

Valentine's Day



Take a Romantic Trip

Valentine's Day is a day to celebrate love and romance.

Take a trip to one of these romantic-sounding places for a lovely Valentine's celebration.

LOVEJOY, GEORGIA

Lovejoy is in Clayton County, Georgia, outside of Atlanta. It's home to around 7,000 people and was the site of what remains of the Hollywood set of Tara from the movie production of "Gone With the Wind." It is also the hometown of Kokomo Arnold, a blues singer and guitarist; Jocasta Odom, a reality TV presenter; and NFL wide receiver Preston Williams.

VALENTINE, NEBRASKA

The county seat of Cherry County, Nebraska, Valentine is home to about 2,000 people. It was founded in 1882 and is named for Nebraska Rep. Edward K. Valentine. It participates in an annual program where pieces of mail can be sent to the post office to be remailed with a special Valentine's Day postmark and verse.

ROMANCE, ARKANSAS

This unincorporated community is in White County, Arkansas, about halfway between Rose Bud and El Paso. It's home to about 1,700 people and several creeks, including Bad Luck Creek.

LOVE, ARIZONA

A town in La Paz County in western Arizona, Love is named

for World War I soldier Ernest Love, who died in France.

CHOCOLATE BAYOU, TEXAS

This Brazoria County, Texas, community is located along the Gulf Coast of the Lonestar State. It's near a bayou of the same name and was originally part of a land grant to Stephen F. Austin and James Franklin Perry.

DIAMOND, OREGON

This tiny town is in Harney County in the western part of the state, south of Malheur Lake. It was originally settled in the 1870s and named from a diamond-shaped branding iron used by a local rancher.

ROSE, NEW YORK

A town of 2,300 people, Rose is named after Robert S. Rose, an early Wayne County landowner. The town is in upstate New York west of Syracuse and was originally settled in 1805.

