

Best In-Home Date Nights

That Don't Involve the TV



Brad and Christine Leeb

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Thank you!

DEDICATION

To all the married couples who are dedicated to keeping the fun alive in your marriage!

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INTRODUCTION

I have to take a moment to brag about my husband here and share with you how we got started “rocking the in-home date nights” as we call it. During a brutal Illinois winter and shortly after the birth of our third child, we quickly realized how challenging it was to be able to go out on a date. Refusing to let our need for date nights go down the diaper pail, my husband decided that we needed to get creative. And so, he did, and I just followed his lead.

It was Valentine’s Day. We desperately wanted to go out, but we didn’t want to leave our breast-feeding infant nor did we want to have to pay for a babysitter, so we decided to at least do something...anything! We got our kids to bed as early as possible. I grabbed a gift card and ran out the door excited to be out of the house for the first time in over a week...even if it was just to pick up our take-out meal. My excitement soon turned to depression as I looked around the restaurant at all the happy couples dressed up enjoying a beautiful evening out--without kids! I stood there feeling sorry for myself in my sweatpants and take-out bag. Will we ever be able to go out on a date again? I nearly cried.

As I drove home staring over at our little dinner-in-a-bag, I was sad, but as soon as I walked in the door, my mood completely changed. My husband had the table set using our “good” dishes. He had candles lit, soft music playing, a fire going in the fireplace, wine in our wine glasses, and a smile on his face. We ate. We laughed. We talked. We even danced together in our own family room. Even though the baby did wake up once, we just took a quick pause in our romantic evening so I could nurse him and put him back down and then we resumed our night. And so began our love for the in-home date night. No TV. No kids. Just us!

And now, we have begun to be very creative thinking of new and exciting ways to spend time together at home after we get our three kids to bed. We cannot wait to share these ideas with you. In this book, you will find 29 different in-home date nights where you don’t have to turn on the TV even once.

Whether you’re on a budget, parents who can’t find a babysitter, or both, you can still enjoy fun dates together! Just like chocolate and peanut butter are “two great tastes that taste great together”, these dates can be two great dates that date great together, so feel free to mix and match.

Some are casual. Some are sensual. Some are silly. Some are sexy. Some are completely free. Some you may have to spend a little cash. Some are for the family room. Some are for the kitchen. Some are for the bedroom. Some are in your own backyard. Some will delight your senses. Some will please your palate. Some will make you think about your night together for days, but all the date nights will help you be a little more adventurous, spend more time together, and ultimately find out, like we did, just how much fun in-home date nights can actually be!

Just a reminder that all of these dates can be done alone, but most of them can be easily paired with one or even two other dates in this book. So have fun mixing and matching, spending time together, and creating your own date right at home!

Enjoy!

TASTY TIME DATES

These Tasty Time Dates are simple, easy to plan, and inexpensive.

1. Wine and Cheese Tasting Grab a few cheeses from your local deli or cheese shop, some crackers, a couple of bottles of wine (or sparkling grape juice), and you have one amazing in-home date night. My husband surprised me with this date one evening and it is still one of my favorites! I highly recommend trying quince paste on your crackers along with the cheese. Yum! He even had romantic music and a fire going in the fireplace to enhance the mood.

2. Wine and Chocolate Tasting Ok, now we're talking! The wine and cheese tasting is great, but the wine and chocolate tasting is even better! Grab a box of chocolates and a couple of bottles of wine (or sparkling grape juice) and you've got a wonderful evening together. We have a blast picking up a piece of chocolate and guessing what kind it's going to be. It's even fun to share them...if you dare.

3. Beer Tasting This one is quick and casual. Simply grab a few different types of beer to try and some salty snacks. It's perfect for those summer evenings where you can sit outside and talk, but you can also sit inside and play your favorite board game together too. (Don't drink? You can try a Cola Tasting where you buy different flavors of cola to try.)

4. Root Beer Tasting There are so many different brands of root beer. I think you'd be surprised. For this date, you would actually be doing a little experiment or taste test to determine your favorite root beer. Choose 5, 10, 15, 20 (or however many you'd like) different brands to try. Before you begin, predict which root beer you think you will like the best. Have your spouse blind fold you (save the blind fold for bedtime later...wink wink) and pour the 5 flavors into 5 different cups. Taste each one. Have a notecard ready to rank them by your favorite to least favorite. Switch. Have your spouse go this time. Compare your results. You can even have some ice cream waiting in the freezer to make a root beer float together when you're finished!

