



Love? Always!



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Mature love is still love!

Couples who have spent more than a few Valentine's Days together needn't feel that celebrating February 14 is a redundant, meaningless routine. This day of love deserves to be thought of as an important moment in the life of every couple, a mythical date to recall and celebrate the love they feel for each other.

Yes, it is still important to spend time together and highlight the event with a small gift or some tender written words. Showing your partner that you are thinking of him or her is what is most important, and giving a gift is often the easiest way to do that. However, a gift doesn't have to cost a lot of money. A handwritten letter, a framed photograph, a small heart-shaped decoration, an "I love you" written on the bathroom mirror for your loved one to see in the morning; these are just a few of the gestures that can demonstrate your love and the importance you give your partner in your life.

You might decide to treat yourselves to a shared gift rather than two separate ones. You'll have to decide together on what would please both of you, whether it's a designer item to enhance your home, a new kitchen accessory, or a romantic evening out. You might even want to treat yourselves to a night at a hotel or a country inn, even if it's close to home. The change of scenery will add a touch of excitement to your evening and bring you closer together.



It's important to celebrate this day of love even if you're an "old" couple.

PHOTO: JUPITERIMAGES / THINKSTOCK



Celebrating the day of love as a family

Valentine's Day is not just for lovers; it is also a celebration of other kinds of love. It's true that on February 14 most of the fuss is all about the Romeos and Juliettes of this world, but family love also deserves some of the limelight.

FLY AWAY LOVE BIRDS

The couple is the cornerstone on which the family is built. Before giving up all your quality time for family cocooning, don't forget the importance of maintaining a strong relationship and making the most of every possible occasion to put some romance into your daily lives.

Making a special effort to spend time together on or around Valentine's Day is a must. Organize a babysitter for the children and plan to take a break

from your usual routine. Make the love of your life happy without forgetting about yourself. If the weather allows, go skating arm in arm. Treat yourselves to massages, a good bottle of wine, and a merry time. Close your

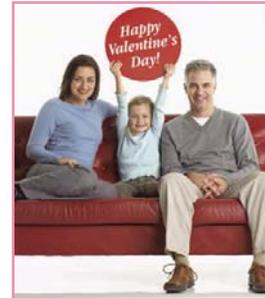


PHOTO: BRAND X PICTURES / THINKSTOCK

eyes and for just a few hours imagine there's only the two of you.

CELEBRATE WITH YOUR LITTLE CHERUBS

Children love celebrations. At home or at school, arts and crafts are often the expression of the love and creativity of our little ones, who adore the symbols of love: bright red hearts, cupids, and arrows. Add even more excitement to the occasion by including the children in the preparation of a surprise meal for your soul mate. They'll love to add their very own touch to salads, mix up a festive macaroni, or prepare an irresistible chocolate fondue.

In other words, experience Valentine's Day not once, but twice! What a great thought for all those hearts overflowing with love.

HAPPY Valentine's DAY

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HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

Beating the blues A survival guide for singles

Valentine's Day is a celebration of love but what if you haven't had anyone in your life for years? You might be very happy to be single, but as February 14 approaches you feel a little lump in your throat. You don't want to admit it, but you kind of wish you could participate in this celebration of love, just like everyone else. To avoid feeling down on Valentine's Day, you will have to be clever and well prepared.

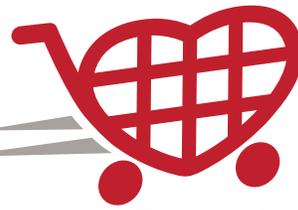
One strategy is to avoid all those places that will be crowded with couples on the fourteenth. Stock up in advance for everything you need for your meals that day. You might want to stay away from grocery stores on Valentine's Day, or you'll likely be confronted with all kinds of lovey couples shopping for their very own romantic dinners. Don't go to a restaurant either, as that is where couples flock to celebrate their love. Instead, go to a bar or a pub or a place that is advertising a singles evening. Your other option is to stay at home, cook yourself a good meal, or order in.

If possible, surround yourself with single friends and spend an evening out together. Or stay at home with a rented action movie or TV series on a DVD that you can watch from beginning to end. Just choose carefully what you watch: don't bother with movies like Dirty Dancing or Ghost or any other romantic movies. That would be sheer torture!

Go ahead and cook one of your favourite recipes that will keep you busy most of the evening, since there's nothing like a little soul food for comfort.



Surviving Valentine's Day as a single means being strategic and having as much fun as possible.



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HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

How to use the language of flowers in your Valentine's day bouquet



Flowers are ubiquitous on Valentine's day, but few people realize that the various blooms in their bouquets are imbued with symbolic meaning. This year, consider using the language of flowers to let your sweetheart know you care.

Roses

A classic choice for Valentine's Day, roses can express different things depending on their colour.

