**Valentine’s Day**

 **For God so lo**V**ed the world,**

 **That He g**A**ve**

 **His on**L**y**

 **Begott**E**n**

 **So**N

T**hat whosoever**

 **Believeth** I**n Him**

 **Should** N**ot perish,**

 **But have** E**verlasting life.**

***(St. John 3:16)***

**Americans plan to spend an average of $142.31 on Valentine's Day gifts this year -- about $8 more than last year, according to a survey from the National Retail Federation. More than half of survey respondents say they plan to buy candy, while 40 percent will buy flowers, and 12 percent intend to purchase jewelry. More than 20 percent say they plan to buy a Valentine's Day gift -- averaging $25 -- for their pet. *(Credit.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 13, 2015)***

**The Sound of Music: Christopher Plummer, who played the Captain, intensely disliked working on the film and likened acting with Julie Andrews to “being hit over the head with a big Valentine’s Day card.” (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 25)**

**Americans purchase over $700 million worth of candy for Valentine’s Day. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts, 2000)***

**My friend Mark and I work in a lawn-mower-parts warehouse. Somehow Mark got the idea that his wife did not want a card on Valentine’s Day, but when he spoke to her on the phone he discovered she was expecting one. Not having time to buy a card on his way home, Mark was in a quandary. Then he looked at the lawn-mower trade magazines scattered around the office--and got an idea.  Using scissors and glue, he created a card with pictures of mowers, next to which he wrote: “I lawn for you mower and mower each day.” Mark’s wife loved it. The card immediately graced their refrigerator door. *(Gene Hyde, in Reader’s Digest)***

**What sets Valentines apart from other greeting cards is that three out of four are hand-delivered. *(L. M. Boyd)***

**Only the U.S., Canada, Mexico, France, Australia and the U.K. celebrate Valentine’s Day. *(Kids’ Pages)***

**The Roman Lupercalia, a fertility celebration, originally began on February 14. Later, Christians borrowed the date to honor a martyr by the name of Valentine. *(Oxford Classical Dictionary)***

**36 million: The number of heart-shaped boxes of chocolate that will be sold for Valentine's Day. *(National Confectioners' Association, at it appeared in Rocky Mountain News, February 9, 2005)***

**Colorsof roses purchased on Valentine's Day:**

**\* Red -- 69 percent (estimated)**

**\* Mixed colors -- 7 percent**

**\* Pink -- 6 percent**

**\* Peach/salmon -- 6 percent**

**\* Yellow -- 5 percent**

**\* White -- 4 percent**

**\* Other colors -- 4 percent. *(***[***www.aboutflowers.com***](http://www.aboutflowers.com/)***, 2005)***

**The first commercial Valentine’s Day cards appeared in the 1800s. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**Each year shortly before February 14, Saudi Arabia's religious police head out to hunt for -- and confiscate -- red roses, red teddy bears and any signs of a heart. Despite the country's ban on the holiday, shoppers who know where to look can find plenty of Valentine gifts, from hearts that say “I love you" to elaborate gift arrangements with “beating" hearts fitted with blinking lights. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in Rocky Mountain News, February 14, 2005)***

**Cupid is the Roman god of love and is also the son of Venus. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**1990s: Electronic greetings made their debut, but cards survived the transition. The scrapbooking craze influenced the industry, resulting in cards with organic, handmade looks. *(American Greetings, Hallmark)***

**It is believed St. Valentine lived in Rome during the reign of the emperor Claudius the Cruel. The evil emperor would not allow young couples to marry or even to be engaged. St. Valentine did not agree with the emperor and secretly performed marriages for many young sweethearts. When Claudius discovered St. Valentine’s actions, he had him cast into a dungeon where he remained until he died on February 14, 270 A.D. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**The British Museum claims to house the first real valentines. They were written by the French Duke of Orleans to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1415. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**The daughter of Henry IV of France is said to have been the first woman to receive flowers on Valentine’s Day when she gave a party in honor of St. Valentine’ in the early 1600s. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**1930s: Valentines became a popular, inexpensive gift for the holiday during the Depression. Humor served as a diversion, though the gags often referred to lack of money. *(American Greetings, Hallmark)***

