

# Top 5 Don't Tips for Interracial Dating



By Rachel Khona

She's hot. She's cute. And she just so happens to be of another race. These days, dating someone outside of your own culture is hardly taboo, particularly if you live in a major city. But potential family issues aside, interracial dating can provide its own set of minefields, particularly when it comes to the initial pickup. Here are some handy tips:

## **1. Don't use her race as a pickup line**

As a minority, I've encountered my fair share of men who think the easiest way into my pants is to use my ethnicity as

a pickup line. The numerous times men have resorted to racial stereotypes to pick me up are endless. The problem is, while these men may have good intentions, their execution is poor. They forget to take into account that women of other races are people, too – people who don't necessarily walk around thinking about their ethnicity or nationality all day.

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## **2. Don't assume you know what her race is**

As an added twist, no one really seems to know what I am. Guys try to discern what my ethnic makeup is, and my friends even take bets on what he's going to guess. Usually it's some form of Latina, often Mexican or Puerto Rican, but sometimes men branch out to Columbian or Chilean.

Alas, I'm none of the above. I'm Indian.

But that doesn't stop men from walking up to me in bars and saying "Hola!" or "Como esta?" Failing to relate to me as a person, they immediately use race as a cheap tactic to start a conversation. One man even went so far as to say I'm sassy because of all that Latin blood running through me. I am sassy, but being Latina has nothing to do with it.

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## **3. Don't act as though she's not American, Canadian, Australian...**

Not all of these men are uneducated, dumb or otherwise ignorant. Everyone from lawyers, businessmen, police officers and artists have asked me where I'm from, seemingly perplexed when I respond "New Jersey," as if that couldn't possibly be the right answer. "No, where are you really from?" they ask again. When I once told a man I was Indian, he responded by saying, "You're not all Ganesh and stuff."

He was right. Funnily enough, I didn't have eight arms or walk

around in a sari. I was raised in New Jersey. I pepper my sentences with “like” and “omigod.” I have a predilection for classic rock, going to the shore and dive bars. My life is not a Bollywood movie. I am more likely to be found joining every other red-blooded American singing “Don’t Stop Believing” at a bar than dancing to Bhangra music. For all intents and purposes, I am as American as anyone else. Yes, I am of Indian heritage and proud of it, but that’s hardly all there is to me.

#### **4. Don’t pretend to be culturally enlightened**

Some men attempt to use race as a way to prove how culturally enlightened they are. Case in point: As I was writing this article at an airport bar, the bartender asked me what ethnicity I was. When I told him I’m Indian, he responded by saying, “That’s what I thought. I’ve traveled to India quite a bit, so I could tell.”

I didn’t believe him, of course, as even Indian people often don’t know that I’m Indian. What I believed is that he was attempting to impress me with his worldliness. I imagine I could have said Brazil, Italy or Iran, and he probably would have said the same thing. When I expressed my surprise, he continued by telling me most people are ignorant for assuming I’m Latina.

Even one of my closest Indian friends thought I was Puerto Rican upon first meeting me. I hardly consider my friend to be ignorant. In dissing everyone else who thought differently, it’s as if he sought to show me how culturally enlightened he was. Not only did he assume that everyone else is just an unintelligent a-hole, he made the dire mistake of behaving like a know-it-all.

He then dropped the fact that he used to date an Indian girl. I wondered if I should respond, “Oh, I used to date a white guy. I’ve traveled all over America, Canada and Europe, so I

know a lot about white people.” I decided against it. He continued to tell me everything he knew about India, and even peppered the conversation with a few Punjabi phrases. My family doesn’t speak Punjabi and isn’t from Punjab. Not even close.

## **5. Don’t stereotype**

Regardless of what end of the spectrum these men fell on, they didn’t realize how simple-minded they were showing themselves to truly be. They relied on racial stereotypes.

There’s nothing wrong with talking about race with a woman, but it shouldn’t be the first thing that comes out of your mouth. It should be something that comes up organically in the conversation, not a way to impress her. If you find yourself interested in a woman of another race, whether she is Asian, Latina, or black, get to know her as a person first. Nobody wants to be reduced to a stereotype, and if that’s what you resort to when meeting a woman, you most certainly will not get very far.

*Rachel Khona is a model broker and writer. She serves as a contributing editor for Vaga, and has written for Cosmopolitan, Inked, Treats, Richardson, Your Tango, and Ask Men. She’s often consulted for her dating knowledge, though she claims to know next to nothing about men.*