

# ST. VALENTINE'S DAY

## HISTORY

**>800 BC**  
A pastoral festival of ritual cleansing called Februa, is celebrated on what becomes the 15th day of the Roman month.

**~400 - 800 BC**  
The Roman festival of Lupercalia subsumes the festival of Februa. Observed February 13 through 15, men stripped naked, grabbed whips, and spanked young maidens to increase health and fertility, avert evil spirits, and purify the city.

**270**  
On February 14, Saint Valentine is executed by Emperor Claudis II for performing marriages in secret after it was banned in order to boost army enlistment.

**500**  
St. Valentine's Day is officially established by Pope Gelasius I at least 150 years after Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire to overshadow the Pagan celebration of Lupercalia.

**1382**  
Valentine's Day is first associated with romantic love by Geoffrey Chaucer in Parlement of Fouls. "For this was Saint Valentine's Day, when every bird cometh there to choose his mate..."

**1420**  
The oldest surviving Valentine is written by Charles, Duke of Orleans to his wife. "I am already sick of love My very gentle Valentine..."

**1847**  
The first mass-produced valentines are produced and sold in the US by Esther Howland.

**1969**  
The feast day of Saint Valentine is removed from the Roman Catholic Calendar of Saints.

**1996**  
The first e-valentine is sent giving rise to a new tradition of e-cards, love coupons and printable cards.

**2011**  
The Iranian printing works owners' union issued a directive banning the printing and distribution of any goods promoting the holiday.

For every 100 single women in their 20s, there are 120 single men.



## RINGS

The first diamond ring was given by Archduke Maximilian of Austria to Mary of Burgundy in 1477.

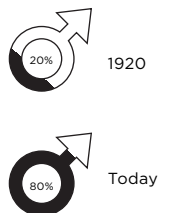
Wedding rings are typically worn on the left hand because the ring finger on the left hand contains the *vena amoris*, or the vein of love.



Stock traders with long ring fingers made up to 11 times more earnings than those with average length ring fingers.



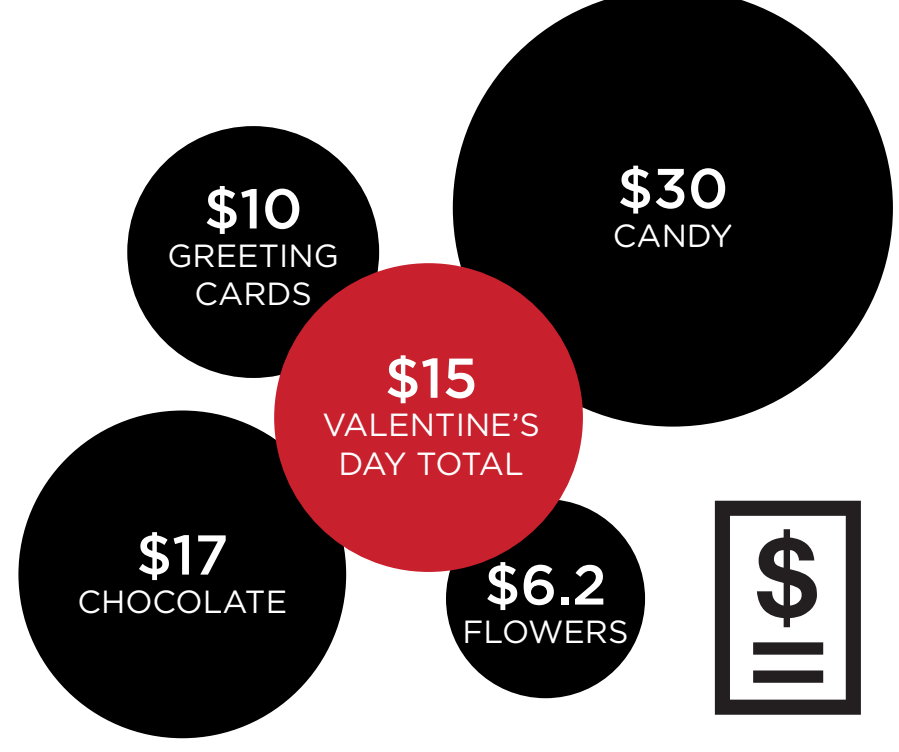
Married men who wear a wedding band:



Average price of an engagement ring in 2010:

