

Okayama Insider

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FREE

FEB

The second month of the 20th
year of the Heisei period.

2008

如月 平成20年
(Kisaragi)

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Some say "Kisaragi" came from Kinu-sara-gi, meaning to put on extra clothing.

If you are a male, your first Valentine's Day in Japan is probably going to seem unusual. You might get some rather confusing messages via the chocolates you receive on this day.

For most westerners, St. Valentine's Day is a day anyone can declare their love to someone special, male or female, anonymously.

In Japan however, February 14th is a day when only girls hand deliver chocolates to boys. Wives give to husbands, girlfriends give to boyfriends, and daughters give to fathers. If a girl likes a boy but she doesn't know if he likes her too, Valentine's Day is a great

chance for her to tell him how she feels. She doesn't have to say much because the chocolate can express it all. For junior and senior high school girls, Valentine's Day is a big event.

However, it is not always a romantic exchange, and this is where westerners can get confused. 本命チョコ (Honmei-Choko) or マジチョコ (Maji-Choko) are chocolate presents from serious admirers. They are words used to describe the chocolates given to the boy she really loves.

義理チョコ (Giri-Choko) on the other hand, is given to male friends, colleagues, bosses or other "important" people,



**Be careful, gentlemen!
St. Valentine's Day is
different here!**

Text by Noriko Ehara

but without any romantic feelings. "Giri" means a sense of obligation or duty. The difficulty for boys is figuring out whether the chocolate received is the real deal, or just a gesture. It's not a question you can simply ask her either.

If you get chocolates from a girl, even if it's Giri-choko, you are expected to give white chocolate, marshmallows or candies in return on "White Day", March 14th. If you want to use White Day to confess your love to someone special, then you might give them jewelry or something more expensive at that time.

But Valentine's Day is also changing. Recently it has become popular for girls to give chocolate to their girlfriends too. If they feel "obligated" to give to their male colleagues, why not enjoy eating delicious chocolates with female colleagues too. Giving to friends is called 友チョコ (Tomo-Choko.)

Some women also like to buy expensive Valentine's chocolates for themselves as a special treat.

Valentine's Day may have been introduced to Japan by chocolate companies looking to sell more, but all the boys get a little excited about it. Just be careful: those chocolates you thought were only "Giri" might actually be from a serious admirer!

Okayama Insider invites you to a FREE Barazushi Cooking Event

10.00am-1.00pm, 2 March 2008



Okayama Insider invites you to join other insider readers and writers in our Barazushi (ばら寿司) Cooking Event at Okayama International Center from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm on March 2nd. Barazushi (vinegared rice with seafood, mountain plants and vegetables) is Okayama's local specialty. It is cooked for special occasions, such as the Japanese Doll Festival (Hina Matsuri: ひな祭り) which is held on March 3rd. The festival is a traditional event to pray for young girl's health and happiness. Families with daughters display hina dolls in their homes, and make Barazushi.

We will make Barazushi and clam soup together. It is FREE and you can bring your friends but you MUST book by emailing the Okayama Insider editors at OkayamaInsider@hotmail.co.jp. Hope to see you there!