



Planning for Your Prom

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Every spring, high school juniors and seniors are excited about making plans for the prom. There are many different aspects to plan for your prom date. Your prom is a once in a lifetime event. You will want to look your best and make a good impression on your date, your date's parents, and your friends.

There are several different areas to consider when planning for the prom.

INVITATIONS

Traditionally, a gentleman will ask the lady to the prom. However, sometimes the lady does ask the gentleman to prom. It is a good idea to ask someone that you already know, so that you will be able to have good conversation and enjoy the evening. If you like to dance, be sure to invite someone who also likes to dance.

We sometimes hear of the lady who is hoping for her ideal person to ask her to prom, and when that never happens, she gets left out. If you already have a date, be honest, if someone else asks you out, and tell him or her that you already have a date to prom. Also, it is very common for ladies and gentlemen to go as a group, so that no one gets left out. This gives everyone the fun of prom without the pressure of having a formal date.

COST: Who pays for what?

The person who asks someone to prom is responsible for paying for the night's expenses, traditionally. However, it is more common now for couples to share the costs of the evening, as proms can be very expensive. You should discuss plans for costs after you decide to go to prom, so that both the gentleman and the lady can plan their prom budget with their family.

The traditional costs would be covered:

- If a gentleman asks a lady to the prom, he pays for prom tickets, transportation, dinner and her flowers.

- If a lady asks a gentleman to the prom, she pays for prom tickets, his flower, and often may volunteer to pay for dinner or make dinner arrangements with several couples to share costs.

WHAT TO WEAR

Find out information about what is the tradition for your school prom – is it formal, semi-formal or a special theme. Customs do vary from school to school, so if you have been invited to a prom at another school, ask about the dress code and if it is formal. If it is formal, your attire has basically been chosen for you – tuxedo for guys and a long formal gown for ladies. A prom that is semi-formal usually means sports coats and ties for guys and short dresses for ladies. A theme may indicate specific choices such as a 50's theme – letter jackets and jeans for guys and poodle skirts for ladies.

GENTLEMEN: Most gentlemen rent their tuxedo, with a black tux being the usual standard choice. You may choose different color ties and cummerbunds to match the color of your date's dress.

LADIES: Ladies may choose to buy a formal, evening dress or you may borrow one from friends. Sometimes, there are organizations that provide used evening dresses for ladies. Check in your community or a nearby college town for thrift stores that may have evening dresses available. Remember to wear shoes that will be comfortable to walk and dance in.

FLOWERS

GENTLEMEN will be responsible for buying a corsage for your date. Remember to ask your date if she would like a wrist corsage, which is probably the most popular choice for proms. Ask her the color of her dress, so that you may choose the color of flowers and ribbons that will complement her dress, rather than clash with her dress.

However, you cannot go wrong with white roses and baby's breath, with white or silver ribbon. If you choose a traditional corsage, it is pinned on the ladies left side. Gentlemen, it would be a nice gesture to take a small bouquet of flowers to the ladies' mother.

LADIES will want to buy their dates a boutonniere. Usually a rose or carnation is the standard choice. You may want to choose white or you could choose one to match the color of your dress.

TRANSPORTATION & PICKING UP YOUR DATE

You should make arrangements for the gentleman to come to the lady's home to pick her up at a specific time. The lady should be ready when her date arrives.

She needs to introduce her date to her parents. (*Refer to the Manners Worth Millions handout on introductions*). Use a firm handshake, look in the eye and say something like, "It is nice to meet you, Mr. and Mrs. Smith." Remember to be cooperative to both sets of parents for making pictures of this special occasion.

Gentlemen should have their car clean, both inside and out. Also, have it full of gas. Gentlemen need to be on their best manners and should open the car door for the lady, and also doors at the restaurants and school or other locations. Although prom is a special night, both sets of parents will need to establish a curfew in advance.

DINNER

If dinner before the prom is a local custom, this may be one of the hardest decisions. Where to eat? If you go to an expensive restaurant, you may need to make dinner reservations. However, a small restaurant may also be a good choice for a delicious, nice meal. Be sure to check on the prices on the menu for before prom. The best advice would be to eat a meal there before prom to know what to expect as far as menu choices and prices. The lady should always follow the lead of what to order from the boy to know what the budget might be. Also, remember that eating dinner at a nice restaurant may take 1-2 hours of time.

Another option for dinner is for parents to host a dinner at one family's home for many couples. All the parents can assist with the meal. Also, all parents can be invited to be present to take group pictures. This makes a special night for everyone, and also reduces costs for dinner.

(Refer to Manners Worth Million Tips on Dining Etiquette)

AT THE PROM

Remember to have your prom tickets. Be yourself, but have fun. Be friendly to everyone. Be polite to your date, dance with your date and enjoy the evening.

AFTER PROM

Some schools sponsor "After Prom" activities. Check with your local schools. Also, some parents may host a meal and watching movies at a house for a group of friends.

Again, be sure that both sets of parents have agreed in advance of prom night on after prom plans and curfew.

STAY SAFE

Be sure to have an enjoyable, but safe evening. Say thank you to your prom date for making it a special evening.

Prom is a special time in a teen's life. Do not drink or do drugs on your prom night trying to feel more grown up. Do not get in a car with anyone else who has been drinking. Unfortunately, we hear of prom nights that turn from a special night into tragedy because of reckless behavior. Remember to plan ahead to have your prom night become a wonderful night that you will remember for the rest of your life!

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