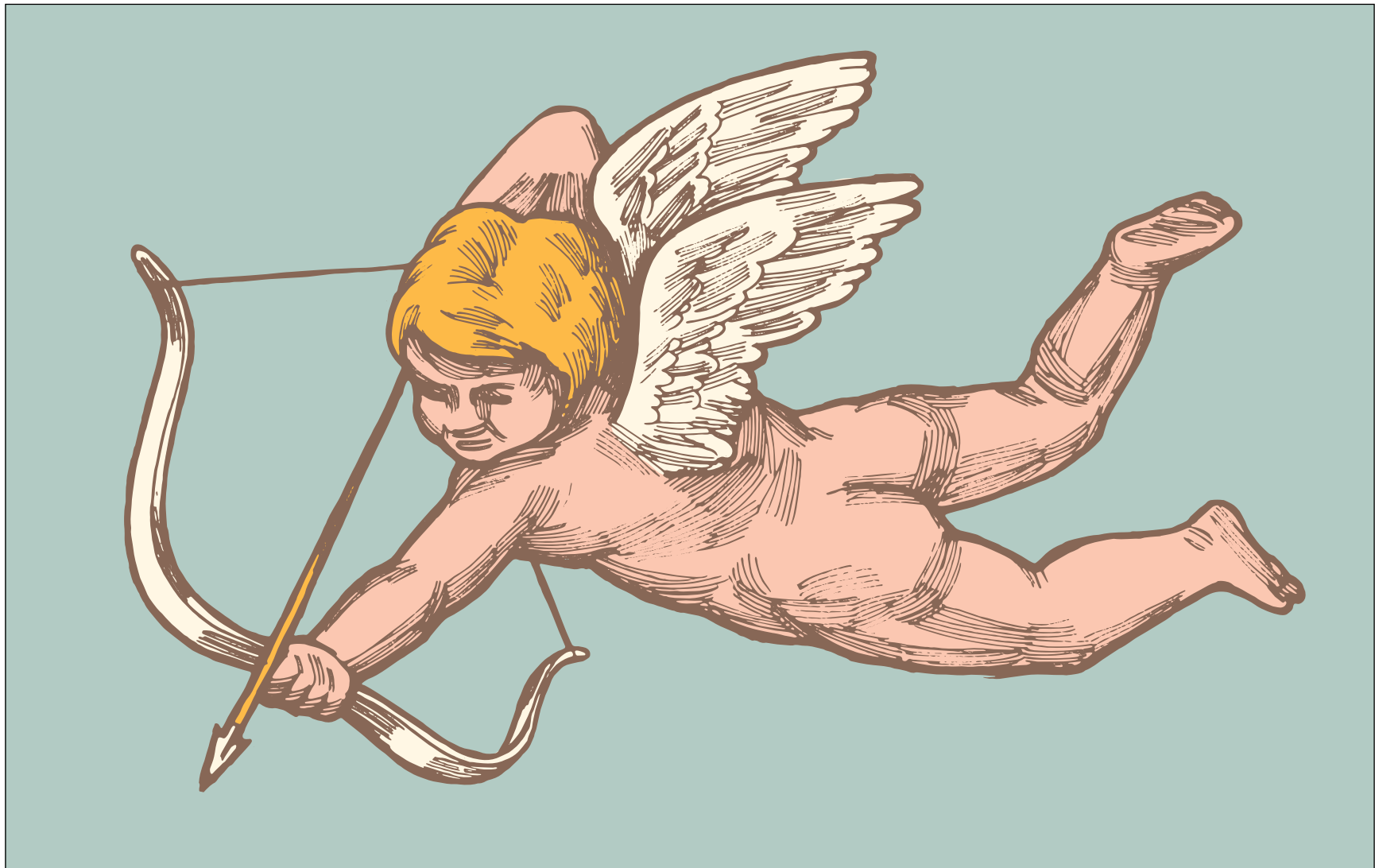
HEART, ARKANSAS

Near the Missouri line in northern Arkansas, Heart is an unincorporated community near the junction of Lick Creek and the South Fork Spring River.

LOVER, PENNSYLVANIA

Located in Washington County in the southwest corner of the state, Lover is a small unincorporated community.





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Cupid Explained

The fat little flying guy with the arrow is everywhere around Valentine's Day. But who is Cupid really?

Keep reading to learn more about who Cupid is.

CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY

In Roman and Greek mythology, Cupid (or Eros, in Greece) is the god of desire, erotic love, attraction and affection. He is the son of the goddess of love, Venus, and the god of war, Mars. Cupid and Eros are often shown carrying a bow and arrow, and that is

the source of his power — whoever is shot by Cupid's arrow is filled with uncontrollable desire. His wings symbolize that lovers can be flighty and as a boy because love is irrational. Cupid is often shown riding a dolphin, an ancient symbol of affection.

Cupid can be depicted as callous, but is usually shown to be beneficent and, at worst, mischievous. His mischief is usually attributed to his mother, Venus, who had her schemes backfire when she used Cupid to take revenge on Psyche, only to have Cupid fall in love and marry her.

CUPID IN ART

One of the most famous depictions

of Cupid is in the Caravaggio painting "Love Conquers All," also known as "Victorious Love." In that painting, created 1601-1602, the Roman Cupid is half-sitting or maybe climbing down from a table, surrounded by the detritus of human endeavors, a violin and a lute, armor and coronet, square and compasses and a flower tangled and trampled under Cupid's foot.

The painting illustrates the line from Virgil, "Love conquers all; let us yield to love." It may also be a coded reference to the Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani, ruler of Chios. There's a large V on the floor, and the painting could mean that Vincenzo conquers all. Giustiniani did own the painting

at one time.

Expressionist artist Edvard Munch produced "Cupid and Psyche" in 1907 featuring stylized, somber figures of the lovers, tossing aside Cupid's pudgy, jovial appearance and laying bare the more raw emotions of love.

TODAY'S CUPID

When the Victorians popularized today's Valentine's celebrations in the late 19th-century, they brought back Cupid and his association with love. Other common card symbols in the early days were hearts, traditionally thought to be the seat of emotion; birds, candy and flowers, especially red roses.

Historic Proposals

Marriage these days usually begins with a ring and getting down on one knee, but it hasn't always been that way.

In some cultures, there's an intense ritual. In other cultures, there are certain times where women propose to men instead of vice versa. Keep reading to learn more about the history of the proposal, the engagement ring and more.

