

# CONTEGO NEWS



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## CHOCOLATES & VALENTINE'S DAY

*How are they linked?*

The cliché heart-shaped box of chocolate is a symbol of love, and a tool of romance, making it an intrinsic part of Valentine's Day. But have you ever wondered how the two are really linked?

Well, the Aztecs were widely known to use chocolate as an aphrodisiac, and by the mid-19th century, Americans, British and Europeans expressed their affection on St Valentine's Day by exchanging lavish cards and boxes of the brown delicacy.

As Peanuts creator Charles M. Schulz famously once said, "All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt."

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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Hello after a long while, friends and associates, and Happy New Year! As we settle into 2020 after the Lunar New Year festivities, I wanted to talk about something a little different... Valentine's Day.

I've always believed that Valentine's Day is not just for couples—it should be a day we celebrate with all our loved ones. I thought it would be fun to explore the history of Valentine's Day, and to my surprise, the story behind it is more fascinating than I imagined. For example, did you know that the lovers' holiday was actually named after two men who had been executed by the Romans on the 14th of February some time in the 3rd Century AD? That took a dark turn, didn't it?!

As the story goes, Emperor Claudius II executed the two men, one of whom was a priest. As they were both named Valentine, their martyrdom was later honoured by the Catholic Church with the celebration of St. Valentine's Day.

What's even more curious is that the Romans celebrated Lupercalia between 13 to 15 February, an ancient festival to avert evil spirits and purify the city. During this festival, the Romans, being a crazy lot, partook in the ritual of hitting women to promote health and fertility.

It wasn't till the 5th century when Pope Gelasius muddled the two festivals to expel pagan rituals, creating a more theatrical interpretation—a day of fertility and love. Around the same time, the Normans (Vikings) celebrated Galatin's Day, which translates to "The day for lovers of women." This was likely confused with St. Valentine's Day because they sound alike. Later on, Shakespeare and Chaucer romanticised the auspicious day, helping along its evolution into the money-making celebration that it is today.

Fascinating, isn't it? With that thought, I bid you Adieu until next month. Wishing you and your loved ones a Happy Valentines's Day!

*Lee Mallard  
a.k.a Celauthe*