5. Ice Cream Tasting Speaking of ice cream...how about an ice cream tasting!!! Now this isn't a taste test to find out which brand of chocolate ice cream you like best...although you could do that if you wanted to. There are no rules for in-home date nights, but this one is just simply tasting a variety of ice creams that you've never tried before and see which one you like the best. You can even feed the ice cream to each other. You could even buy some chocolate sauces to pour over the ice cream and maybe even each other. Yum!

6. M&M Tasting There are so many different kinds of M&Ms. I'm serious. Like the root beer, you'd be surprised at how many flavors of M&Ms there are! The fun part in planning this date night is to try to find as many different flavors as possible. If you're a competitive couple, during the days leading up to your date night, you can see who can find the most varieties to bring for your date. Then you simply open each one and sample. If you're super organized, you can have a pre-made numbered list with each type of M&M on it so you can rank them as you go. If you're super, super organized, you could have a fun question to go along with each type of M&M to get to know each other even better. Never mind, how about we just create one for you to use! Just know that you can still do this tasting even if you can't find all the M&Ms that we found.



M&M Tasting Date Night

Taste each flavor of M&M. Rank the M&Ms in order from your favorite to your least favorite (1-12) and then answer each fun question below.



*Pretzel _____

What's the biggest twist your life has ever taken?



*Birthday Cake _____

What is your favorite birthday gift given or received?



*Mint _____

If you could have a fresh start or do-over with one situation in your life, what would it be?



*White Chocolate _____

What is the biggest white lie you've ever told or heard?



*Dark Chocolate _____

What's your favorite thing to do in the dark?



*Mega _____

What is your most mega dream job?



*Milk Chocolate _____

Have you ever milked a cow?



*Coconut _____

What tropical place would you most want to be right now?



*Almond _____

Fun Fact: The U.S. is the biggest producer of almonds in the world. Which U.S. state would you enjoy traveling to the most and why?



*Peanut Butter _____

Chocolate and peanut butter are two great tastes that taste great together. What other food combinations do you like to eat together?



*Peanut _____

What is the nuttiest thing you've ever done?



*Dark Chocolate Peanut _____

What is the nuttiest thing you've ever done in the dark?

GAMES WITH A TWIST DATES

These dates are not your ordinary game night. They are playful and are definitely meant to be fun and flirty!

7. Twister Now this is a fun game to do as a married couple! It's not just your typical board game. The closeness and crazy positions that you can get in can be really fun foreplay.

8. Strip War War is a fun and easy game to play together, but why not make it even more fun by adding the element of losing an item of clothing every time you lose a war. If you're not sure how to play, it's very simple. All you need is a deck of cards. It's especially fun if you play it in bed.

- a. Deal all of them equally between you and your spouse.
- b. You each put down a card. Whoever has the highest card wins both cards.
- c. The war comes in when you each put down the same card. To determine who wins the war, you each put down an additional 3 cards (facedown) and flip over the fourth card to see who has the highest.
- d. If you lose that war, not only does your spouse get all your cards from that war, but you have to remove an item of clothing.

9. Playful Puzzle Why not spice up a puzzle night by adding a little something extra when you find a matching piece? You decide what that "something extra" is going to be—a kiss, a hug, or a compliment. Just be playful and enjoy each other while you're putting together a puzzle. This is another one that would pair nicely with a tasting!

10. Truth or Dare Remember this game from childhood? Well, this can be even more fun to play with your spouse. All you need is one dice and a chart for the action and the body part for each number (see example below). Here's how to play Truth or Dare with a married couple twist:

- a. Ask the question: Truth or Dare
- b. If your spouse says truth, ask them a question—keep the questions fun and light (you don't want the questions to lead to a fight.)
- c. If your spouse says dare, roll the dice twice. The first roll will determine the action that they spouse has to do. The second roll will determine the body part to which the

action will be done.

FOR EXAMPLE: You can make up your own action words and body parts—make them as G rated or X rated as desired!

Number Rolled	Action	Body Part
1	Kiss	Back
2	Lick	Lips
3	Rub	Neck
4	Caress	Ears
5	Hug	Shoulders
6	Whisper	Face

Have fun with this. Truth or Dare can end up being silly or very sensual. It's up to you!
(Special Note: if you get a weird combination, feel free to roll again.)

CREATIVITY DATES

Unleash your creative side with these dates. Bring out the artist in you and your spouse and enjoy a not-so-typical date night together.

11. Origami Night My husband gets all the credit for coming up with this one. He bought origami paper and a beginner's book. We tried Sake—a Japanese drink made from fermented rice, listened to Japanese music, and learned how to do origami together. We made animals, flowers, a house, and even a little piano. We talked and laughed and enjoyed a very unique evening together.