GENDER ROLES

In modern Western proposals, it's much more common for the man to propose marriage to the woman rather than the other way around. But in some countries, on Feb. 29 in a leap year, women can propose to men. In Scotland, Ireland, England and Finland, a woman can pop the question on that date. In Finland, if a man rejects the offer, he was then expected to buy the woman enough cloth for a skirt to compensate.

In one famous instance, Queen Victoria had to propose to Prince Albert because she was a monarch. She proposed marriage on Oct. 15, 1839, and the royal couple were married Feb. 10, 1840. They were married for 21 years until Albert's death in 1861.

IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Around 6% of Japanese

marriages are still arranged following the traditional custom of omiai, which roughly translates into matchmaking. The samurai started the practice in the 16th century and spread to other classes during the Tokugawa period. It was a solemn practice and involved an evaluation of family bloodlines and class.

Arranged marriages were common in many cultures, including in Russia, China and India. In some arranged

marriages, a go-between matches the bride and groom and matches them according to the social, economic and cultural groups (or not, depending on the traditions in that culture). In others, the bride and groom are from the same family group; this is more common in parts of the Middle East, Africa and Asia. It's important to remember that arranged marriages and forced marriages — those without the consent of either

the bride or groom — are not the same thing.

ENGAGEMENT RINGS

Rings are a common engagement gift in many cultures. In the West, they usually feature diamonds or other gemstones and are worn on the left ring finger. Engagement rings can be traced back to Ancient Rome, when the bride-to-be was given two rings, one gold for wearing outside the home and

an iron one to wear at home.

Diamond engagement rings became popular in the U.S. after World War I. Diamond cartel De Beers began a marketing campaign in 1938 that sent diamond ring sales soaring. The sales of diamonds in the U.S. rose from \$23 million to \$2.1 billion between 1939 and 1979. However, other gemstones are growing in popularity, as are rings for men, sometimes called "man-gagement rings."



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Romantic Songs for Your Playlist

Music sets just the right mood on Valentine's Day or any day. Here's some great love songs to add to your playlist this Feb. 14.

"SOMETHING" BY THE BEATLES

This cut from 1969's "Abbey Road" was written by George Harrison. It was a love song to Pattie Boyd, Harrison's first wife, and was first offered to Joe Cocker. It was good that The Beatles kept it, though. Time magazine called it the best track on "Abbey Road," and John Lennon and "Abbey Road" producer George Martin agreed.

"UNCHAINED MELODY" BY THE RIGHTEOUS BROTHERS

Written by Alex North and Hy Zaret, "Unchained Melody" was originally meant as the theme for a 1955 prison film, "Unchained." Of the many recordings of this song, the Righteous Brothers' version is arguably the most popular, though it was also recorded by Elvis Presley, Heart, U2, Barry Manilow and others.

"CRAZY" BY PATSY CLINE

Patsy Cline started singing at her local radio station when she was 15 but became a star with "I Fall to Pieces" in 1961 and "Crazy" in 1962. It was



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written by Willie Nelson and appears on Rolling Stone's 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.

"MY GIRL" BY THE TEMPTATIONS

This was The Temptations' first No. 1 single, inspired by Smokey Robinson's wife, Claudette Rogers Robinson. It appeared on the 1965 album "The Temptations Sing Smokey." The song was

inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1998.

"LET'S STAY TOGETHER" BY AL GREEN

This song hit No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 and remained on the chart for 16 weeks. It's been covered many times, most notably by Tina Turner on 1983's "Private Dancer," and Isaac Hayes. It's also a film staple, appearing in

"Pulp Fiction," "Higher Learning," and "How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days." President Barack Obama performed part of the song during a 2012 appearance at the Apollo Theater.

"I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU" BY DOLLY PARTON

Dolly wrote and recorded this song in 1973, originally as a farewell to her former busi-

ness partner Procter Wagoner. It hit No. 1 on the Billboard Hot Country Songs twice, once when it was released and then again in 1982 as part of the soundtrack for "The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas." Whitney Houston recorded and released the song again in 1992 for the movie "The Bodyguard," and it spent 14 weeks at No. 1 yet again. It's one of the best-selling singles of all time.

