

Letting algorithms be matchmakers

Woman's take on dating apps in Malaysia

BY SHIVANI SUPRAMANI

IN a world where feeds are carefully curated, algorithms quietly decide who we meet and first impressions are reduced to a single swipe – dating has become easier and strangely more complicated.

For many women navigating the dating scene today, especially those who have been on dating apps since their early 20s, the landscape feels familiar yet constantly shifting. Most of the popular dating apps available in Malaysia have been tried at least once – some out of curiosity, others in genuine search of connection.

Some platforms feel exciting and chaotic, others promise safety and intention, while a few sit somewhere in between. What often stands out is not just who women meet on these apps, but how each platform makes them feel while using it – empowered, cautious, hopeful or emotionally drained.

Tinder

Best for: Casual dating and fast-paced connections
Tinder is often the first dating app many women encounter. Built for

volume, it offers endless swiping, instant matches and minimal emotional commitment. While interest-based features and AI-powered matching have been added over the years, its reputation as a space for casual encounters remains firmly intact.

From a woman's perspective, the experience can be a mixed bag. There are genuine conversations to be found, but they often come alongside unwanted messages and the occasional uncomfortable interaction.

For women in their early 20s, Tinder can feel fun and empowering, largely due to the sheer number of choices. With time, however, it may start to feel misaligned with deeper relationship goals.

For those seeking something serious, the app can be emotionally exhausting. However, for women open to casual connections, Tinder delivers exactly what it promises.

Fun rating: 4.5/5

Serious relationship potential: 2.5/5

User-friendliness and design: 4.5/5

Bumble

Best for: Women who prefer having control

Bumble's woman-first approach initially feels refreshing. Giving women the power to initiate conversations offers a sense of control that many appreciate, especially in a digital dating space that can often feel overwhelming.

The app is free to use, with optional paid features that allow for greater filtering and visibility. While Bumble once attracted users looking for long-term relationships, it now sits closer to Tinder, with many users also open to casual dating. However, Bumble also offers a BFF option which allows users to find friends instead of only focusing on dates. From our observation, this section does have a higher female audience compared to a male audience.

Nonetheless, it is a refreshing option when compared with other apps that solely focus on dating or casuals.

Overall, from a female user's point of view, the experience is both empowering and a tad bit frustrating (unfortunately). While the freedom to choose who to engage with is a plus, safety remains a concern.

Over time, some men have found ways to bypass the woman-first feature by identifying as women during sign-up – a loophole that undermines the very reason many women joined the app in the first place.

Fun rating: 4/5

Serious relationship potential: 3.5/5

User-friendliness and design: 4.5/5

Coffee Meets Bagel (CMB)

Best for: Women seeking long-term commitment

Coffee Meets Bagel is frequently recommended to women in their 30s who are looking for something more intentional. Marketed as a quality-driven app, it caters to professionals who value depth over numbers.

In practice, the app requires patience. The interface is less intuitive, and matches are harder to come by. Men swipe first, while women decide whether to reciprocate – a process that feels slow but deliberate. While the seriousness behind the app is appealing, the experience can feel rigid and less engaging.

However, based on personal experience, CMB does have extensive safety protocols, which help users eliminate people who have made them uncomfortable.

