VALENTINE'S DAY IN UNITED STATES

Valentine's Day is celebrated on February 14. It is a festival of romantic love and many people give cards, letters, flowers or presents to their spouse or partner. They may also arrange a romantic meal in a restaurant or night in a hotel. Common symbols of Valentine's Day are hearts, red roses and Cupid. Cupid is usually portrayed as a small winged figure with a bow and arrow. In mythology, he uses his arrow to strike the hearts of people. People who have fallen in love are sometimes said to be 'struck by Cupid's arrow. Other symbols of Valentine's Day are couples in loving embraces and the gifts of flowers, chocolate, and red roses that couples often give each other.

Many people celebrate their love for their partner by sending cards or letters, giving gifts or flowers and arranging meals in restaurants or romantic nights in hotels. People who would like to have a romantic relationship with somebody may use the occasion to make this known, often anonymously. Valentine's cards are often decorated with images of hearts, red roses or Cupid. Common Valentine's Day gifts are flowers chocolates, candy, and champagne or sparkling wine. However, some people use the occasion to present lavish gifts, such as jewelry. Many restaurants and hotels have special offers at this time. These can include romantic meals or weekend breaks.

Valentine's Day is not a public holiday. Government offices, stores, schools and other organizations are open as usual. Public transit systems run on their regular schedule. Restaurants may be busier than usual as many people go out for an evening with their spouse or partner. Valentine's Day is also a very popular date for weddings.
February is Black History Month

Listed below are just a few highlights from Black History Month:

- John Rock was credited with honing the phrase “black is beautiful.”
- Langston Hughes, author born 1906.
- Dr. Carter G. Woodson, in 1926, launched Negro History Week as an initiative to bring national attention to the contributions of black people throughout American history. It became a month long celebration in 1976.
- Percival Prattis becomes the first African American news correspondent allowed in the United States House and Senate press gallery – 1945.
- Rosa Louise McCauley (Rosa Parks) an African American civil rights activist whom the U.S. Congress later called “Mother of the Modern-Day Civil Rights Movement” was born in Tuskegee, Alabama. She became famous for refusing to obey bus driver James Blake to give up her seat to make room for a white passenger.
- In 1972 Bob Douglass became the first African American elected to the Basketball Hall of Fame.
- Harry S. McAlpin was the first African American journalist admitted to a white house press conference.
- Alice Walker, the Pulitzer Prize Winning Author of the “Color Purple” born in Eatonton, Georgia. In 1983, the Color Purple won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, making Walker the first African American woman to win, as well as the National Book Award.
- 1986, Debi Thomas won the women’s Senior Singles U.S. Figure Skating Championship, becoming the first African American to win this title.
- Bernard Harris, 1st Black astronaut to walk in space, 1995. Defining himself as a “dreamer who believes nothing is impossible,” Bernard A. Harris, Jr., M.D. is an accomplished NASA astronaut, physician and businessman.
- Ron Brown is elected chairman of the Democratic National Party becoming the first African American to lead a major American Political Party in 1989.
- Henry Highland Garnett was an abolitionist and orator. He was the first black minister to preach to the United States House of Representatives in 1865.
• 1909, six African Americans, most of them former members of the short-lived Niagara Movement, and forty-seven liberal whites founded the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
• Sugar Ray Robinson, won the world middleweight championship for his first time on this day in 1951; he went on to win the 160-pound middleweight title four more times and the world welterweight title once.
• Nat “King” Cole, singer and jazz pianist died 1965. In 1965, he hosted “The Nat King Cole Show” becoming the first African American to host a regular network television program. The show lasted only one year due to lack of sponsors.
• Disney’s first live actor born; James Baskett became Disney’s first live actor playing the part of Uncle Remus in Disney’s Song of the South (1945) he would receive a posthumous Academy Award for this role in 1948 the year of his death.
• Virginia’s House of Delegates votes unanimously to retire the state song Carry me back to old Virginia which glorifies slavery.
• Morehouse College was founded originally in Augusta, Georgia as the Augusta Institute before moving to Atlanta in 1879.
• Toni Morrison, Pulitzer Prize winning author born in 1931.
• Frederick A. Douglass died of heart failure in Anacostia Heights, Washington, DC. With his impressive appearance and eloquent manner of speech, Frederick Douglass had been the main intellectual voice of black America for nearly fifty years. Born a slave of mixed European, African and Native American blood, he escaped slavery at the age of 21. It was not color, but crime, not God, but man that afforded the true explanation of the existence of slavery…what man can make, man can unmake.
• Frank E. Peterson, Jr. named the first Black general in the Marine Corps on this date in 1979.
• Hirman R. Revels of Mississippi sworn in as the first Black U.S. senator and first Black representative in Congress in 1870.
• Adrienne Mitchell, first African American woman to die in combat, Persian Gulf War, 1991.
• Charlotte Ray, first Black woman lawyer graduated Howard University Law School.
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NOTE: Please submit information or news that you would like to share to Kathy Hutchins.