

# Dinner and a movie can be fresh, frugal

STAFF REPORT

For Valentine's Day, there always seems to be a frenzy for everything to be big, ostentatious and completely over the top — and those who follow suit never seem to be mum when it comes to letting others know how much the whole ordeal cost.

But if you're the average college student — a creature usually found stuffing his or her hand between the couch cushions, in hopes of scrounging up enough change to buy something off Wendy's 99-cent menu — there's still hope to have a memorable holiday on a meager budget.

We're all familiar with that old dating standby, the Dinner and Movie. On a normal day, it's often a solid move. But for a special event, it's tired.

Try a new twist: Take your companion on a candlelit picnic and catch a local film festival.

Let's face it — everyone and his mother is going to be flooding Franklin Street on Monday, trying to snag a cramped table at any of its

fine eating establishments.

Avoid the whole mess. Swing by the grocery store, pick up a bottle of wine, a couple of your favorite foods (Harris Teeter even sells ready-made rotisserie chickens for the kitchen-phobic), some candles, a lighter and disposal utensils. Yank a blanket off your bed.

Find a secluded space somewhere if you're looking for some quality alone time. The best bet on campus is Coker Arboretum.

But if you have a car and don't mind a little bit of a drive, there's no beating the Sarah P. Duke Gardens in Durham. If you plan on going, make it an early dinner — the park closes at dusk.

If you're a bit of an exhibitionist, why not have your picnic on Polk Place or McCorkle Place, where everyone can see you? That works for some people.

If your date's particularly shy — or if the weather is particularly cold, rainy or otherwise nasty — make it an indoor meal. Ditch the table and formalities and cozy up with your blanket tossed on the

living room floor.

In almost any form, the picnic will be a recipe for instance romance. Oh, and you'll spend about a fraction of what you would at any restaurant. Except maybe McDonald's. But don't take a date there. Just don't.

For a cheaper, more unique movie alternative, check out Flicker Chapel Hill, a film festival that started in 1994 to showcase movies that are shot exclusively on film.

The bi-monthly screenings — always held at Cat's Cradle, located at 300 E. Main St. in Carrboro — feature original short super 8-mm, 16-mm and 35-mm films that are no longer than 15 minutes.

Doors for the event open at 8 p.m., and the reels start rolling at 8:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$3 at the door — less than half the price of a regular movie ticket.

Contact the Features Editor at [features@unc.edu](mailto:features@unc.edu).

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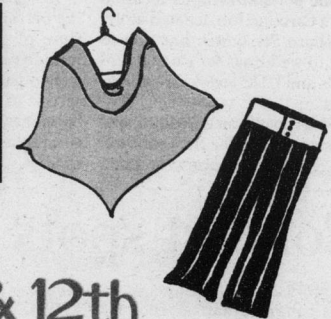
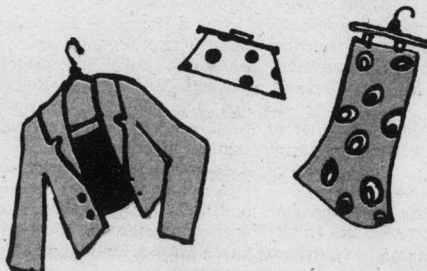
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