

Say "No" to the restaurant date

RABITA SALEH

Are you tired of your dates becoming identical in flavour because they all revolve around food? Are you worried that your growing second chin is here to stay? Well then this article is for you, my slightly chubby friend; for you and your S/O.

Dhaka has never been known for boasting a plethora of diverse entertainment opportunities. Conversely, our food scene has exploded in the last decade, resulting in no shortage of restaurants to pick for a date. However, food as a form of entertainment gets monotonous after several dates and it isn't exactly the healthiest habit either. Yes, we are all proud of our ability to talk about a plate of food as though we were Masterchef judges, but at some point we have to draw a line; usually at the point when the acidity from the balsamic vinegar reduction begins to cut through the fattiness from the steak brilliantly.

Troubled by the sad, despairing faces of couples sitting around restaurant tables, scrolling away on their phones, I took it upon myself to solve this dilemma. Here are my picks for the top 5 places you can go to for a perfect date that doesn't revolve around food:

ART

Located next to Banani Lake, Clay Station provides a brilliant getaway from the concrete jungle that is Dhaka. You can simply walk in and choose between the several services they offer, including painting and pottery making. They even have a "Couple's Special - Throw at the Wheel" that gives you access to a pottery wheel for an hour for BDT 1500. Plus, at the end of your time, you get to take away the masterpiece that you created -- a perfect souvenir of the much needed relaxation amidst busy schedules that you and your significant other were seeking. What's better is that you don't have to pay for studio time, only for materials used. And if you're worried about not being an expert artist,

or even very creative, Clay Station has you covered: "We call it 'fun art', not fine art. Anyone can do it, and everyone should!"

MOVIES

In a fitting manner, going to the cinema has always been the ideal date in the various movies that we watch. Both Star Cineplex and Blockbuster offer a wide range of halls, movies, seat choices and the likes to pick and choose from for your perfect date. Tickets begin at roughly BDT 300, but for an extra special day, we recommend Club Royale seats at

Add another couple hundred bucks to that and you can play an hour of pool. Now, a lot of places in Dhaka let you play pool for cheaper. However, the general atmosphere at Player's Club is one of the best for dates, when you want to avoid crowds and serious players who will judge you, at all costs.

The karaoke is on the higher end, costing BDT 1000 an hour. For that you get a private room with top-notch sound system. However, beware of the sign that says "Only singing and dancing allowed".

ety of rooms as well. Hence, that was the one I chose to experiment with.

Also located in Jamuna Future Park, Dare2Game offers 4 different kinds of escape rooms for you to select. Whether you pick their Ancient Sands, Friday the 13th, Basement, or Circus escape room, all coming in under BDT 1000 per person, you and your date should have a fun hour solving puzzles and manoeuvring your way through the unusual terrain. Dark rooms with black lights, rooms filled with sand and creepy-crawlies, and sometimes even the distinct feeling that you aren't exactly alone will get that adrenaline going and transport you into an experience which you wouldn't believe could exist in the outwardly small set-up they seem to have.

COMEDY

"The couple that jokes together stays together." And so add a bit of laughter to your life with Naveed's Comedy Club (NCC). Located inside Gloria Jean's Coffees in Gulshan 2, NCC offers stand-up comedy in both English and Bangla. For a date, the English Comedy Night is recommended over the Bangla Comedy Night since the crowd is usually younger, and the jokes are more risqué. Whichever your preference however, NCC is guaranteed to provide over two hours of hilarity that will make you double up in laughter. Pro-tip: If you're up for it, identify as a couple when the comedian asks; jokes at your own expense can be highly amusing. Tickets come at around BDT 400 per person, and take my word for it -- it's worth every penny.

These dates provide a much more engaging alternative to the multitudes of hours spent at restaurants that centre more on the food than you. Walk down the adventurous road for a bit, that steak isn't going anywhere.

Rabita Saleh is a perfectionist/workaholic. Email feedback to this generally boring person at rabitasaleh13@gmail.com



PHOTO: RABITA SALEH

Blockbuster in Jamuna Future Park. The BDT 1000 per person seat prices will probably make a hole through your wallet, but the extra wide armchairs, blankets and waiting service will feel worth it.

GAMES

Player's Club on the 5th floor of Jamuna Future Park is another spot for an unconventional date. There are several different games to choose from. For BDT 350 per person you can have a game of bowling.

They mean it.

ESCAPE ROOMS

Escape rooms are a new addition to Dhaka's entertainment options. There are three escape rooms in Dhaka so far: Escape Room in Nikunja; Escape Myst in Mirpur; and Dare2Game. A quick search online led me to the following opinion: Dare2Game is the more expensive of the lot, but also the best experience. The challenges are tougher, and the decor more immersive. They offer a wider vari-