

TUSCALOOSA, Ala.— Tuscaloosa, Alabama, seemingly just another SEC college town, could be the perfect romantic getaway for two valentines looking to spend a special day together. For a day full of shades of red, here is how to spend Valentine's Day in a town in love with crimson.

Senior couple EllieRay and David have been dating since the tenth grade. In all those years, they have preferred Valentine's Day to be spent as a day activity.

“Valentine's Day is often used for just a nice dinner date, but that to me is wasting a holiday,” EllieRay said, “I'd rather spend a day out with David, trying date ideas we don't normally do.”

With the advice of EllieRay and David, with three Tuscaloosa Valentine's Days under their belt, this is a cupid-worthy guide to spending Valentine's Day in Tuscaloosa.

Although breakfast in bed is a classic option, let's start the day with an energizing breakfast or coffee spot. A morning focused on love could be well spent at Just Love Coffee Cafe. Located on University Boulevard in downtown Tuscaloosa, Just Love offers many classic breakfast options as well as a vast menu of exciting morning beverages.

Around lunchtime, there are many great spots around Tuscaloosa. Five Bar is a very popular choice for lunch and dinner, with the appeal widely being the menu of only five items and the ambient atmosphere. “With our usual five menu items,” Natalie Thomas, general manager at Five Bar, said. “We will be adding five more specialty items for Valentine's dinner.”

Interested in a fresh, filling meal? The additional entrees will be roasted root vegetable salad with a creole mustard vinaigrette and roasted chicken with herb battered linguini and collard greens, easily shareable plates for two valentines. Want something even sweeter than your valentine? Finish the meal with a sweet tooth fix, either with their specialty dessert,

tiramisu tart, or a dessert cocktail such as a chocolate cherry old fashioned or chocolate strawberry martini.

Five Bar, however, does not take reservations, so to save time an afternoon picnic could be a romantic way to spend the day. Either enjoy the almost four-mile River Walk or, requiring a slight hike, a picnic in Van De Graaf Park and Arboretum. Van De Graaf offers many walking trails, picnic spots and a pond.

If Cupid is shooting hoops instead of arrows, sports fans can enjoy an Alabama baseball game — a perfect way to unwind and spend some time outdoors together. Luckily, Alabama will be playing the Bradley Braves on Feb. 14 at 4 p.m.. If romance turns into competitive spirit, compete in mini golf at PopStroke or bowling and arcade games at Bowlero.

Now, on to what some may consider the most crucial part of the day — the romantic dinner. Some of the most popular dinner spots include Chuck's Fish, Dillard's Chophouse and Forte.

For the homebody valentines, the night can still be just as special and romantic inside the comfort of your own home. David and EllieRay have been prone to choose takeout and a movie over a dinner out on the town. "For past Valentine's days, I've tried to plan fun activities in the day, including meals in new places," David said, "and then just ending the night comfortably at home."

Located at the top of The Alamite Hotel in Downtown Tuscaloosa, Roll Call is a rooftop bar and restaurant ideal for pre-dinner drinks. Roll Call will not be offering any special drinks or Valentine-themed specials. However, after enjoying rooftop drinks, make your way to the bottom of the hotel, where "Forte will be offering a four-course dinner menu for the holiday," said Ciara Daniel, director of sales and marketing for The Alamite Hotel.

After a long day of exploring the city and with a full stomach, it is time to sit back and relax. Jon Langston will be performing at Druid City Music Hall on The Strip for the country music fans.

And just like that, EllieRay and David will be spending their seventh Valentine's Day together. Whether you take their advice or create your own Tuscaloosa romantic getaway, remember all that really matters is creating that Instagram-worthy hard launch post.

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