

Swiping Right for Friends

Carly and I met for brunch at Tart, a cozy restaurant on Fairfax Avenue in Los Angeles. I arrived first. I had to parallel park my Civic a few blocks away, but if you know LA, you know that's not so bad. Of course, on my way in the door, I realized I never fed the meter so I turned right back around. I wasn't in the mood for a seventy-five dollar ticket that day.

The host sat me down at a petite table for two on the outdoor terrace. String lights and ivy decorated the canopy above. It was prime time brunch hour so I was scoping out the options. Avocado toast and mimosas mostly, with the occasional minty cocktail, my personal preference.

I was nervous. When Carly walked in I recognized her right away. She wore a cute pair of overalls with an off the shoulder crop top and a straw satchel. She had long waves of blonde hair and light blue eyes that mirrored the sky. I looked okay, I thought. I could have tried harder.

She sat down and the conversation was pretty effortless. We ordered the same thing to eat, two Egg Benedicts, and shared our cocktails by passing them back and forth. So, when she asked me what I was doing for the Super Bowl that evening and I told her I was going to a co-worker's party, it felt natural to then ask, 'do you want to come with?'

And she did. She followed me in her baby blue Mini Coop to my co-worker Josh's apartment. I hardly knew Josh, because I had only moved to LA and started my first full-time job three weeks prior. He welcomed us in by handing us a couple beers. We threw in some money for Squares, played 'Guess the Gaga' where we guessed which songs Lady Gaga would sing during her halftime performance, and ate a lot of greasy food. Carly and I continued to hit it off, and to everyone else, it looked like we'd been friends for years.

This was the year the Patriots trailed the Falcons by 25 points, and after halftime, Brady led New England on five straight scoring drives and they won the game. As a New Englander, I was on the edge of

my seat and kept conversation to a minimum. After the adrenaline and shock subsided and the game finally ended, Josh turned to us and said, ‘so, how did you two meet?’

We looked at each other and laughed. We met on BumbleBFF. That day.

You may recognize Bumble as the dating app, or you may know it’s competitor Tinder. You swipe right or left on photos of single people in your area depending on your interests. Bumble came out with a feature called BumbleBFF, which in essence works the same, except the intention is to find friends in your area rather than significant others.

When we told Josh and his group of friends, I could sense they found it a bit weird. And it is weird at first. But, I also saw it as optimizing my resources. Carly and I walked out of Josh’s apartment and made plans to see each other again soon. Despite walking out to a seventy-five dollar ticket on my windshield (you really can’t escape it), it was the perfect way to start my social life in this new, unfamiliar city. Merely a week after the Super Bowl, Carly and I were drinking Bud Light on the side of the road overlooking Malibu Beach and decided we were going to spend a quarter of our monthly income to buy last-minute Coachella tickets. It’s been over a year, and she’s still one of my closest friends.

Since then, I’ve met a handful of other girlfriends who have genuinely impacted my life. I’ve gotten over the discomfort of swiping for friends and I use it when I’m traveling alone to meet people for drinks (link to 24h in Paris) and do more social oriented things that seem more difficult when I’m on my own.

I recently moved to Zürich, Switzerland and one of the first things I did was open my BumbleBFF app. It expedited everything for me. I was hardly unpacked before making plans for a ski weekend in Crans Montana, or staying overnight in an [Igloo](#) at Engelberg, or checking out Swing Jazz at a local bar called La Bohème. Sure, these are things I could do on my own. But, moving to a foreign city with, in this case, significant language barriers, it was daunting enough. We seek companionship in many things that we do, even more so when we are uncomfortable and unfamiliar with a place.

BumbleBFF is [not only for women](#). Ninety percent of male bumble users have opted in for the feature, too. And BumbleBFF isn't the only app out there, either. [Check out](#) some of these other social apps that help connect you with like-minded people.

Social media, in a lot of ways, can take away from our face-to-face connections, and in that sense, I try to limit my daily use. But, there are ways platforms have revolutionized the way we connect with others, specifically people we would never otherwise meet. Beyond that, it offers us a chance to step outside of our comfort zones. If we know about resources like this, maybe we move to that city we've always dreamt about. Maybe we aren't so afraid of change.

For that, you can find me on BumbleBFF, swiping right for friends.