas print, a necklace, or something else—that is engraved or embroidered with the coordinates of the location you were married is a thoughtful way to preserve the memories made together on that day.” The trendy solid rose gold-tone He Rocks Engravable Cuff will serve as her daily reminder of your special day. Of course, if your bank account is feeling a bit empty after your recent nuptials, there's always these [budget-friendly ways to celebrate Valentine's Day](#) instead.

Newlyweds: Sheets



You're probably at the stage in your relationship where you are spending more time in bed than you ever will again, which means the finest bed linen is a great gift idea. Keep the red-hot romance alive with luxurious 1,000-thread count 100 percent Egyptian cotton bed sheets from Thread Spread. The soft sateen weave looks like satin, yet it's breathable and durable. If you swear by online shopping for all holidays, check out the [25 most popular Valentine's Day gifts on Amazon](#).

Newlyweds: Keepsake jewelry



If you recently got married and aren't on a tight budget, splurge on a piece your significant other will hold onto for years—such as a pair of classic diamond earrings, like these ½ carat total weight halo drop earrings set in sterling silver, 14k rose gold over sterling or 14k gold over sterling. Her ears will sparkle and her heart will be filled with joy. To help your relationship grow through the decades, follow this [marriage advice of couples who have been together for 50+ years](#).

Married for less than a decade: Handbag



"Sometimes a relationship in this category might get back-burnered because of the demands of starting and raising a family, so this holiday is great for spicing things up or reminding each other of core values of the relationship," says Mitroff. This Valentine's Day,

treat your wife to one of her favorite things: a classic handbag. This pebble leather hobo from Dooney & Bourke comes in a variety of colors to suit her style (though red seems to fit the holiday best), will hold everything she needs (including snacks for the kids), and will serve as a daily reminder of how much you love her. Find out the [Valentine's Day secrets that the card you chose reveals](#).

Married for less than a decade: Air fryer



“Household items are created on the premise that they make life easier,” says Dr. Meyers. “Gifting your significant other with one of these trending household items—like a Roomba or air fryer—has potential to allow more time together instead of making dinner, vacuuming, etc.” The Cosori 5.8 quart air fryer has a unique square-shaped basket that can fit a whole six-pound chicken, 11 functions to make dinner a breeze, and a preheat function that visibly improves food texture. Have kids? Then check out the [most adorable Valentine's Day gifts for children](#).

Married for a decade-plus: Pots and pans



They say the kitchen is the heart of your home. So, if the cookware you registered for a decade or more ago have seen better days, it's time for an upgrade—especially if they are

non-stick, as they likely were made with a toxic chemical called PFOA. Plus, it'll give you an excuse to spend more time cooking heart-healthy meals together and less time eating takeout on the couch. The All-Clad 10-piece Essentials nonstick cookware set is safe for the dishwasher (hello faster clean up!), made of heavy-gauge anodized aluminum with stainless steel handles, and PFOA-free. Consider whipping up one of these [14 romantic dinner ideas for Valentine's Day](#).

Married for a decade-plus: Refreshed wedding album



It's back to the basics for established couples. "Creating or repurposing a hardcover wedding album to keep and look through is an opportunity to look back on the moments you've had as a couple and cherish them in a way that photos on an iPhone cannot provide," says Dr. Meyers. "Writing little comments throughout the album about how much you love and care for your significant other can serve as a reminder of the special relationship you've built over the years and an opportunity to manifest and set goals for your relationship's future." A crafting kit from Paper House Productions will let your creativity shine—or if you aren't feeling artistic, check out these [9 Valentine's Day ideas long-time couples swear by](#).