- Red symbolizes a deep, passionate love, which is why they're ideal for a romantic partner.
- Pink roses symbolize appreciation and make for a milder gesture than red ones. They're a nice choice if you don't want to overwhelm a new love interest.
- White roses stand for purity and innocence, making them a great choice for a friend, daughter or other relative.

Tulips

Beautiful but understated, tulips are a wonderful alternative to roses and also hold various meanings depending on their colour. In particular, red tulips are a symbol of passion and love. And because they last longer than other cut flowers, tulips also represent the longevity of your relationship.

Lilies

These flowers, specifically the white ones, are associated with royalty and will express to your loved one that they're a king or queen in your eyes.

These are just a few of the many flowers that you can include in your Valentine's Day bouquet. If you're still not sure what blooms to choose, your local florist will be happy to help.

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HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

How to navigate Valentine's Day when you've just started dating

Whether you've only been on a couple of dates or you've spent every day together for the last two months, Valentine's Day can be uncomfortable when you've just started dating someone. However, it doesn't have to be an awkward event. As long as the two of you talk to each other about your expectations, Valentine's Day can be a hassle-free affair.

Broach the topic

It's never too early to learn to communicate with your new partner. If you see a future with this person, you should talk to them about your expectations and hopes for Valentine's Day. Bringing up the topic can be as simple as asking, "how do you feel about Valentine's Day?"

Figure it out together

The two of you should decide how you'd like to celebrate mark the occasion. No matter what you decide, don't go overboard. If you choose to buy each other presents, decide on a budget and stick to it. If you don't want to exchange gifts but still want to do something, cook dinner together and have a quiet evening in.

Navigating the waters of your first Valentine's Day together can make or break you as a couple. If it goes well, you could be starting a tradition that will last for years to come.



Four things to avoid cooking on Valentine's Day

Have you offered to make somebody you love a romantic Valentine's Day dinner but aren't the best cook? While there are countless recipes out there for people who aren't adept in the kitchen, here are four meals you'll definitely want to avoid serving.

1. Anything too spicy: some people love spicy foods like curries, chilies and anything covered with

hot sauce, but for the uninitiated, these foods can cause major stomach issues that could put an early end to your romantic evening.

2. Anything that requires a bib: lots of people love to crack into a lobster or crab, but eating these shellfish can be incredibly messy. If you're going to go

the seafood route, serve the meat without the shells.

3. Anything too heavy: you might be tempted to serve a robust dish you know your sweetie will love like steak and potatoes. However, eating a heavy meal is more likely to put your love interest to sleep than it is to put him or her in the mood for romance.

4. Anything too complicated: while you might love the idea of making a cheese soufflé or French macarons, the truth is that these dishes are extremely finicky, even for an experienced chef. It's best to leave these recipes for a night when there's less at stake.



You don't need to be fancy to impress your date. The important part is spending some time together, even if it means ordering a pizza after you've burned the chicken.

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HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

Seven ways to celebrate Valentine's Day as a family

Valentine's Day can be a time to celebrate love of all kinds. This year, instead of making romantic plans with your partner, why not include your kids and celebrate as a family? Here are some Valentine's Day activities you and the kids will love:

1. Profess your love. Each family member takes a turn telling the others something they love about them, including themselves.
2. Eat a special breakfast. Serve heart-shaped pancakes or oatmeal with strawberries and chocolate chips.
3. Go on a family date night. Eat at a local restaurant you haven't tried before and catch a movie after.
4. Take a walk down memory lane. Reminisce and

share stories while looking at old family photos. The kids will love looking at themselves and you in your younger days.

5. Bake cookies. Use a heart-shaped cookie cutter to make Valentine's Day cookies. Decorate them with pink icing.
6. Have a movie marathon. Make popcorn, buy candy and snuggle up together under your cosiest blankets.
7. Make cards. Gather red and pink paper, glitter, stickers and markers to make valentines to hand out to friends and family members.

Taking the time to celebrate Valentine's Day as a family will create memories your kids will have for a lifetime.



Tips for choosing the perfect Valentine's gift

Are you having a hard time deciding what to give your sweetheart for Valentine's Day? Do you want to give them something beyond the customary flowers and box of chocolates? If so, here are some tips for finding the perfect gift.

- Think about them: consider what they like and any hobbies they may have. Keeping these things in mind will help you avoid giving something they won't appreciate.
- Listen to them: they may be dropping hints. Have they recently mentioned something they'd like to buy? You'll get extra brownie points for getting them something they

talked about wanting months ago.

- Ask for help: if you've been wracking your brain but can't think of anything, asking somebody they're close to could help. Their mom, best friend or brother may have a good idea you haven't thought of.
- Remember who it's for: don't buy them tickets to an event you'll be more excited about than they will. If you're going for an experience as a gift, make sure it's something they'll enjoy.

By following these tips, you'll be sure to wow the person you love most.



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