12. Self Portrait All you need for this one is an inexpensive white canvas or even just a plain piece of poster board or, simpler yet, just a plain piece of white paper. You can use paints, colored pencils, markers, or crayons. If you have kids around then I know that you have an abundance of choices. Take turns drawing, painting, or coloring a picture of each other. I guarantee there will be a lot of laughs!

13. Paint By Number There are some beautiful paint by number sets that are less than \$15.00. Many sets include the paints and even a brush. These are not your typical paint by number for kids sets. These are gorgeous pictures that you and your husband can create together step by step. Enjoy fun conversation and see a picture come alive. This date night could easily be combined with a tasting!

14. Body Paint With this one, you can be as creative and as sensual as you desire. The idea here is to not only make your spouse's body a work of art, but also to enjoy touching each other. My recommendation is that you put an old sheet on the floor before creating your masterpiece. The best part about this one is showering off together afterwards.

IN THE KITCHEN DATES

Going out to dinner is wonderful, but by the time you pay for appetizers, meals, drinks, desserts, a tip and a babysitter, it can be very, very expensive! “In the Kitchen Dates” are so much more affordable and as an added bonus, they will give you an opportunity to “heat things up in the kitchen together”...literally!

15. Create a Meal Plan, prep, and cook an entire meal together! What an exciting thing to look forward to after you get the kids to bed. In advance, talk about your meal and create the grocery list together. You might want to experiment with a new recipe or make one of your favorite not-so-kid-friendly meals. Plan to make a simple appetizer in advance so you can actually eat that when the kids are eating their meal. I don't know about you, but I can't wait to eat too late, so having an appetizer always helps me. Then, once the kids are in bed, cook the meal together. Chop vegetables, measure everything out, and of course, taste as you go. This is a great opportunity to flirt and feed each other and then sit down and enjoy what you've made together!

16. Delicious Dessert No time or energy for a full meal? How about just a dessert then? Yes, make a night of making a dessert together. My husband and I had a blast making chocolate chip cookies together one night. In fact, they ended up being the best chocolate chip cookies we've ever had! (The trick was that we used the Tollhouse cookie recipe but just added more flour to them.) Have fun with this delicious date and afterwards enjoy eating what you've created together. And again, flirting and feeding each other is always a great idea! We've even shared our favorite dessert recipe for you to try!

Peanut Buster Dessert

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups evaporated milk
- 2/3 cup chocolate chips (you can always use more!)
- ½ cup butter (for the crust)
- ½ cup butter (for chocolate sauce)
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 lb. chocolate sandwich cookies (Oreos)
- 1 gallon vanilla ice cream
- 1 ½ cups Spanish peanuts

Crust:

1. Open sandwich cookies and feed one to each other. Crush cookies into a 9x13 pan (we used a potato masher—you can also put them in a gallon ziplock bag and crush them. Don't worry about crushing the cookies too much. Having big chunks of cookie in the crust is yummy!)
2. Add ½ cup of melted butter to the cookies and stir. Together, press and smooth the cookies. Put in the freezer.
3. Before you close the freezer door, grab the ice cream and let it thaw while you move on to making the chocolate sauce.
4. Sneak in a little kiss now too!

Sauce:

1. In a sauce pan, add evaporated milk, ½ cup butter, chocolate chips and powdered sugar.
2. Bring to a boil. Set a timer for 8 minutes and stir constantly. You and your spouse need to stand together at the stove and stir together—holding the spoon together, hugging, sneaking in kisses, etc. Be patient. It's not going to look anything like chocolate sauce at first, but it will as it thickens! Use this time to flirt!
3. Stir in the vanilla. Set aside.

Putting it all together:

1. Remove the crust out of the freezer. Pour a layer of chocolate sauce on top of the cookies.
2. Add ½ of the Spanish peanuts on top of that.
3. Spread on the softened ice cream. Don't forget to feed each other a bite or two with a spoon.
4. Add another layer of the chocolate sauce. You can add as much as you'd like. You can always save some for another dessert...another time...in the bedroom...wink wink.
5. Add the rest of the Spanish peanuts.
6. Put in the freezer. This dessert is best to eat after being in the freezer for a few hours, but it's just chocolate, ice cream and peanuts so you can also eat it immediately if you can't wait! You can always choose another date night idea to do and come back and enjoy your dessert later. It's totally up to you! Enjoy!

