

Single For Valentine's Day? Today 6 million Brits Are On The Dating Scene

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With Valentine's day approaching, the focus of many consumers will be on love and romance - and latest research from Mintel reveals that there may be plenty of choice out there - as 15% of Brits are on the dating scene - the equivalent of 6 million adults.

The number of those on the dating scene compared to 58% of Brits married or living together and 27% are not on the dating scene.

But when it comes to single Brits, it appears it is men who are missing romance the most. Indeed, seven in 10 single men (69%) don't like being single compared to three in 10 (31%) single women. Men are also more likely than women to say "I am OK, but would be happier if I was in a relationship" - almost half (47%) of single men say this compared to just over four in 10 (41%) single women.

Overall, over half (55%) of singles agree they would rather be in a relationship, but only slightly over one in 10 (11%) say they dislike being on their own. Conversely, over half (52%) of single women say they are perfectly happy not being attached (versus 39% for single men).

Alexandra Richmond, Senior Consumer and Lifestyles analyst at Mintel, said:

"Those single for Valentine's day this year should remember that there is plenty of opportunity out there - as a massive 6 million Brits in the UK today are actively on the dating scene. There are benefits to being single with single men and women being more likely than those in couples to feel that they don't have to justify their expenditure, they buy themselves more treats and more than half have plenty of time to spend with their friends compared to around one in three who are in a couple. These singles are also exploring new things, trying out new clubs, restaurants and activities. In many ways, they are living life to the full compared to their coupled friends."

"But of those single, it is women who are happiest being that way. We have noted the delay in marriage and motherhood before as well as the growing financial clout of Gen Y women for some time now. Marriage and having children is increasingly being put on the back-burner by many younger women today. Many put their education and careers first, and as a result, women are more financially independent and self-sufficient than ever before. While it appears that it is men more than women who are missing romance - the stigma associated with being single has virtually disappeared and more singletons are perfectly content with their dating status." Alexandra continues.

Today, those who are single are more likely to focus on their careers (35% compared to 17% of married/ living as married) whilst those who are married or living as married plan to make home improvements (26% compared to 14% of singles). When it comes to the advantages of being single in Britain today - it appears freedom is key. Indeed, 62% of singles claim "I have more freedom, do what I want, when I want and with who I want".

Time to yourself (60%), a less complicated life 51% and fewer responsibilities (46%) are also top advantages for singles Brits. However, a quarter (25%) claim to have less money to spend when all their bills are paid, 23% claim that "there are some things I can't afford to do on my own" (e.g. buy a house/car/go on holiday) and nearly one in five (19%) claim to feel less secure.

Other top advantages of being single that men were more likely to cite are socializing more (23%) and going out drinking more (20%), as well as doing more exercise (26%). Even though single men generally do not have a fear of losing their personal space while in a relationship, they are more likely to say they have fewer responsibilities when they are single (49%). Those unhappily single on Valentines day this year may have one consolation though, as having an "other half" doesn't mean you've always got company - only half (50%) of couples say that they socialise as a together.

The research also ties in to the Mintel Inspire trend "The Power of One". There's a growing demand for single-sized products that cater to the independent needs of these singletons, especially as they embrace their status and become less willing to compromise their tastes and needs to those of others. It also finds a new demand for services that combat isolation like dating events or those that offer socializing with like-minded individuals.

Catherine McColl, Inspire Trends Analyst at Mintel, said:

"Not so very long ago, singledom carried a sense of shame. To be divorced, or worse, having never married, suggested there was something "wrong" with you. Today, not only has society become far less critical of singlehood, but we've actually become more critical of marriage - especially as weddings become more expensive and divorce rates continue to grow. In this respect, "being single" has become the new normal. It's also worth noting the rise in women's earnings has played in this. Those who might have once felt compelled to marry for financial security no longer need do so."

Source: Mintel Oxygen Reports

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