Say it with Flowers

Flowers are a popular Valentine's Day gift for your sweetie.

Nearly \$2 billion is spent on Valentine's flowers every year, in fact. But did you know that those flowers have specific meanings? Keep reading to learn the sentiments behind each kind of bloom in your bouquet according to The Old Farmer's Almanac.

LOVE

It shouldn't be surprising that love is a common theme in flower meanings. Aloe is one plant that can signal affection, as can aster, pink camellias (in terms of longing), red camellias (flaming love), white camellias (you're adorable), carnations except for striped or yellow ones, red chrysanthemums, white clover, daffodils, daisies, forget-me-nots (of course), ferns (secret bonds of love), gardenias, heliotrope, honeysuckle, white hyacinth, ivy, white jasmine, myrtles, red roses, blue salvia, sorrel, red tulips, and yarrow.

HAPPINESS

Other blossoms signal joy or happiness. These include, the almanac says, basil for good wishes, bay tree for glory, ferns for fascination, white jasmine for affection, coreopsis, lilacs for joy, lily-of-the-valley for sweetness, marjoram, morning glories for affection, parsley, peonies to signal a happy life, pink roses,

sorrel for affection, spearmint for warm sentiments, sweet pea as a thank you for a lovely time, yellow tulips for a sunny smile, and zinnias for lasting affection.

BEAUTY

Still other flowers signal that the giver things you're easy on the eyes, the almanac says. Blooms for beauty include

aster for daintiness, bay tree for glory, clematis for mental beauty, gardenias, hibiscus, yellow jasmine for grace and elegance, and dwarf sunflowers for adoration.

SPURNING STEMS

Flowers can also meet the opposite of love, happiness and beauty. The almanac also lists some flowers that mean,

well, go away. Those include the anemone as a symbol of the forsaken, begonias as a warning, butterfly weed as a sign to let someone go, striped carnations to signal refusal, yellow carnations for disdain or rejection, evergreen clematis for poverty, columbine for foolishness and red columbine for anxiety. Crab blossoms can signal an ill nature

while cyclamen means goodbye. Geraniums signify stupidity, purple hyacinth sorrow and yellow hyacinth jealousy. Lavender can be a sign of distrust while orange lilies mean outright hatred. Tall sunflowers signify haughtiness while the almanac says a gift of tansy is tantamount to a declaration of war. Willows, meanwhile, means sadness.



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A 3-Course Chocolate Meal

Chocolate is king at Valentine's Day, but it's way more than just truffles and candies.

You can make a whole meal flavored with chocolate. Let's get started.

FIRST COURSE Eggplant Caponata

Recipe is from Saveur.
Serves 6-8.

Ingredients

- 3 cups olive oil
- 2 pounds Eggplant, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 1 rib celery, roughly chopped
- Kosher salt and black pepper to taste
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste, thinned with 1/4 cup water
- 1 cup crushed canned tomatoes
- 6 ounces green olives, pitted and roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup white wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup golden raisins
- 1/4 cup salt-packed capers, rinsed and drained
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 2 tablespoons finely grated unsweetened chocolate
- 1/2 cup finely shredded basil
- 2 tablespoons pine nuts

Directions

- Heat oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Working in batches, fry eggplant until browned, about 3-4 minutes. Transfer eggplant to a large bowl and set aside.
- Pour off all but 1/4 cup oil and return skillet to heat. Add the



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onions and celery, season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring often, until beginning to brown or about 10 minutes. Turn heat to medium.

- Add tomato paste and stir until caramelized and almost evaporated, 1-2 minutes. Add the crushed tomatoes and cook for 10 minutes. Stir in olives, vinegar, raisins, capers, sugar and chocolate and cook, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 15 minutes.
- Transfer to the bowl with eggplant and mix together. Check and adjust seasonings and let cool to room temperature before serving with toast points.

SECOND COURSE Steak au Poivre

Recipe is from Taste of Home. Serves 2.

