



What's the origin of Valentines Day?

Like many Christian saints days, St Valentines Day has its origins in a Roman (pagan) ritual that was held in mid-February, and called "Lupercalia". This fertility rite was considered too un-Christian and was replaced by a day honouring the martyr Valentine who died by the command of the Roman emperor Claudius II in the 3rd century AD; the first St Valentines Day was in the year 496.

By the middle ages, Valentine was one of the most popular saints; Valentine's Day, 14th February, was commonly believed to be the start of the birds' mating season which may have led to the idea that Valentines Day should be a day for romance.

Written Valentines greetings can be traced back to 1415 and successive generations have built on the tradition. In the United States alone, over 150 million Valentines cards are exchanged each year.

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