

‘My boyfriend won the lottery on our first date!’

Paige Howlett couldn't believe it when her date told her he'd won £5,000...

When Paige Howlett went on a first date with John Thompson in November 2025, she had no idea quite how much Lady Luck would be looking down on her.

As the pair drank in a pub where they lived in Middlesbrough, John got a game-changing phone call from his mum – telling him he'd won the lottery.

SINGLE

John had scooped £5,000 and then immediately afterwards, Paige then hopped on a fruit machine and won £170. The couple decided to immediately jet off to Benidorm and celebrate. Paige, 31, says, ‘We both struck lucky that night – but getting together is where we really hit the jackpot!’

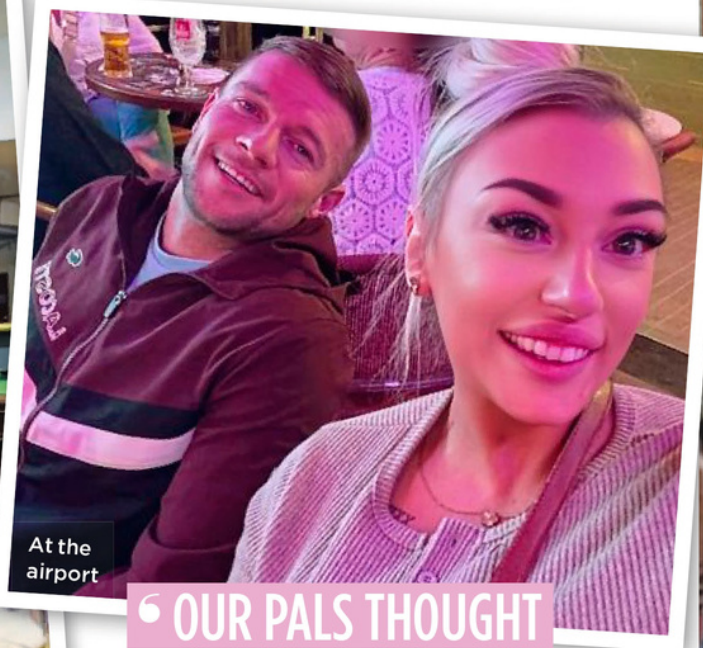
Paige met John, 36, through her friend Vikki, John's sister, who introduced them and said they were suited and should go for a drink. Paige says, ‘I'd been single for three years so thought why not? He was cute. We exchanged numbers and a couple of weeks later, we arranged to meet at the pub for a date.’

‘I booked a hotel for the night to save travelling home after a few drinks, and took a bag with a change of clothes and my passport as ID if needed. John laughed and said he had his passport on him too. He said, “If I win big tonight, we'll go on holiday.”

‘He explained that he played the lottery every week as part



John just after he'd found out about his lotto win



At the airport

‘OUR PALS THOUGHT WE WERE INSANE!’

of a syndicate. He said, “I put £20 in a week. You've got to be in it to win it, haven't you?” He made me laugh. I work in a betting shop so was used to people gambling.’

The pair were having a great time getting to know each other when suddenly, John's phone rang. Paige says, ‘He said,

“Sorry, I have to take this” and stepped away from the table. When he came back, he was grinning from ear to ear.

‘He said, “You must be my lucky charm. I just won £5,000! That was my mum ringing me to let me know.” My jaw dropped. I couldn't believe it!’

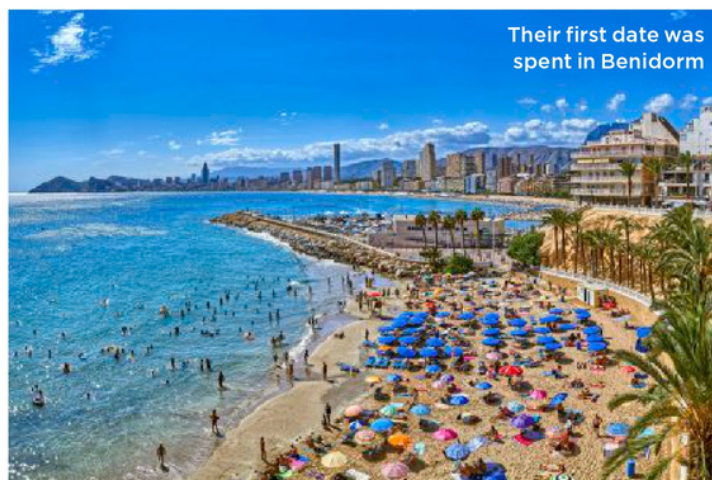
Straight away, John had an

idea about how to spend his winnings. Paige says, ‘He said to me, “Fancy going somewhere a bit warmer?” and pulled his passport out of his back pocket. I thought he was probably joking, so I laughed and said yes.

CRAZINESS

‘But he said, “Well, let's get to the airport then!” But before we left, I had an idea. If John was right and I was lucky, it was worth a try, so I put £10 into the fruit machine, hit a few buttons and was amazed when I won £170! That was our taxi money to the airport sorted.’

The pair called a cab and headed to Newcastle airport. En route they browsed last-minute holidays before deciding on Benidorm.



Their first date was spent in Benidorm



The couple flew straight to Benidorm

Paige says, ‘It felt bonkers, but after a few drinks and the excitement of our first date and John's win, I went with it.’

Arriving at the airport, they headed for the check-in desk, but hit their first stumbling block since their madcap decision – the woman on the desk explained that the couple had to sober up first. Paige says, ‘We went to Greggs to stock up on carbs to soak up the booze, washing them down with coffee. After that, we were finally able to check-in, and once through

security we made our way to the terminal pub for another pint.’

A few hours later, they boarded the flight to Benidorm. Paige says, ‘We couldn't stop laughing at the craziness of the situation. It was only our first date and we were going on a five-day all-inclusive holiday together!’

MAGICAL

‘As we got off the plane and were hit by heat of the Spanish sun, I felt hot in my cardigan and jeans. So, after dumping our bags in the hotel, we went in search of some summer clothes. We stopped for

a few drinks and then walked along the beach, just as the sun was setting.

‘John said to me, “This has been the best first date ever”, and I couldn't agree more. As we lounged by the pool, too tired to do anything else, I messaged my mum and told her I was in Benidorm with John. She didn't believe me, so I had to FaceTime her to prove it!’

‘I rang work to let them know I wouldn't be in, and John was a self-employed plasterer, so he could take the time off no problem.’



Paige says she felt like she'd hit the jackpot



She's now been dating John for eight months

Over the next five days, Paige and John played bingo at the hotel, swam in the pool, sunbathed and enjoyed getting to know each other. She says, ‘We couldn't stop laughing about our unusual first date. When we sent our pals a photo of us on the beach together, they all thought we were insane. But for us it had been magical.’

‘When our spur-of-the-moment break came to an end, we were both gutted. But then John said, “I know this is a bit early, but would you like to be my girlfriend?” I didn't hesitate in saying yes! But he then said he had no idea how he was going to top our first date!’

Now, eight months on, the pair are happier than ever. Paige says, ‘The £5,000 was a bonus – meeting John was the real windfall.’