

Tips for living

Sei ka tsu Hi n to
生活 の ヒント

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Valentine's Day in Japan



📁 February 14th is Valentine's Day. 📁

Valentine's Day is originally a custom that came from abroad. While Valentine's Day was becoming popular throughout Japan, a uniquely Japanese Valentine's tradition was established.

In Japan, Valentine's Day is when women give chocolates to men they have a crush on as a way to confess their love.



Chocolate given to a man you like is called ^{hon mei cho ko}本命チョコ. Before Valentine's Day, girls are busy choosing or making chocolates. Boys also get anxious about whether they'll get chocolates.



If the boy got a chocolate, he has to give something back to the girl on White day which comes a month after Valentine's day.

If the boy got ^{hon mei cho ko}本命チョコ, he will need to tell the girl how he feels about her.

Giving chocolate on Valentine's Day, especially from women to men, was actually a marketing strategy by chocolate manufacturers. However, this has become part of the unique Valentine's day culture in Japan.

Types of Valentine's chocolate (names)

There are different types (names) of Valentine's chocolates depending on the relationship between the giver and the receiver.

Hon mei cho ko
本命チョコ

This word is a combination of “本命” (hon mei, the person you really love) and “チョコレート” (Cho ko re to, which is a shortened version of the Japanese word for chocolate). Special chocolates to give to your boyfriend, husband or loved one.

Gi ri cho ko
義理チョコ

Gi ri cho ko
義理チョコ is for work mates or boss or someone who you want to show your appreciation.

To mo cho ko
友チョコ

To mo cho ko
友チョコ means exchanging chocolates between friends.

Ji bun cho ko go hou bi cho ko
自分チョコ (ご褒美チョコ)

Chocolate for myself, Self-indulgence chocolate. It refers to chocolates people buy for themselves as a special treat.

Fa mi cho ko
ファミチョコ

Chocolates for family.

Gyaku cho ko
逆チョコ

A man gives a gift to a woman.



The history of Valentine's Day in Japan

♥ **1950s**, The tradition of giving chocolate on Valentine's Day began with a confectionery company's advertising campaign, encouraging people to **'give chocolate to someone you love!'**

♥ **1970s**, It has become popular for women to give chocolates to men on Valentine's Day. This is how Japan's unique Valentine's Day culture was born.



♥ **1980s**, The custom of ^{gi ri cho ko}義理チョコ has taken hold, resulting in more shoppers purchasing gifts and an increase in stores offering special Valentine's items.

♥ **Currently**, There are many ways to enjoy Valentine's, such as giving ^{tomo cho ko}友チョコ or ^{go hou bi cho ko}ご褒美チョコ. Fewer people give ^{gi ri}義理 ^{cho ko}チョコ these days. Buying ^{go hou bi cho ko}ご褒美チョコ is gaining popularity. Also, ^{Tomo cho ko}友チョコ is a big trend among the younger generation.



Valentine's Day in Japan has shifted from just women giving chocolates to men, to a day for expressing gratitude, love, or treating oneself. It has evolved into an inclusive event that anyone can enjoy.

gai koku seki shi min sou dan mado guchi

外国籍市民相談窓口

Shiojiri city hall Counter 2

Monday～Friday 8:30～17:00