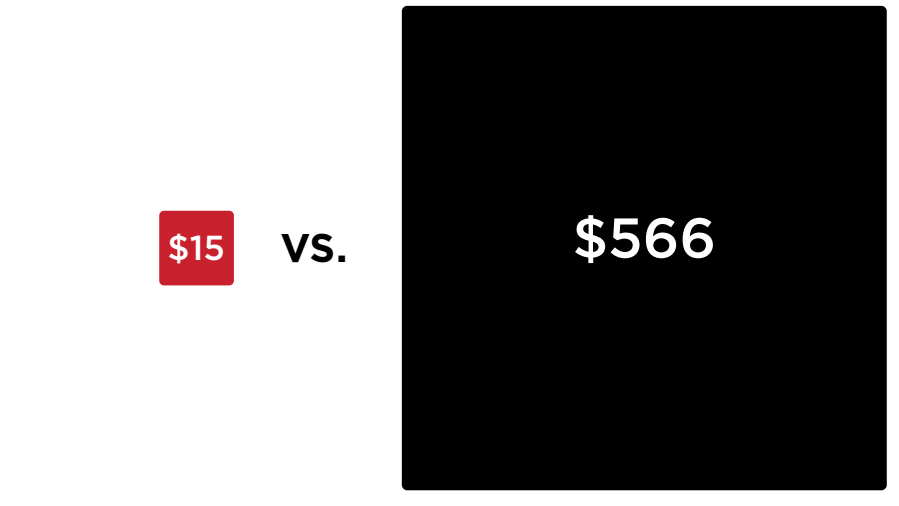
**\$2100**  
**\$4.4B**

## BILLIONS SPENT LAST YEAR IN THE US



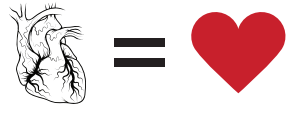
## CHRISTMAS VS. VALENTINE'S

It would take 38 years of Valentine's Day retail spend to amount to a single year of Christmas spending



## HEARTS

The seed of the silphium plant has been suggested as the source of the heart symbol



In mathematics, the implicit curve  $(x^2+y^2-1)^3-x^2y^3=0$  yields an approximation of the heart shape.

## ROSES

Number of roses sold in the U.S. on Valentine's Day:

**189M**

67% of roses sold on Valentine's Day are red.



The state that produces the most cut roses:



The state with the highest marriage rate (per capita):



In Scotland, if a white rose bloomed in autumn it was a token of an early marriage.

## LOVE POTIONS

**AFRICA**  
yohimbe tree bark + hot water



= an increase in desire for men and women

**UGANDA**  
gray crowned crane egg + herbs



= an increase in affection and monogamy

**EAST JAVA**  
various concoction of herbs



= jamu ramuan: which restores youth to women and makes them more desirable to their husbands

**DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**  
rum + honey + red wine + tree bark



= mama juana: gives an increase in desire for men and women

**ROMANIA**  
snow + heat



= magic potion used by young girls on Dragobete Day to ward off illness for the rest of the year

**FINLAND**  
blueberries + fermentation



= Lappish love potion that gives an increase in desire

## CARDS

**15M** e-valentines  
**190M** traditional valentines  
**1000M** valentines including valentine-exchange cards made in school



## CANDY

Americans eat 46 lbs of candy per year. Roughly 1/4 the body weight of an average person.



8 Billion candy hearts will be produced this year. Laid end to end they would stretch for 250,000,000 feet.



## AROUND THE WORLD

Brazil celebrates Lover's Day, called Dia dos Namorados, on June 12. It happens to come right after the feast of St. Anthony, known as the saint of matrimony.

In Finland, citizens celebrate "Friends Day" on February 14. It's not just a day for romance--it's also a day when friends send cards and gifts to each other.



In Norfolk, Jack Valentine, also known as Old Father Valentine, knocks on people's doors on the night before Valentine's Day and leaves treats and presents and then vanishes in the blink of an eye.

On February 14th, people in Bulgaria celebrate Trifon Zarazan (Viticulturist's Day), a centuries-old observance of the cult of Dionysius, the god of wine and merriment.

## APHRODISIACS

**GREECE 700 B.C.**  
carrots



**MESOAMERICA A.D. 1400**  
chocolate



**EUROPE 1800**  
asparagus



**USA 1998**  
Viagra

