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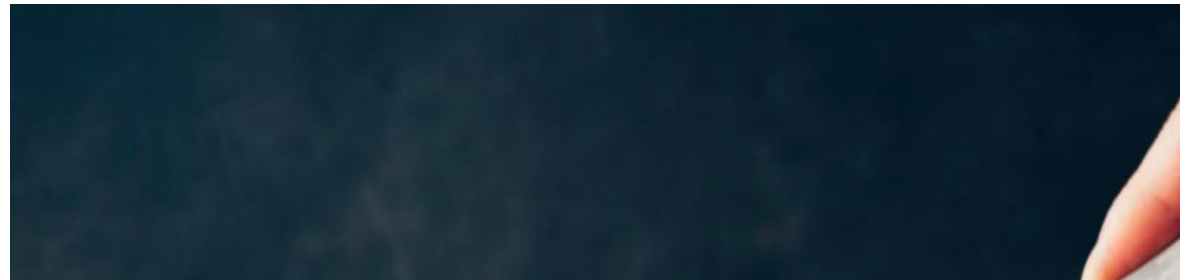
VALENTINE'S DAY

How to Make a Killer Valentine's Day Dinner at a Gas Station

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Imagine it's [Valentine's Day](#), it's getting near dinner time, and the usual options aren't all that appealing (or simply aren't possible.) You've got nothing to eat at home; your favorite neighborhood restaurants are either booked solid or forcing diners to pay for exorbitant tasting menus; takeout places are running more than an hour wait time; you've got nothing to eat at in the house; and the thought of trekking to the grocery store in the cold on a Sunday evening just sounds like a bit more than you can bear. Well, if you live near [a convenience store](#), minimart, liquor store, or even just a gas station, there's hope of being able to grab what you need in just five minutes inside the store and whipping up an easy Valentine's Day dinner for two. Here, some convenience-store hacks to use in a pinch. It might not be lobster and caviar, but it'll do. Oh, and next year? Plan ahead.





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Pasta Dishes

If you can find a box of spaghetti or other pasta, the world is your oyster (whoops, didn't mean to mention oysters, those aren't usually available at minimarts). You just need a few other ingredients from the store and a little creativity.

Spaghetti Carbonara: All you really need to pull off this [classic pasta dish](#) are eggs, black pepper, olive oil, parmesan cheese (which you'll have to grab from the shelf, as they probably won't have the refrigerated kind), and some kind of pork. We actually found a [single-serving of prosciutto](#) at a 7-11, but bacon or even deli ham will do. For a little extra richness, throw in some heavy cream or half and half.

Spaghetti With Browned Butter Sauce: It doesn't get [any simpler](#). Heat a few tablespoons of butter over medium-high heat until the butter begins to foam and starts to brown, then toss with the pasta.

Spaghetti With Sardines and Lemon: We couldn't help but notice that that every store we visited carried sardines. (Some even offered more than one brand). To use the ubiquitous shelf-stable fish in a [pasta dish](#), grab a couple of tins, sauté with olive oil, lemon, salt, pepper, and maybe some capers, which we spotted at a few stores

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and toss with your pasta. If you feel like going the extra mile, buy a loaf of sliced bread to make some simple breadcrumbs to add a bit of texture.

Spaghetti With Tomato Sauce: Yes, we mean the jarred kind that every convenience store sells. Hey, no judgments. It's fast, easy, and cheap. (We're sure there's a Valentine's Day date joke in there somewhere.)

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