

Valentine's Day

Planning required for party

Valentine's Day is one of the year's most popular occasions to entertain.

Whether you're planning a festive get-together with a group of loved ones or a romantic candlelit dinner for two, a little planning and creativity can go a long way.

To ensure your party is enjoyed by all, the experts at Carlton Cards offer these tips:

- Successful parties begin with a plan. Select a theme, then build your party around it. For example, ask guests to come disguised as famous lovers, or have everyone dress in red and white.

- Let family members pitch in. Even young children will enjoy decorating cookies and blowing up balloons.

- If you're planning a family buffet, ask for the names of everyone's favorite meals, then prepare them. Before serving, place a heart-shaped card next to the dish, bearing the name of the meal and the person who chose it. This can be your personal valentine to each family member.

- Colorful, themed paper partyware can be mixed and matched for a more festive look. Matching plastic tablecloths add an attractive touch - plus they can be used next year.

- Create a festive mood with lots of balloons, streamers and printed decorations. Display cupid and heart garlands across walls. Line cookie and cake plates with heart-shaped doilies.

- Use candles to add a romantic glow to your table. For example, surround a floral arrangement with red and white candles in decorative holders.

- Keep guests entertained with activities. Play a few games of Hearts, or have couples take turns describing their most memorable date. Give a prize for the best story. For a children's party, try a variation of Pin the Tail on the Donkey by having the kids pin an arrow to a large heart hung on the wall. Or, fill a glass jar with cinnamon hearts and ask children to



guess how many are in it. The winner gets to keep the candy.

- Fill holiday-themed mugs with heart-shaped candies - they make ideal prizes or hostess gifts.

- Take candid polaroid photos for your guests throughout your party. Insert them into inexpensive Valentine's Day picture frames and present them to guests as they leave. It's a great way to preserve warm memories.

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Valentine's Day cards date back to 1415

On February 14, Canadians are expected to exchange about 75 million cards, making Valentine's Day the second largest card-selling holiday.

The oldest known valentine was written in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orleans, says Kendall Wigoda, manager of corporate communications for Carlton Cards. It was mailed to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London. In early North America, homemade valentines flourished. At first, designs were simple, highlighted by fine pen and ink workmanship. Later, styles became more elaborate. Puzzle cards took the form of a puzzle, the Daguerreotype featured a reflective plate in its center and the Rebus cards featured verses with illustrations in place of certain words. Watch Papers were cards sized to fit into a man's watch pocket. During the 1700s, the custom continued with writers or booklets containing an assortment of verses on decorative paper. By the 1840, mechanical designs were all the rage, with honeycomb pop-outs and three-dimensional features.

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Special Valentines Day Menu
Friday 14th, Saturday 15th and Sunday 16th
Four course prix fixe dinner \$34.95
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For reservations please call 640-8494