

DATING- WHAT'S NEW NOW



At GLAMOUR, we embrace being single – it's *the* time in your life to mix it up, meet interesting, cute guys and, above all, have fun. **Arianne Cohen**, columnist for *New York* magazine and author of *The Sex Diaries Project*, breaks it down ►

Illustrations by Travis Barteaux



Ladies. You are fantastic at being single: you meet all your own needs, achieve your career, fitness and hobby goals, and are in much finer form than all those single men who can barely locate three daily meals. And you know what? You *like* being single. I know this because I've spent the past five years collecting week-long diaries for *The Sex Diaries Project UK*, and every day I watch you pass up opportunities to settle down. I relish reading about these experiences because women on their own path are grounded, powerful and open to adventure: who knows what's going to happen in the next seven days? Perhaps you'll run into an old flame and have a hot rendezvous on Tuesday, or fall in love at the pub on Thursday, or sign up for a weekend meditation retreat and be a Buddhist by Monday. Anything could happen. Routine is for couples.

From my perch, being single has little to do with whether or not you have a sexual partner – indeed, many of you enjoy regular rolls in the hay. Rather,

'single' means that you are meeting all of your own needs (sexual, emotional, logistical, financial) in the way that makes the most sense for you.

Most women are single for a while – all relationships come to an end one way or another, and half of all women in their twenties and early thirties are single. Even the ones *looking* for Mr Right average a year to enter another healthy long-term relationship, and even if you're a relationship black belt, you'll spend, on average, a third of your life single. It's inevitable, so let's be honest about it.

In these pages, we're going to show you how to make your single era the Best. Ever. Treat your single time as your own life chapter, and plan accordingly. It's a numbers game: some women win the lottery early, and those looking for a particularly rare combination of partner traits can spend substantially longer. So, in the meantime, follow our dating guide and please come and tell me all your single adventures in your own Sex Diary, at sexdiariesproject.com. The great news? You *will* eventually find what you seek.

WHAT ARE YOUR *RIGHT NOW* NEEDS?

Think ahead, stay sane



The secret to being happy and single? One golden rule: meet your needs now. Some women fill their lives with friends and loved ones, and a lover or vibrator... or two, or three. They're happy because they're content with what's happening *right now*. How to create this for yourself? Before launching into your search for Mr Right, stop everything and ask yourself what you need in these three categories...

SEX

How often do you need it? Every woman's different – just be honest with yourself.

What to do If you need regular orgasms, set that up first. Buy a new best friend at a sex-toy store, or spend a few weeks hanging out with the men in your life who might be up for a friends-with-benefits arrangement. Be flexible. You'd be surprised – men you would never date seriously can make ideal lovers because you're at no risk of falling in love with them.

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Whether you're single and happy or just out of a disastrous break-up, make sure that three friends or loved ones know what's happening in your life on a day-to-day basis. Happiness studies suggest that the more loved ones involved in your life, the happier you will be. It's invigorating.

What to do In the next two weeks, make appointments with yourself to call five friends or family members for an hour. Pour energy into these relationships, and they'll pay you back in spades.

SOCIAL LIFE

The happiest single women are the ones who don't just have a lot of friends, but friend families – groups of friends and family that tend to hang out with each other at least a couple of times a month.

What to do Set up a casual event, like movie night or bowling night, or knitting night or "Teach me how to make sushi" night. Repeat. Make sure you schedule two per month. ►

HOW YOU DATE NOW

Sorry, Cilla, blind dates have come on a *long* way...



GRINDR FOR GIRLS

After the success of Grindr – a smartphone app that lets gay men get in mobile contact with other men nearby – a straight version is imminent. It works like a sat nav for singles; alerting you to interested guys wherever you are, be it a nightclub or a new country. And with Grindr already attracting 8,000 new users a day, it's set to be a huge deal. To sign up pre-launch, visit projectamicus.com

SPEED PLATING

Combining food (hence the 'plating') and finding love, New York's hottest singles craze is speed dating meets *Come Dine With Me*. It takes place in two ways: at a dinner party, where each guest brings an unattached member of the opposite sex and some food, or at a 'speed plating'

night in a restaurant, where you have 20 minutes to eat a course and suss out a potential match. There aren't any organised 'speed plating' events in the UK yet, so why not get a bunch of single mates together and set one up at your favourite restaurant?

HOW ABOUT WE...?