**Charlie Brown: “There’s our mailbox. Wouldn’t it be great if there was a Valentine in there for me from that little red-haired girl? Wouldn’t it be great if it was a real fancy one with all sorts of hearts all over it and lace and everything? Maybe it will even be a scented Valentine. It will smell sort of like violets or a rare perfume.” Linus: “This is Sunday, Charlie Brown. There’s no mail delivery on Sunday.” *(Charles Schulz, in Peanuts comic strip)***

**Hallmark has over 1330 different cards specifically for Valentine’s Day. *(Kids’ Pages)***

**The identity of St. Valentine is very much in doubt but the most popular theory is that he was a Roman priest who incurred the wrath of Emperor Claudius II by encouraging young people in love to get married. Claudius had decreed that his soldiers should stay single because they weren’t as afraid to die in the state of bachelordom. St. Valentine was beheaded somewhere between 270 and 273 A.D. In 1976 his name was removed from the Calendar of Saints. *(Bernie Smith, in The Joy of Trivia, p. 53)***

**Women give the gifts on Valentine’s Day in Japan. It’s the men’s turn on March 15, known as White Day, when the traditional gift is white chocolate and marshmallows, or anything in a white box. (Don Voorhees, in The Essential Book of Useless Information, p. 131)**

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Lonesome on Valentine’s Day? Give yourself a heartening party. Literally. Make your heart happier and healthier with chocolate and a glass of \red wine. Once taboo, chocolate has proved itself the Maya “food of the gods.” Contrary to medical myths, scientists now know that chocolate contains polyphenols. These chemicals do double duty: They lower your bad cholesterol and raise the good stuff. What’s more, chemistry Prof. Joe Vinson of the University of Scranton has shown that the stearic and oleic acids in chocolate “lower the risks of heart complications by 20 percent.” Dark chocolate is also a tough cancer fighter. Rich in “high quality” antioxidants, it is as potent a cancer beater as broccoli (you make the choice). Bursting with vitamins C and E, magnesium, and phosphorus, chocolate has become a must – for your health, of course. So buy a box for yourself – and another to share with somebody else. And wash it down with a glass of red wine, with all its resveratrol, that other antioxidant that researchers claim protects you against blood clots and memory loss. L-chaim to a chocolaty Valentine’s Day. And many more to come. *(Nancy Yanes-Hoffman, in U.S. News & World Report, February 21, 2005, p. 55)*

**Loveland, Colorado is a town of about 50,000 whose name calls to mind hearts and flowers--with a postmark to match. Romantics from around the world send Valentine's Day cards and letters there to get Loveland's unique valentine postmark stamped on the envelope. As romantic as the town's name sounds, it has nothing to do with Valentine's Day. Loveland, Colorado was founded in 1877 when the railroad built a line from Denver to Cheyenne, Wyoming, laying tracks through a 320-acre wheat farm owned by David Barnes. Barnes deeded 64 acres of his farm to the town and named it after the railroad's president and his longtime friend, W.A.H. Loveland. *(Judith D. Miller, in American Profile)***

**Love letters are as old as time. But the manufactured valentine card we associate with February 14 has roots in early 19th century England, where proper Brits may have found it easier to keep a stiff upper lip by passing along pre-printed sentiments. Esther Howland of Massachusetts is widely credited as the first producer of commercial valentines in America, circa 1850. Her work, inspired by cards imported from England and Germany, led to sales of $5,000 in her first year of business, an enormous amount for that time. By the early 1900s, Norcross became one of the first card companies to make and widely distribute valentines. *(American Greetings, Hallmark)***

