

February 14th is traditionally a celebration of love, so how do people in the UK mark the occasion?

Cards

Sending a Valentine's card to a loved one is a custom that started more than a century ago. Couples give cards to each other, but it is also traditional to send an anonymous card to anyone you secretly love. This practice is particularly common in schools and can be a source of great amusement and embarrassment as everyone tries to work out who sent a card and who has a secret admirer! Valentine's Day symbols on cards include hearts designs, doves, and the figure of the winged angel, Cupid.



Poems

The card might also feature a poem. Probably the most famous lines from a Valentine's Day poem are:

Roses are red, violets are blue,
Honey is sweet, and so are you.

There are some ironic variations on this poem such as:

Roses are red, violets are blue,
You look like a monkey and smell like one too!

Mobile love

Millions of people use digital means of creating and sending Valentine's Day greeting messages such as e-cards, or printable greeting cards. Texting your Valentine message is an easy (although maybe not very romantic!) option. Valentine's Day text messages include:

WUBMV - will you be my Valentine
xoxoxoxoxo - hugs and kisses
LUWAM<3 - love you with all my heart
ImRdy4Luv - I'm ready for love
:-) - I'm so happy, I'm crying
ILUVU - I love you

Flowers and chocolates

As well as cards, February 14th is also a day for giving gifts. Traditionally, men give chocolates or flowers to their wives or girlfriends. There are lots of websites offering advice on which Valentine's present to buy. Popular choices last year included: an mp3 player, red roses, a box of chocolates, a CD of romantic songs, a phone, jewellery, a photo frame or perfume.

Unusual gifts

Some people think that flowers and chocolates seem a little ordinary and so they look for a more unusual gift. For romantic people with plenty of cash these gifts could include: a helicopter flight, a balloon ride, the chance to test-drive a Ferrari, an all-day session at a health club. Others, however, complain that Valentine's Day is yet another opportunity for ever-increasing commercialism. For true romantics the gift of love is enough. Valentine's Day is a popular day to either propose or get married - you'd never forget your wedding anniversary!

Valentine's Day: Love it or hate it?

We asked a few Brits about their views on Valentine's Day and here's what they said. Following the tradition of Valentine's Day all the comments below are anonymous.

"Love it! I always send cards to my mates - and my boyfriend or course."

"I would prefer to go without it. I don't want gifts or money or anything like that. Knowing that I'm appreciated and that I can make others happy is good enough for me."

"I got a card last year – but I still don't know who sent it. I haven't got a girlfriend."

"My mum sends me a card every year. It's sort of sweet but I think I'm getting a bit old for that now."

"It's just really humiliating. I've never received a Valentine's card in my life. A day to switch off my phone because I know I'm not going to get any messages."

"My boyfriend sent me a text message last year on Valentine's Day. I suppose that's kind of romantic but I'd rather have a present or even a real card."

"I sent an anonymous Valentine's card to a boy in my class when I was younger. Then my brother told him it was from me. I was so embarrassed!"

"I'm single so it's definitely irritating. It's too commercial anyway."

"If a girl likes me I don't need to waste money sending her a card just because it's a tradition."

"Chocolates, roses, cards, presents. Bring it on! I love Valentine's Day!"