Anyone who's tried online dating knows it can be a *long* process – hours spent creating a profile, plus the agony of crafting a wow first email. To cut out both, new website howaboutwe.com lets you post a photo and an introductory question, ie 'How about we... have a picnic in the park/watch a film/hunt for the perfect Mojito'. There's zero email-initiating awkwardness, and you get a date in the bag before you end up as pen pals who don't fancy each other when you do finally meet.

THINGS YOU NEVER WANT TO HEAR WHEN YOU'RE SINGLE

"On my birthday this year, my brother said to me, 'So, now you're 31 you'd really better get cracking, Sis – you know, before all your eggs are dead.'"

Kate, 31, Birmingham

"When I told my married friend I was going to give online dating a go, she replied, 'Oh good for you! I mean, I don't think I could do it – I don't like the idea of having to pay to meet men – but it sounds perfect for you.'"

Rachel, 27, Stafford

"I'd been single for a year when my coupled-up friend said, grudgingly, 'It's really unfair – think of all the money *you* save on shaving and waxing. You don't even have to wash your hair because no one sees it.'"

Chrissy, 29, Portsmouth

"After two years of being single (and enjoying lots of no-strings sex), I was asked by my mum if my female flatmate was 'my special friend'. Apparently, not having a man made me gay. I told her, 'No, mother' and she replied 'Thank goodness... I know you've got better taste.'"

Jenny, 32, Cardiff ►



GLAMOUR PLAYS

CUPID

We put our matchmaking skills to good use. Sort of

The latest ways to hook up are fun, but whatever happened to the booze-induced excitement of simply meeting a bloke on a night out? Armed with Cupid's bow and a photographer, GLAMOUR hit the bars to find 12 unsuspecting strangers, couple them up and eavesdrop on their chat. Then we caught up with them a few days later for the sober truth.

Terry Donovan, product manager at Topman, and **Nicola Petts**, an accessories designer



Nicola Let me buy you a drink.

Terry That's nice of you. Makes a change for the girl to buy the drinks.

Nicola I work here part-time. I'm technically on-shift now.

Terry Must've been hard working in that blackout – it was all over Soho, wasn't it?

Nicola All this street, definitely. The joys of bar work. Where's your accent from?

Terry Newcastle. I've been in London for four years, though. I'll come to this bar more now that I've met you.

THE MONDAY AFTER...

Nicola Nothing happened that night. Actually, he

disappeared, which is a shame – I hope he pops into the bar again. He's cute – so, we'll see!

Terry I didn't take her number because I felt we didn't really hit it off. But she was a good-looking girl (although I tend to go for blondes).

David Woolman, a property developer, and **Diva Renton-Roderix**, a global campaigns executive

David I've never been to Mahiki before.

Diva Me neither. How did you end up here?

David I just went out for dinner with my mate and he suggested it. It's cool. Not my normal hangout, but I like it.

Diva And now you've met me, is that making it a good night?!

David A great night, yeah. Wait, are you being sarcastic?

Diva No! Ha.



THE MONDAY AFTER...

Diva We spoke for a while then I went to dance. I can usually tell straight away if I'm into a guy, but there was no real chemistry.

David Diva's very pretty, but quite hippy-ish and into drum'n'bass music, whereas I like house. It never would have worked!" ▶

Sebastien Angelats, a clock mender, and **Nicola Mitchell**, a teacher

Nicola Are you really a clock mender?

Seb Yep.

Nicola You won't believe this, but I used to want to be a clock mender when I was little.

Seb Stop it.

Nicola I'm not joking. It was after reading *My Little Pony*. There was a story about mending clocks – I think that was where I got the idea!

Seb I don't believe it! Here, let me buy you another drink.



♥ THE MONDAY AFTER...

Seb Nicola was very pretty. I took her number, but had to go away this week so haven't texted her yet.

Nicola We discussed a date, but neither of us has texted.

John Morales, works with adults with physical disabilities, and **Lisa Howells**, a journalist

John I'm training for the UK air guitar championships at the moment.

Lisa Air guitar? Will you show me some now?

John Alas, I have to keep my moves under wraps. I can show you a picture though... [gets out phone] This is me last year.

Lisa Is that a Lycra leotard?!

John It is, yeah!

Lisa Impressive.

John So, where do you work?

Lisa On a pregnancy magazine, although I'm in no rush to have children!



♥ THE MONDAY AFTER...

John Lisa was nice, we chatted for a while, but her not loving kids pretty much killed it for me!

Lisa John was a great guy, but the chemistry wasn't there.

