

KENT GARDEN of ENGLAND

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First date ideas in Kent for this Valentine's Day



Images (L-R): Tiller & Wheel (Please Credit: Tiller & Wheel) and Biddenden Vineyards (Please Credit: Biddenden Vineyards).
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Press Release

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Trust us, we know how daunting the first date experience can be. The combination of nerves, excitement, fear of the dreaded awkward silence... and don't even get us started on choosing what to wear.

Luckily for you, our charming county boasts an abundance of romantic spots to soak up, so you and that special someone can make your first date one for the memory books. From strolling around luscious vineyards to skating back to the 80's at a retro roller-room, treat your love interest to one of the following idyllic spots this Valentine's Day and a second date is sure to be on the cards...

TILLER AND WHEEL

When you're 'knot shore' of where to go ('sea' what we did there?), set sail on your blossoming romance and head to the horizons with *Tiller and Wheel*. Hop aboard the historic Sailing Barge and discover East Kent's charming coast and peaceful waters. From one-hour trips to full day excursions (depending on how well you're getting on), there's a trip to suit every voyager. If you need a little more engagement, there's even options for prosecco-topped afternoon tea, perfect for those tempted by a tipple and a homemade cake.

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL (MUSEUM OF THE MOON)

Stepping outside for a stroll under the stars can be a little unbearable at this time of the year (brrr), but with *Rochester Cathedral's* Museum of the Moon exhibition, the enchanting glow of the night's sky can be enjoyed inside away from the cold. The wonderful display features a seven-meter replica of the lunar surface, compiling NASA imagery, moonlight and surround-sound composition to create a wonderfully romantic setting. Treat that special someone to a date out of this world and if you're looking for Valentines options, the visit includes a glass of bubbly on the 14th Feb, so you can raise a glass to your first date under the moonlight. Out of this world...

THE ISLE OF THANET

We think the best way to really get to know someone is by unleashing their competitive side as soon as you can. If you're dating a Monica Geller, it's probably best to realise on the first date, right? Watch the awkward silence and forced conversation drift away as you channel your inner Sherlock, unearth clues, and unlock the door to the Isle of Thanet's fantastic escape rooms. Or, strap up your skates, grab your neon leg warmers and skate back to the 80's at Dreamland's retro Roller Room-the perfect excuse to indulge in some hand-holding when you feel like you're going to trip.

BIDDENDEN VINEYARDS

Fancy something a little more relaxing? Why not book a private tour of *Biddenden Vineyards* and discover the viticulture techniques used to create world-class wines? Wander hand in hand through the sun-kissed vines as your personal guide shows you both around and answers any questions you may have. Indulge in a sharing platter made from local produce and taste the award-winning wines to discuss yours, and your dates favourites. You're the wine that I want...

GO APE LEEDS CASTLE

If even the thought of watching a horror film makes you want to cry, but you're still desperate to show your date how fearless you really are, then get in touch with your inner Tarzan and Jane and head to the treetops at *Go Ape, Leeds Castle*. Be released into the forest ready to tackle rope bridges, speed down zip wires and make your way across intricate crossings, all challenged at 40 feet above the ground. Spend the morning taking on the obstacle course, before rewarding your accomplishments and teamwork with a romantic lunch, set against the backdrop of 'the loveliest Castle in the World', *Leeds Castle*.

HYTHE IMPERIAL AND THE SPA HOTEL

If you consider yourself more of a traditionalist when it comes to dating, how about wining and dining your date at one of Kent's hotel restaurants? Treat your valentine to dinner at *The Spa Hotel* and be welcomed with a glass of fizz, before indulging in a delicious three-course meal complimented with live music from Jessica Louisa. Or, tuck into a four-course dinner at the AA Rosette Coast Restaurant at *Hythe Imperial*. Chat away the evening, then head to Kent's only Moët & Chandon bar to toast your date, whilst enjoying breath-taking views of the seafront.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

The historic spa town of *Tunbridge Wells* has so much on offer for visitors, making it a picture-perfect spot to spend a first date. For those with a sweet tooth, take a bite out of the *Spa Valley Railway's* afternoon tea and enjoy this English tradition in a less-than conventional method; on a steam train! Or, shake things up and see how well you and your date really mix with cocktail making at *One Warwick Park*. If you're more enticed by taking a deep breath of fresh air, peddle along to *Countrybike* and soak in the sites of this beautiful area, stopping off at the many attractions along the way. Swipe right for Tunbridge Wells...

MAIDSTONE

Located in the heart of the Garden of England, *Maidstone's* romantic villages, hop gardens and luscious landscapes provide the perfect backdrop to set the scene. From romantic boat trips on the *Kentish Lady* and delving into Kent's fascinating history at *Maidstone Museum*, to hearty pub lunches at *The Boat House* and farmyard fun at *Kent Life*, there's so much to see and do here. For a date to remember, take a spin at Wheel Throwing at 'This Art of Mine'. Release your inner Patrick Swayze and Demi Moore as you enjoy a glass of bubbly and help each other create a pottery masterpiece. *Disclaimer* There will be no topless Patrick Swayze at this event.

EAGLE HEIGHTS

For those wanting to unleash their wild side, *Eagle Heights* will make a fantastic first date spot. Grab those wellies and prepare to be amazed as you and your date come face to face with nature. Watch as the beautiful birds glide high in the sky against the backdrop of Darent Valley's sweeping countryside and learn the history and habitats of these majestic animals. If your date is going well, how about treating them to one of the experiences here? From meeting meerkats and hiking with huskies to alpaca trekking and owl flying, you can guarantee a huge smile on your date's face. For the lovebirds...

ARRIVA

If you're in need of a speedy way to get around or are trying to avoid the awkward conversation of who's the dedicated driver on your first date, then hop on board *Arriva*. With routes in Maidstone, Medway and Swale, you don't have to limit yourself to only visiting one of the attractions (or having just one drink!). Think you could be in with a chance of being crowned Kent's most deserving couple? Then there's no better time to travel with Arriva. Enter their competition for the opportunity to spend a date night on-board accompanied by a personal butler, before indulging in dinner courtesy of one of our local Kent restaurants. Email your 100 word description, name and location to arrivavalentines@smokinggunpr.co.uk by February 7th to be in with the chance of winning. Hop on board...

For further information inspiration on things to do in Kent, head to www.visitkent.co.uk.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

For further media information on Visit Kent and images please contact Brand Manager Lana Crouch on lane.crouch@visitkent.co.uk or call 01227 812914.

About Visit Kent

Visit Kent Ltd is the Destination Management Organisation for Kent (the Garden of England), welcoming 65million visitors a year, championing the county's £3.8 billion tourism industry and supporting more than 77,000 jobs.

It is recognised as one of the country's leading DMOs, targeting UK and overseas markets to raise Kent's profile as a premier destination, improving quality and skills within the industry, and growing investment in tourism. Visit Kent is a public/private sector partnership supported by Kent County Council, Medway Council, district and borough councils, and the leading sector tourism businesses in Kent.

For further information visit www.visitkent.co.uk (consumer) or www.visitkentbusiness.co.uk (business), or tweet @visitkent.