

# DATE NIGHT

A well-planned staycation sans kids is the perfect romantic interlude for young parents.



The stress of careers, parenting and just everyday chores can strain even the strongest of relationships. Issue a timeout for yourselves — an overnight trip into town for just the two of you is an inspired and time-efficient way to keep that intimate spark going for young couples.

## 11:00AM

The two of you motor downtown early, even though the occasion was entered into his calendar as “date night”. Your devious strategy: butter him up with a surprise present of Jays tickets behind home plate. You spent weeks prying those from that girlfriend of yours who’s dating one of the outfielders, and you were determined to put them to good use.

It was quite a while before the hotel’s official check-in time, but what the heck, you figured you would store your bags, grab lunch and still make the first pitch. The friendly desk person said they were busy overnight, but still offered to expedite, get you keys in 30 minutes, and treat you to a soy latte while you waited. As tempting as that sounded, he would rather beat the crowd to the adjacent Wahlburgers to sample the cold house beer — a local brew rumoured to be hand-selected by one of the Wahlberg brothers after extensive tasting around the 6ix.

A few pints of those, a fully-loaded bacon burger and a turkey-topped salad bowl for you later, you were fortified for nine innings of excitement at Toronto’s home park just steps away. Never one to fall for exorbitant concession prices at a stadium, you doggy-bagged a couple orders of sweet potato tater-tots, along with an order of poutine and two cans of soda, as in-game nourishment.



## BYOF

BRING YOUR OWN FOOD

*A little indulgence on sinful snacks, treats and beverages is a staple of the ball park experience, but who needs inflated prices and sub-par offerings?*

*TIP: Fans are in fact allowed to bring in basically whatever they like in the way of outside food. According to Rogers Center policy, guests can bring food “as long as the items are wrapped, bagged or left inside a container to avoid spillage. Cans, glass bottles, aluminum/steel water bottles or drinks larger than 600 ml are not permitted”.*

## 4:00PM

These days, the Jays can be as frustrating as they are entertaining. But on this occasion, the Boys in Blue managed to irk out a ninth-inning comeback that had both of you, and the rest of the ball park, off of your seats. Your plan to beat traffic out of the stadium was thus thwarted, but the journey back to the hotel was still just a short walk away.

The front desk welcomed you back with two glasses of chilled bubbly, which you managed to sneak to the room against all regulations and local liquor ordinances. Alas, there was no need: a bottle was already brought to temperature in an ice bucket as part of the romance package you booked.

One look at the plush Italian bedding, and any attempt by him to stave off a much-needed, well-deserved nap was rendered futile. Ever the energetic type, you instead opt to refresh with a few laps in the hotel pool.





## 5:30PM

A quick call home reassured you two that the babies were just going to be fine, even though perhaps you preferred them to have missed you more.

Getting big-date-ready under the influence of champagne turned out to be a playful, albeit inefficient proposition. This rare moment of fun and intimacy was indeed an unspoken promise of the weekend. However, his unsolicited styling advice aside, makeup is not a two-person operation, and in the end you make him wait a safe distance from the vanity while you doll up for dinner.



## 7:30PM

Armed with voluminous web research and recommendations from friends and netizens alike, you were determined to show off your knowledge of the menu to the wait staff. Still, the server managed to upstage by offering a 5-course tasting specially curated by chef himself. How could you refuse?



## 7:00PM

As much as getting ready was half the fun, it is time for the main event — dinner at Luckee by Susur Lee.



## 8:30PM

You knew going with chef's choices was the right decision the minute lobster cheung fun was brought to the table; the *mushroom in golden sand* and *malay-spiced rib eye* merely provided confirmation. While the tasting menu was predictably delicious, but you had to remind him that any mention of your recently adopted diet would be ruled out of order.



## 10:00PM

He was not going to miss dessert – in this case a generous helping of *guava crème brûlée* and *Hong Kong bubble waffle with black sesame ice cream* – but a small bribe to the concierge later, you were chauffeured off to an exemplar of Saturday night shenanigans in the 416.



## 6IX PICKS

*The energy level in Toronto's Entertainment District is always high, but the area really comes alive at night. The young and young-at-heart can dance to tunes spun by great DJs at one of Toronto's many nightclubs, sip drinks and take in the view at an elite rooftop patio or chill out to the blues at a local jazz bar.*

# TAKE THE ELEVATOR HOME

*Spending the night in a fabulous hotel is a terrific way to cap off date night, and the responsible and smart thing to do after a few well-deserved cocktails. It doesn't have to cost much more than round-trip Uber if you live far and you'll be grateful you treated yourself to the exquisite pleasures of luxury accommodations.*

*The SoHo Metropolitan supports MADD Toronto's "drive responsibly" message with special packages that are not only great value but include a donation to the worthwhile cause as well. Check the hotel's website for details.*

[soho.metropolitan.com/madd](http://soho.metropolitan.com/madd)

**madd**  
Toronto

## 11:00PM

Style and people watching, primed by a digestif or two, at one of the nearby roof-top pool bars was doubtless entertaining, but you reminded him that more bliss was in the offing back at the intimate hotel suite that was yours for the night. A short walk, with arm-in-arm, down Toronto's busy King West, and you were ready to play out that plan.





## 5:30AM

Your eyes popped open out of habit, but it took a minute to get accustomed to the quiet and dim serenity of the stylishly insulated cocoon that was your hotel suite. No alarm clocks ... no screaming kids ... no financial channel with the volume turned up so he could hear it from the bathroom. Before long, the silence was punctuated by his gentle snore, prompting you to invoke the option that had become oh-so-rare: back to snooze.



## 8:30AM

Your recurring dream of fluffy soufflés on the Champs-Élysées was interrupted by you-know-who, and it soon became clear there was no convincing him to go back to sleep. Which was just as well, as you had ordered breakfast to be delivered at 9:00AM.

When breakfast promptly arrived with a knock on your door, both of you marveled at how civilized it was to get your extra hot Soy Latte sans that dreaded five-minute lineup. The discreet room service server smartly offered to hand you the breakfast tray - no signature required - rather than enter your suite. Naturally you accepted his brilliant suggestion with a wink and a nod.

## 9:30AM

Breakfast came with the Sunday paper. You couldn't remember the last time you two shared giggles over the comic section; reading that on an eight-inch tablet just wasn't the same. Your hopes suddenly appeared closer to reality when you caught him sneaking a peek at the real-estate pages. Maybe the weekend's experience in this designer-furnished suite, coupled with your persistent nagging and junior's impending school enrolment, had finally convinced him that some imminent upgrading of the family's abode might be well-advised.



## 10:30AM

Alas, all good things must come to an end, and it was time to relieve the in-laws of overnight baby-sitting duties. Both of you leave with a grin, resolved to do this more often. As he drove home, you were already checking next month's summer concert listings on your smartphone ...