Ingredients

- 2 5-ounce Beef tenderloin steaks, about an inch thick
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 tablespoons whole white or black peppercorns, crushed
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped shallot
- 1/4 cup port wine
- 1 tablespoons Balsamic vinegar
- 1/4 cup condensed beef consommé, undiluted

- 1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary or 1/4 teaspoons dried rosemary, crushed
- 1/2 ounce bittersweet chocolate, chopped

Directions

- Rub steaks with a tablespoon of oil and sprinkle with peppercorns and salt. Heat 2 teaspoons of oil over medium heat. Add steaks and cook 5-7 minutes on each side or until desired doneness. Remove and keep warm.
- In the same pan, heat the rest of the oil over medium-high heat. Add the shallot and cook and stir for 1 minute or until tender. Add the

wine and vinegar, stirring to loosen browned bits from the pan. Bring to a boil and cook 2-3 minutes or until slightly thickened.

- Stir in consommé and rosemary, bring back to a boil. Add chocolate and stir until melted and sauce is thickened. Serve with steaks.

THIRD COURSE Chocolate Pots de Crème

Recipe is from the Food Network. Serves 6-8.

Ingredients

- 9 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped
- 1 1/2 cups whole milk
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 6 large egg yolks
- 5 tablespoons granulated sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon confectioners' sugar

Directions

- Place the chocolate in a blender.
- Whisk the milk, 1 cup cream, egg yolks, granulated sugar and salt in a heavy-bottomed medium saucepan over medium heat. Cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture is thick enough to coat the spatula or spoon and almost boiling, about 5-6 minutes.
- Pour the milk mixture over the chocolate in the blender. Cover and hold the lid with a thick towel and blend until combined and smooth, stopping to scrape the sides as needed. David the chocolate mixture among ramekins or small cups and refrigerate until set, about 2 hours.
- Whip the remaining 1/2 cup cream and the confectioners' sugar with a mixer or blender until soft peaks form. Top the chilled pots de crème with whipped cream.



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Romantic Cocktails

Sometimes it takes more than just chocolate to get the romance flowing.

Try these cocktails to get the night going with your Valentine.

HOT BUTTERED BOURBON

Recipe is from HGTV. Makes 2 cocktails.

Ingredients

1 cup apple cider
2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
2 tablespoons honey
1/2 teaspoon cloves
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger

1/2 cup bourbon

Directions

1. In a saucepan over low heat, bring apple cider to a simmer. Mix together butter, honey, cloves, cinnamon and ginger and add it to the cider, whisking until just melted.
2. Remove the pan from the heat, whisk in the bourbon and serve immediately. The drink may separate as it cools, but can be stirred again.

ROSE AND MINT CHAMPAGNE

Recipe is from HGTV. Makes 8 1-pint cocktails.

Ingredients

2 cups sugar
2 tablespoons honey or more to taste
1/2 cup mint leaves, plus more to garnish
4 tablespoons lime juice or more to taste
1 cup dried rosebuds
2 bottles champagne brut or dry sparkling wine, chilled

Directions

1. Over medium-low heat, combine sugar with honey and a cup of water. When the sugar melts, add mint leaves and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes.
2. Strain and return liquid to saucepan. Remove from heat, then stir in fresh lime juice, crushed

rosebuds and rose water.

Refrigerate for 30 minutes or up to a week.

3. Add 2 tablespoons rose syrup to a Mason jar. Top with dry champagne or sparkling wine. Garnish with finely crushed rosebuds and mint leaves.

HOT WHITE RUSSIAN WITH SALTED CARAMEL

Recipe is from HGTV. Makes 2 cocktails.

Ingredients

1 ounce caramel sauce
1 ounce margarita salt
10 ounces hot brewed coffee
3 ounces Kahlua
1 1/2 ounces vodka
3 ounces heavy cream

Directions

1. Pour caramel sauce and margarita salt into separate small saucers that are big enough to fit the opening of the glasses you will serve the drinks in. Hold each glass upside down and dip each rim into the sauce so that it is evenly covered. Pull the glass out and allow the excess to drip before dipping in salt. Set the glasses upright and allow to dry for 5 minutes.

2. Pour 5 ounces of hot coffee into each glass, then add half a shot of vodka and one shot of Kahlua to each glass.

3. In a small saucepan, warm 3 ounces of cream over low heat but not boiling. As soon as the cream is warm, add 1 1/2 ounces to each glass of coffee. Stir before serving.