

## Think you know all about Valentine's Day?



### Valentine's Day...

...celebrated February 14th, honors love through gifts like flowers, chocolates, and cards, with roots in Christian martyr St. Valentine and ancient Roman fertility festivals, evolving into a major commercial holiday for romance, friendship, and even pets, making it the second-biggest card holiday after Christmas.

### Did You Know...?

#### **St. Valentine wasn't just one person.**

Many people know that Valentine's Day is named after St. Valentine. But did you know there are actually two St. Valentines? Nobody knows for sure if the holiday originally celebrated St. Valentine of Rome or St. Valentine of Terni, both of whom were martyred. Legends say that St. Valentine of Rome was a priest who defied the Roman Emperor Claudius II's ban on soldiers getting married and continuing to marry couples in secret. Other stories say that he helped Christians escape Roman prisons and fell in love with the jailer's daughter, writing her a letter signed "From your Valentine."

#### **Valentine's Day has its roots in an ancient Pagan festival.**

Valentine's Day also has pagan roots alongside its connection to St. Valentine. It may have originated in Lupercalia, a festival of fertility celebrated on February 15 in ancient Rome. Lupercalia was dedicated to the Roman god of agriculture, Faunus and the founders of Rome, Romulus and Remus.

#### **In the 1300s, it officially became a holiday associated with love.**

The origins of Valentine's Day are murky. But it is thought to have been made a holiday in the fifth century when Pope Gelasius outlawed the celebration of Lupercalia. It wasn't until much later that it became associated with romance. In the Middle Ages, it was believed

that February 14 was the start of birds' mating season. Chaucer cemented the connection between Valentine's Day, birds and romance with his 1375 poem "Parliament of Fowles," writing, "For this was on Seynt Valentynes day, / Whan every foul cometh ther to chese his make." The rest, as they say, is history!

**The first Valentine was sent in the 15th century.**

According to History.com, the oldest Valentine we have record of is from 1415. Charles, Duke of Orleans, wrote it to his wife while he was a political prisoner in the Tower of London. One of the lines in the poem? "I am already sick of love, My very gentle Valentine." Swoon!

**Not until the 1840s did we get the first mass-produced Valentines.**

In the 17th century, people started exchanging cards and letters with their lovers and friends. But the first mass-produced Valentines didn't arrive on the scene until the 1840s. Known as the "Mother of the American Valentine," Esther A. Howland sold cards with lace and ribbons that commercialized Valentines in America.

**The tradition of giving Valentine's Day flowers dates back to the 17th century.**

In the late 1700s, Lady Montagu was the wife of the British ambassador to Turkey. She misunderstood a local custom of using rhyming words to convey secret messages and thought the flowers themselves that were used in the rhymes represented secret meaning. This idea of "flower language" caught on in Europe, where specific flowers could represent feelings of love, hate, regret and more. Over time, red roses became more and more linked with romance.

**Nearly 250 million roses are grown in preparation for Valentine's Day each year.**

We take red roses for granted as a Valentine's Day staple. But roses actually don't grow in February weather in the U.S. because it's too cold. Instead, millions of flowers are grown around the world and shipped to the U.S. specifically for February 14th. Most of the roses we gift for Valentine's Day come from Ecuador, Kenya and Columbia.

**The color of flower given on Valentine's Day holds meaning.**

While a red rose has traditionally symbolized love, other colors like deep pink, purple or white — which symbolize happiness, royalty and sympathy respectively — may be given on the holiday too.

**Americans send 145 million Valentine's Day cards each year.**

According to Hallmark, a whopping 145 million Valentine's Day cards are exchanged every February 14 (and that's not even including all those kids' Valentines exchanged in classrooms!). This makes Valentine's Day the second biggest holiday for exchanging greeting cards after Christmas.

**Candy is the most popular gift to give.**

According to the National Retail Federation, most people will give candy and greeting cards to their loves, although many will also spend money on flowers, gift cards and clothing. But the biggest expenses are jewelry and activities.

**The first heart-shaped box of chocolates was introduced in 1861.**

It was created by Richard Cadbury, son of Cadbury founder John Cadbury, who started packaging chocolates in fancy boxes to increase sales. He introduced the first heart-shaped box of chocolates for V-Day in 1861, and today, more than 36 million heart-shaped boxes of chocolates are sold each year. That's 58 million pounds of chocolate!

**Conversation hearts got their start as medical lozenges.**

Weirdly enough, the story of conversation hearts first began when a Boston pharmacist named Oliver Chase invented a machine that simplified the way medical lozenges. The result was America's first candy-making machine because the pharmacist soon started shifting his focus from making lozenges to candy instead! Chase founded the New England Confectionery Company, or Necco, and the candy lozenges soon became what we know today as Necco wafers.

**More than 8 billion conversation hearts are manufactured each year.**

And Necco has to make them all year. Each box has approximately 45 sayings — including "True Love," "Hug Me" and "You Rock". A box has a shelf life of five years.

### **It's one of the most popular days for proposals.**

While Christmas and New Year's Day see more people popping the big question, Valentine's Day is also a big one. Plus, one survey showed that many would have loved to get engaged on V-Day.

### **Valentine's Day horror movies are a thing.**

That's right, some people prefer to get their heart rates up by watching a scary movie about the holiday. The popular 1981 film, My Bloody Valentine, is just one of many.

### **Four states have a city named Valentine.**

Arizona, Nebraska, Texas and Virginia each have cities with the name, although Virginia adds an "s" on the end. Apparently, in Virginia and Texas, you can get special holiday postmarks at the post office, how cute is that?

Sources: [goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/valentines-day-ideas/a26863/valentines-day-facts/](https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/holidays/valentines-day-ideas/a26863/valentines-day-facts/) and [history.com/articles/valentines-day-facts](https://www.history.com/articles/valentines-day-facts)

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## **Acts of Random Kindness**



### **National Random Acts of Kindness Day**

Brighten someone's day with unexpected kindness! Hold the door, pay for a coffee, or simply smile. Small gestures make a big difference!

#### **How to Celebrate Random Acts of Kindness Day | Be Intentionally Kind**

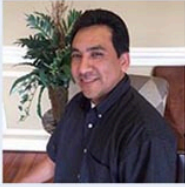
Random Acts of Kindness come in all forms, large and small, and how you choose to perform yours is entirely up to you. It can start with dropping a bit of change in the cup of the homeless person along the street, or considering the time of year, providing a warm blanket to see them through.

You could take a friend out to lunch, for no other reason than that they're your friend. See someone looking down?

Drop a hot coffee or tea on their desk with a smile and tell them to have a great day. Even just smiling at someone and wishing them a good day could have a profound impact.

Source: [daysoftheyear.com/days/random-acts-of-kindness-day/](https://www.daysoftheyear.com/days/random-acts-of-kindness-day/)

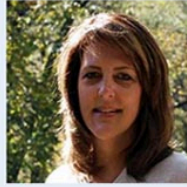
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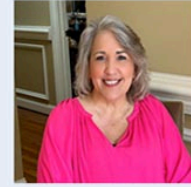
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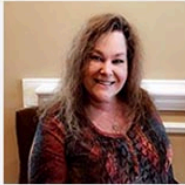
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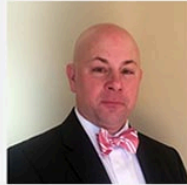
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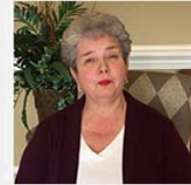
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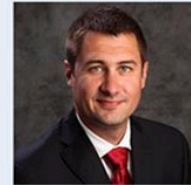
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