17. Take-Out Night Ok, so...with this one, you won't be heating anything up in the kitchen unless your take-out needs a quick zap in the microwave, but I'll admit, sometimes at the end of the day there is just no time or energy for a full meal nor for a dessert. How about just having someone else make it all for you? My husband and I love this date night. We wait until we put the kids to bed. We order take out from any restaurant (We really don't care which one as long as we don't have to make it. And if I'm honest, we usually do this date night when we've been given a gift certificate to a restaurant). So enjoy no cooking, barely any clean up, and have a meal together where you can actually talk to each other without interruption! Oh and because you saved so much energy, you can just use it to heat up the bedroom tonight!

18. Romantic Candlelight Dinner Add candles to any of the "In the Kitchen" date nights and you up the romance level ten notches. Even for "Take Out Night", you can use your own plates and silverware, dim the lights, light some candles, use cloth napkins and a tablecloth, and turn on some soft classical or jazz music and BAM...your kitchen table can be transformed into a five star restaurant! Enjoy your time gazing into each other's eyes and eating a quiet meal together.

IN THE BACKYARD DATES

Your backyard is a wonderful place for a date. If needed, you can always “set the mood” in your backyard well in advance like planting grass seeds or flowers, pulling weeds, trimming bushes...anything simple you can do to create an inviting atmosphere for you to enjoy together.

19. Star-Gazing This date night is free and fun. Head out to your back yard. Grab a couple of lawn chairs or even a blanket and look up. That’s a date. Talk and just enjoy the wondrous, beautiful sky. You can even prepare ahead of time and find out when there’s going to be a meteor shower or you can even go to an International Space Station Tracker online and find out when the International Space Station will be passing by.

20. Not-so-hot Hot Tub We don’t have a hot tub, but we do have one of those blow up kiddie pools. Put on your swim gear, grab a couple of towels, and head out to your very own back yard pool! You can make this a splash and play date or a sit and relax date. It’s up to you and what you’re both in the mood for! The point is just to have fun together on a hot summer night!

21. S’mores Night Marshmallows, graham crackers, chocolate and each other...what a great night! We even invested in one of those small fire pits so we could have this date often throughout the summer. It was definitely worth the investment! My husband loved the smell of burning firewood and the fun we had roasting marshmallows together was so memorable. We even combined this date with the Star-Gazing and the Beer Tasting to make it a **Campfire Night!**

22. Campout Night Speaking of campfires, why not just make a night of it and camp outside together in the backyard? A little pop up tent is very inexpensive, and if you use it over and over, it’s worth the investment just like the fire pit. You can have a campfire meal after the kids are in bed--hot dogs, baked beans, chips, fruit, etc. and then sleep outside. Or you can enjoy some time in the not-so-hot hot tub and sleep outside. Or you can play backyard games like badminton or bean bag toss and sleep outside. Or you can enjoy some s’mores and sit by the fire pit and sleep outside. Or you can have a beer tasting then sleep outside. Or you can spend time star-gazing then sleep outside. Or you can combine all of these for the **Ultimate Campout Adventure Date!** Either way, I think you get the point that no matter what you decide to do, at the end of the night, you snuggle up and camp out in your backyard together!

INTIMATE DATES

Let's face it. You can make all of the dates in this book intimate, but these next dates are specifically for a very intimate time together. Enjoy!

23. Jacuzzi Tub/Bath Night Warm water, bubbles, soft music, candles, and being naked with your spouse...what a wonderfully intimate evening! You can easily combine this date with a wine-tasting too. Nothing else needs to be said about this one.

24. Massage Night Lotions, candles, soft music, and getting intimate touches from your spouse...what an amazing way to enjoy each other. Add in a candlelight dinner before, wine during, and a bubble bath afterwards and you've got yourself one incredible evening!

25. Naked Dancing You put "naked" at the end of anything and my husband would be all for it. "How about a naked craft night honey?" "Ok", he would say without hesitation. Now, most men don't care for dancing much, but what about naked dancing? I'm sure they would be ready to go! Take off your clothes. Turn on some music and dance together.

IMAGINATION DATES

Sometimes marriage leaves very little to the imagination, but with these Imagination Dates, you will be able to bring back a little mystery, excitement, and even escape the stresses of life for a night!

26. First Date Night

Option A. Pretend you are on a first date. Pretend that you've never met each other until tonight. When we've done this, we've even gotten ready in separate bathrooms so we don't know what the other person is wearing. He will even go outside and knock on the door (very quietly so we don't wake up the kids or cause our dog to bark). We ask "first date" questions as though we know nothing about each other. What you do on this night is up to you...you can really choose any date you'd like. (Just try to pick one that would be appropriate for a first date—don't go body painting or anything!)

