

## **DRESSED TO THRILL**

### **Creating the Perfect Couples Costume**

It's barely October and the Halloween party Evites are already piling up in your inbox. Maybe one of them is a couples costume party, or maybe you and your significant other just like to match. Whatever the situation, follow these helpful tips to avoid getting lost in a jungle of Tarzans and Janes.

#### **CHOOSE YOUR COUPLE**

First, consider your pairing. Will your date be your boyfriend, your best friend, or your teacup chihuahua? Some costumes are obviously better suited to specific couplings, but a little bit of gender-bending is always fun, too. How about an all-male Laverne and Shirley, or a male Bonnie and a female Clyde?

#### **AVOID THE OBVIOUS**

Everyone has been to at least one couples party overrun with Freds and Wilmas, or a few too many nuns and priests. Be creative! Pick a theme based on your interests, and don't feel limited to human pairings--with two colored sweatsuits and a touch of inspiration, anything from "peanut butter and jelly" to "Miss Piggy and Kermit" can make for a winning costume.

Keep in mind the importance of choosing a duo that your friends will recognize. "Ulna and radius" might *sound* like a good idea, but unless your friends are doctors or you're prepared to spend the night explaining your concept, it's probably best to go with something a little less abstract.

#### **MAKE A PLAN**

Are you planning to start from scratch, or would you prefer to have the hard work done for you? Pre-made costumes make for easy, one-stop shopping, and all necessary pieces (usually minus shoes) are included. At the same time, there's a good chance that at least one other couple will arrive wearing the *exact same thing*. Make your own outfits and you're guaranteed to avoid a "who wore it better?" moment.

#### **SET A BUDGET**

Next, decide how much you want to spend. If you're on a strict budget, choose a concept that you'll be able to execute without spending a fortune, or one utilizing stuff you already have around the house. (A Halloween costume is not the place to invest a lot of money, since you'll likely only wear your creation a handful of times.) And don't pick anything that relies on expensive wigs or special makeup, especially if you only want to spend a few bucks--even the "cheap" Halloween versions of these items will run costs up pretty quickly.

## **SHOP AROUND**

Check out your local Halloween shop if you're planning to buy a pre-packaged costume, but don't forget about Internet sources. Online retailers like Buy Costumes ([www.buycostumes.com](http://www.buycostumes.com)) and Costume Craze ([www.costumecraze.com](http://www.costumecraze.com)) stock the same items as brick-and-mortar stores, but at a fraction of the price. Some, like Costumes 4 Less ([www.costumes4less.com](http://www.costumes4less.com)), will even match other retailers' prices. And once you find the packaged costume you'd like to purchase, try Googling the name or style number--it's an easy way to track down the best deal.

## **HIT THE THRIFT STORE**

You'll be amazed at the costume gems you can uncover at your local Goodwill or Salvation Army, and they'll cost you next-to-nothing. Pick up a couple of tie-dyed tee shirts and an ice cream scoop and go as Ben and Jerry, or score some great eighties duds (thrift stores are loaded with them) and do your best Cliff and Claire Huxtable. Coogi sweater a must!

## **GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY**

Remember the stuff that made childhood craft time so much fun? The same basic supplies--felt, ribbon, styrofoam balls, pipe cleaners, yarn, colored foam, paint, markers, poster board, even clay--can turn generic pieces from a Halloween store (or even last year's leftover costume) into a top-notch disguise. Art supplies are inexpensive and readily available at hobby shops, craft stores, and big box retailers. It's a bonus if you have access to a sewing machine, but duct tape, hot glue, or adhesives like Magna-Tac or Sobo will work just as well for short-term use.

## **CALL THE PROS**

If you aren't feeling creative but still want a unique look, consider renting costumes for your event. Many community theatres and college drama departments offer reasonably-priced rentals. Just don't leave renting until the last-minute. Wait until the day before and you might end up going as a Maria Von Trapp and a Christmas Elf.

## **POSSIBLE SIDEBARS:**

### **Ten Unique Couples Costumes:**

- Abercrombie & Fitch
- American Gothic
- John & Yoko (or Lennon & McCartney)
- Zach Morris & Kelly Kapowski
- Julia & Paul Child
- Oprah & Stedman
- Bacon & Eggs
- Dorothy Zbornak & Sophia Petrillo
- Cindy Loo Who & Grinch
- Justin Bieber & Tween Fan

### **Couple Cliches to Avoid:**

- Adam & Eve-
- Danny & Sandy
- Nun & Priest
- Fred & Wilma Flintstone
- Sonny & Cher
- Tarzan & Jane
- Antony & Cleopatra
- Doctor & Nurse
- King & Queen
- William & Kate (sure to be popular this year)

### **If Your Pet Is Your Date:**

- Mary & Little Lamb
- Annie & Sandy
- Elle Woods & Bruiser
- Dorothy & Toto
- Charlie Brown & Snoopy
- Alice & Cheshire Cat
- Calvin & Hobbes

### **Looking for a New Twist? Go as Famous Rivals Instead:**

- David Letterman & Jay Leno (or Jay Leno & Conan O'Brien)
- Jerry & Newman
- Nancy Kerrigan & Tonya Harding
- Ronald McDonald & Burger King Clown (or Wendy from Wendy's)
- Will Schuester & Sue Sylvester
- Mark Zuckerberg & Wilklevii
- Tiger Woods & Phil Mickelson
- Tupac & Biggy Smalls
- PC & Mac (Gates & Jobs)
- Mozart & Salieri