**Good week for: Fido and Fluffy, after the National Retail Federation said Americans would spend an estimated $700 million on Valentine's Day presents for their pets. *(The Week magazine, February 6, 2015)***

**Pope Gelasius officially named February 14 as St. Valentine’s Day in 496 A.D. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**2000 to present: The valentine remains the most popular gift on the holiday, with 62 percent of American consumers planning to buy at least one, according to the National Retail Foundation. *(American Greetings, Hallmark)***

**1910-1919: Postcards were the popular format; folded cards were just coming into vogue. Ornate designs reflected the European influence of new immigrants. *(American Greetings, Hallmark)***

**188 million valentines are purchased every year, making the holiday second in the greeting-card game only to Christmas (2 billion sold annually). *(Jay Dedrick, in Rocky Mountain News, 2007)***

**A red heart is the most common symbol used on Valentine's Day. This came about because hundreds of years ago people believed the heart was the part of the body that was actually responsible for creating emotions. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**Valentine's Day is one of the world's oldest holidays. This day of love finds its roots in the ancient “festival of Lupercus,” or Lupercalia. This festival was first celebrated thousands of years ago where the city of Rome now stands. For hundreds of years, the traditions of Lupercalia continued and were joined and replaced by many new ones. This happy pagan feast was eventually linked with a celebration for St. Valentine. Today, Valentine's Day is seen as a day to celebrate love and kindness. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**An elderly gentleman got on a bus one February 14, carrying a dozen red roses. He sat beside a young man who looked at the roses and said, “Somebody’s going to get a beautiful Valentine’s Day gift.” “Yes,” said the older man.  A few minutes went by and he noticed that his young companion was staring at the roses. “Do you have a girlfriend?” he asked. “I do,” said the young man. “I’m going to see her now. I’m bringing her this.” He held up a Valentine’s Day card. They rode along in silence for another 10 minutes, and the old man rose to get off the bus. As he stepped out into the aisle, he suddenly placed the roses on the young man’s lap and said, “I think my wife would want you to have these. I’ll tell her that I gave them to you.” He left the bus quickly, and as the bus pulled away, the young man turned to see the old man enter the gates of a cemetery. *(Delia Sellers, in Abundant Living magazine)***

**Americans will send nearly 90 million roses this Valentine’s Day. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts, 2000)***

**Though a dozen roses cost an average of $57 during the rest of the year, they run $72 around Valentine's Day. *(Kiplinger's Personal Finance, as it appeared in The Week magazine on February 3, 2006)***

**Retail prices for a dozen roses surge 30 percent in the days leading up to Valentine’s Day. *(SmartMoney, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 9, 2007)***

**Dennis: “Mom said Saint Valentine was a doctor.” Mom: “Actually, I said he was a heart specialist.” *(Hank Ketcham, in Dennis the Menace comic strip)***

**900,000,000 people in the U.S. will send Valentine’s Cards this year. *(Kids’ Pages, 2007)***

**Nearly one billion Valentine’s Day cards are sent in North America each year. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts, 2000)***

**$100 is what the average consumer will spend on Valentine’s Day this year, according to the National Retail Federation. *(Rocky Mountain News, February 9, 2004)***

**Americans last year spent an average of $100 on Valentine’s Day. Those chocolates, roses, greeting cards, and candlelit dinners added up to about $13.7 billion. *(Consumer Reports Money Advisor, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 16, 2007)***

**Teachers receive the most Valentine’s Day cards. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**A new type of valentine called a “Vinegar Valentine” was first seen around 1860.These rude valentines were not meant to be romantic. They were mostly humorous but sometimes they were very insulting and mean. *(Jeff Harris, in Shortcuts)***

**1940s: Cards aimed at teens and World War II-bound soldiers were introduced. Cutout shapes were an alternative to the traditional rectangle. Wartime meant Uncle Sam often upstaged Cupid as an icon. *(American Greetings, Hallmark)***

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