Fun rating: 2/5

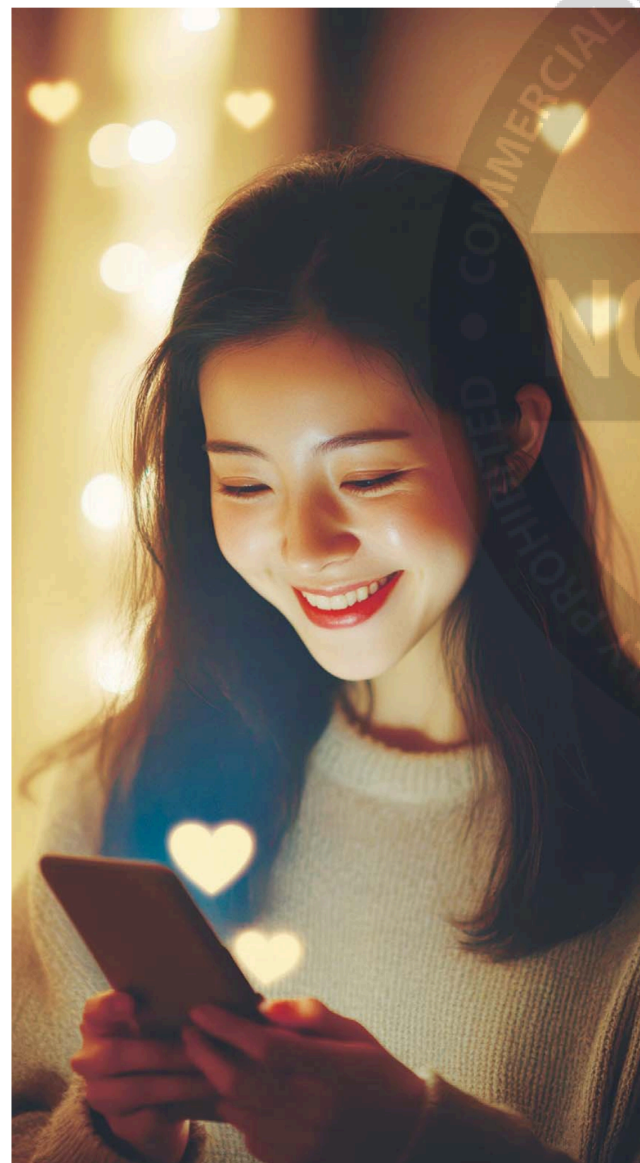
Serious relationship potential: 4/5

User-friendliness and design: 3.5/5

OkCupid

Best for: Women who value compatibility and conversation
OkCupid offers more depth than most dating apps. Users are encouraged to answer detailed questions about values, boundaries and expectations, allowing compatibility to go beyond surface-level attraction.

For many women, being able to see compatibility percentages and non-negotiables upfront helps save time and emotional energy. The app has a reputation for encouraging conversation rather than



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mindless swiping.

While it once felt promising – even leading to meaningful relationships for some – the experience today can feel a little inconsistent. Many profiles appear inactive, and conversations often fail to progress. However, the structure remains thoughtful. Unfortunately, the follow-through does not always match the potential.

Fun rating: 3/5

Serious relationship potential: 3.5/5

User-friendliness and design: 4/5

Omi

Best for: Malay Muslim women and those open to cross-cultural dating
Omi is a Singapore-based dating app with a strong Malay Muslim focus.

Its interface is simple and familiar, similar to Tinder, and includes features such as blind dates. Filters are limited, which can feel restrictive depending on what users are looking for. One standout feature is its astrology compatibility section, adding a playful element to matching. The user base includes

those seeking serious relationships as well as casual connections.

For women, the experience can feel niche. Those open to dating outside their race or religion may find it interesting, but the app's demographic focus can feel limiting for women hoping to meet partners within a broader pool.

Fun rating: 3.5/5

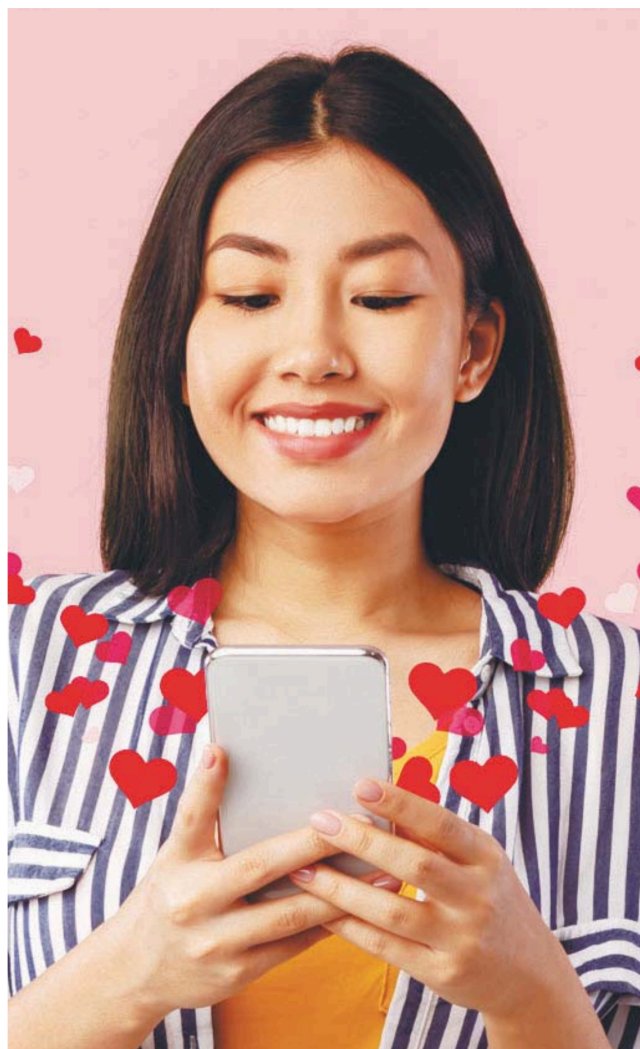
Serious relationship potential: 3.5/5

User-friendliness and design: 4.5/5

Where does that leave women today?

From a woman's point of view, dating apps reveal just as much about personal boundaries as they do about potential partners. What feels exciting at 22 can feel exhausting at 30. Over time, safety, intention and emotional clarity start to matter more than endless matches.

There is no single "best" dating app – only the one that fits a particular stage of life. Sometimes, the right match has less to do with the algorithm and more to do with knowing when to swipe, when to pause and when to walk away.



Bumble and CMB give women more control over who they connect with and whether they pursue something serious. – ALL PICS FROM 123RF

See also page 22