Patrick Giddi, a waiter, and **Laura Scholes**, an advertising account director

Laura Where are you from originally?

Patrick Kosovo. I've worked in this bar for a couple of years. Where do you work?

Laura In advertising, just around the corner. Our friend is getting married soon so we're celebrating.

Patrick This is going to sound really corny, but when you walked in, I actually said to my friend that I liked you...

Laura That's not corny!



♥ THE MONDAY AFTER...

Laura He was really sweet, wasn't he?! We didn't swap numbers, but next time I'm in there I'll definitely talk to him.

Patrick Laura was definitely my type. Cool, very pretty. I'd like to see her again, but I was so busy I never got her number – can you pass it on?

James Butler, a software programmer, and **Krishna Patel**, an optician

Krishna So, what do you do?

James I make mobile phone apps. I just made a McDonald's app, so you can find your nearest McDonald's.

Krishna Cool. I might have to download it. I bet that's popular in America, right?

James It's fairly new. We're waiting to sign a deal for the US. Are you staying for a bit then?

Krishna Sure, I'll stay to finish my drink.



♥ THE MONDAY AFTER...

James Alas, no further developments with Krishna, although she seemed lovely. In a slightly odd turn of events, her friend gave me *her* number. We've texted, but not met up yet.

Krishna We had a fun evening, but I do have a boyfriend, so it was just a friendly thing for me. ►



AMERICANS vs BRITS

Don't get confused: the language of dating is not universal



THE SCENARIO	THE AMERICAN MAN...	THE BRITISH MAN...
Boy likes girl	Immediately sends a text message asking if she would like to "hang out some time".	Follows the three-day rule: silence. On day four, he sends a vague text message, eg: "How are you?"
First minute of the date	Displays brazen confidence, beginning with a joke about his dating prowess.	Launches into apologies about the choice of venue, the weather, the music.
End of date	Valiantly attempts to go home with you, through a two-hour charm offensive of alcohol, jokes, touching and playful making out.	Spends 20 minutes debating in his own head whether or not to kiss you. Ends with a respectful embrace.
Dates two to four	Suggests increasingly touchy-feely date activities, like visiting hot tubs, or couples' massage.	Disappears from communication for three or four days at a time and, when asking you out, repeatedly suggests the same pub.
Post-coital cuddling	Smiles, closes eyes, and goes to sleep.	Apologises: for the rate of thrusting, the mattress quality, the music.

THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN MR RIGHT

Awesome women who don't need long-term monogamy, thank you very much

I'm just fine alone

Says GLAMOUR's Gemma Askham, 28, from Norwich. "After a spell of friends-with-benefits sex that benefited no one except my commitment-phobe ex, in August 2008, I decided to stop doing 'it' full stop. I still had tipsy kisses with guys, but no looking for love, no dating, no sex. It was beyond liberating. I freed my head from the baggage of past break-ups and revelled in being strong, independent and selfish. I loved the fact I could blow £60 on a new top instead of a meal with a man. I had the freedom (and guts) to holiday alone. The sex-break ended in November 2010 – there's only so long the human body can go without certain things – but, even now, it would take a *lot* for me to give up being single."

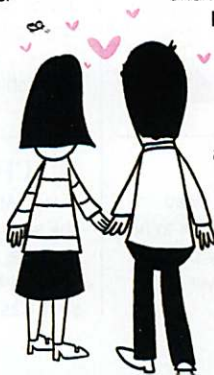
I love that my career comes first

Says Chloe Barkley, 34, from Southampton. "After years working in marketing (which I hated) and flogging a long-term relationship to death, I decided a change of direction was in order. Just six months into my

photography degree, I genuinely felt like, 'This is it, I've found the passion I've been missing all these years.' Now, four years on, my main focus is my career; I have flings, and yes, the occasional one-night stand, but for now, and the foreseeable future, my love for my career and my friends is everything I need."

I like flirting online, but don't want love

Says Sarah Ketterring, 30, from Cheltenham. "I was married once – a young, silly, seven-month mistake – and now I only want the opposite. That's not to say I don't enjoy male company, I do. But now I get the buzz from 'dating' online – and, most importantly, *overseas*. There are no crossed wires that it's going to go somewhere when the other person lives 1,500 miles away. As I travel a lot for my job, I often meet up with the men I chat to on iloveyouacc.com. What better way to get to know a new area than with a man you already class as a 'friend'? But then I fly home the day after, and that's it." ©



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wow!
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