Option B. If it's possible, you could even reenact your first date together. Be creative and see how you can bring your first date to life right in your own home!

27. Bar Night Turn off the lights. Turn on some of your favorite dance music. Grab some beer and pretzels. We even bust out our dart board and play some darts. Oh and how fun would Bar Night be with First Date Night? Or you could even pretend that you meet each other at the bar. Maybe your eyes meet from across the room and you decide to play some darts and even dance together. Be creative with this one!

28. Wedding Night Maybe you had the best wedding night...recreate it! Maybe you had the worst wedding night...reinvent it! Get dressed up. Renew your wedding vows and then throw yourselves an awesome reception! Enjoy some good take-out (I mean catered) food. Get some cake to cut and feed to each other (or smash into each other's faces). Put on some fun dance music—you simply must play the typical wedding songs like the "Chicken Dance", "Celebration", "Macarena", etc. Then you can slow things down and dance to your wedding song. You can even give yourselves a champagne toast before you adjourn to your Honeymoon Suite where you may even find rose petals on your bed, soft music playing and candles everywhere. Enjoy a wonderful night being newlyweds again!

29. Beach Night This is hands down my favorite in-home date night that we've ever done! Beach night is great any time of year, but is especially fun (and much-needed) for the winter blahs! You can either go all out on this one or keep it really simple...it's up to you! Here are some ideas of how we make a Beach Night at home. We grab some beach towels and put them on our family room floor. Turn on some reggae music. Put in some black lights so we look like we're tan. We keep the snacks simple—a pretzel mix or even some fresh pineapple. We dress in beach attire. We even have tropical decorations that we saved from an old party we used to throw called “Jamaica in January” which includes fish shaped lights, straw hats, leis, and palm tree centerpieces. And the best part is our delicious beach concoction we call Jungle Juice (recipe below). During our beach night, we sat on our beach towels, drinking our Jungle Juice, and reminisced about our date nights, trips we used to take, how we celebrated our anniversaries, and we laughed. Of course, sitting on the beach drinking jungle juice together wouldn't be complete without some heavy making out! Enjoy this fun and memorable night together!

Jungle Juice: (Don't Drink? Just eliminate the alcohol and it's still delicious)

Simply combine all of the ingredients in any desired amount. You will be glad that this is an in-home date night...this stuff is sneaky and good!

- Pineapple Juice
- Orange Juice
- Vodka (optional)
- Triple Sec (optional)
- Malibu Rum (optional)
- Bacardi Rum (optional)
- Fresh Orange Slices (optional)
- Fresh pineapple chunks (optional)
- Maraschino cherries (optional)

FINAL THOUGHTS

We hope you've enjoyed these in-home date night ideas as much as we have. More importantly, we hope that they have brought your marriage fun, flirty-ness, laughter, and togetherness. Your marriage is so important and deserves every amount of time and energy that you put into it.

We lead very busy lives. We have three kids who make us laugh and sometimes cry. We both have jobs and responsibilities outside of our home. We both value family and want to make sure that our kids know how important that they are to us, and therefore, we spend a lot of time with them, but we also value each other. We value our marriage. We've been down the road to near divorce in 2009, and that was our wake-up call to do more for our marriage. We are committed to each other, and we are committed to staying together for the rest of our lives. We want to love each other more, and find ways to make our marriage more fun and exciting with each passing year! Marriage doesn't have to be boring. Oh sure, you're going to have those moments where you want to run out the front door and never look back every now and then, but that's just normal...right honey?...honey?

Wait a minute...the front door is open. Just kidding. The point is to have a sense of humor together...go on adventures together...laugh together...be together...pray together...stay together. Continue investing in each other. Continue dating at least once a month for the rest of your lives. You should never be too busy to make time for your spouse. Your marriage is worth it!

Blessings from our marriage to yours,

Brad and Christine

If you have any in-home date night ideas that you'd like to share with us or if you'd just like to say hello, feel free to email us at:

inhomedatenights@gmail.com

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Brad and Christine Leeb have been married for almost 17 years and have nearly 40 years of combined teaching experience. Though near divorce in 2009, they have fought to stay together, and through that process have grown individually and as a couple. They are both in their forties and live in central, Illinois with their three young children, their dog, and their turtle. They find humor in the small things, love to quote TV shows and movies, look forward to traveling together again someday, and have a blast laughing at the joys and the “uh ohs” of their family life.

Christine is a passionate teacher and the founder of a faith-based organization called Real Life Families—building better families through free classes in the community. Bradley is an elementary music teacher and photographer on the side.