

Pitt students search for Pittsburgh date spots this Valentine's Day

By Sarah Demchak, Staff Writer

Romance, love and anxious crushes float throughout the Pittsburgh air this week with Valentine's Day right around the corner. From quirky cafes and art museums to picnics and ice skating — Pittsburgh has a plethora of date spots for Pitt lovebirds.

The Pittsburgh museums are free for students with their Panther card. For example, Pitt students can attend the Andy Warhol Museum, the Carnegie Museums of Art and Natural History, the Mattress Factory and more free of charge. For those looking to save even more money and use their meal plan, there are many Oakland restaurants that accept dining dollars and Panther Funds. Oishii Bento, Pamela's Diner and The Milkshake Factory are just a handful of options that take dining dollars.

Cameron Chase, a junior environmental studies major, has taken advantage of student perks to save money on dates. She said her favorite date was going to Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens and eating at The Porch afterward.

"One of my favorite date spots was going to Phipps just because it's so close to campus, plus we get in free with our Pitt IDs, that made it super easy to even just go there with friends or a date," Chase said. "After going to Phipps, I also went to The Porch, which was really good because their pizza is amazing — chef's kiss."

Lauren Lussier, a junior chemistry major, also enjoyed Phipps and The Porch as date spots. She said the ideal location and the garden's constant variety makes it a great place to visit.

"Going to Phipps and walking around and then eating at The Porch or something a little more formal down in Oakland would definitely be my favorite because it's simple and easy, especially for us because we can just walk there," Lussier said. "It's fun because Phipps is always so different every time you go, and it's romantic because there's so many flowers and there's picture spots."

Running with the broke college student trope, Oakland offers pretty areas to simply meander around with a date, according to Gileanna Ortiz, a junior chemistry major. Schenley Park has miles of hiking trails to explore for those looking for an active excursion. The Cathedral lawn holds lots of potential too. Lussier said one of her favorite dates was a picnic in front of Cathy.

"I've had someone do a picnic for me outside of Cathy once — that was cute," Lussier said. "He got food from The Porch and we sat on a blanket outside of Cathy and had a picnic. I think the picnic on Cathy lawn is really sweet because it's really romantic. You can dress it up or dress it down depending on what you want to do with it."

Venturing outside of Oakland, there are many other date spots in Pittsburgh's neighborhoods, such as Lawrenceville, Downtown, the Strip District, South Side and North Shore. Ortiz enjoyed visiting Lawrenceville with her date because there is a lot to explore.

"Lawrenceville has a lot of really nice things," Ortiz said. "We just walked down Butler Street, looked at all the cute shops, got lunch and played pinball at Kickback Pinball Cafe."

Sports fans can take their dates to see the Steelers, the Penguins or the Riverhounds. Heinz Field is located in the North Shore, the PPG Paints Arena is in Downtown and Highmark Stadium is located in the South Side.



Romita Das | Senior Staff Photographer

The Porch in Schenley Plaza.

Lussier enjoyed attending a Riverhounds game. The Pittsburgh's soccer team's stadium is located near the Monongahela Incline. Both Chase and Lussier enjoyed taking the Monongahela Incline up to Mount Washington, remarking on its iconic picture spots and pretty views. Lussier said the restaurants in Mount Washington are quite expensive, but there are some dessert shops up there that college students can still enjoy.

"It's kind of fun to just walk around up there and look at the restaurants," Lussier said. "There are crepe places and ice cream places that you can stand outside and eat, I think that's cute."

For those looking for more adventure, head Downtown to go ice skating at the Ice Rink at PPG Place. With a Pitt ID, students can skate for \$5.50 on Wednesdays. Ortiz said this date was a little tricky with all the slips and falls, but ultimately was a great time.

"We went ice skating, which was a little hard, but also really fun," Ortiz said. "Yeah, we may have slipped a bunch of times, but we also laughed so much that day."

Located in the Strip District, Coop de Ville offers Southern food, drinks, bowling, classic arcade games, pinball machines and pool tables. Ortiz has not been here, but has only heard great things. She said it sounds like an exciting place to go with a date because it has so much to offer.

"I would like to go to Coop de Ville because I heard that it is really fun," Ortiz said. "It sounds like there is no way someone could get bored there with all the games you can play."

Pittsburgh has so much to offer students this Valentine's Day and throughout the semester, according to Chase. She encourages students to get out and explore the City with someone they love. Chase said they should find time out of their busy school schedules to really enjoy a nice date in the City.

"You're not just sitting in the library doing work together or doing some club activity that you're both in together," Chase said. "You are getting out, exploring and doing something different."