

ITALIAN ENGAGEMENT RINGS

Have you ever wondered how things so small could have so much meaning? Could also symbolize so many hopes and dreams? Well, Italian engagement rings are examples.

The tradition of engagement rings began in ancient Roman wedding culture. Grooms gave rings to their brides-to-be



as public marks that contracts of engagement had been made between the families. Once given, the rings became legally binding and meant only death was an acceptable reason for not continuing to marriage. For that reason the rings were very plain, undecorated bands made of iron symbolizing lasting and

unbreakable contracts. As for ancient Roman wedding rings - they did not exist as a separate item. Engagement bands were worn by women as a sign of their betrothal and, later, their status as wives. No other rings were exchanged at ancient Roman weddings.

By the third century, plain silver and gold bands replaced iron bands as engagement rings. This time the rings symbolized not just strength but the grooms' faith in their brides-to-be: the women could be trusted with their wealth. Rings were now symbols of promises to marry and expressions of trust.



Then ancient Romans goldsmiths developed more elaborate bands, gold signet designs showing hands clasped, or a couple entwined, 'fede' rings. The rings are also

known as a 'Concordie' or harmony rings. Engagement rings now spoke of strength, a promise to marry, trust, harmony and 'fede', a pledge of love. Rings were now worn on the third finger of the left hand. Roman culture followed the Egyptian belief that from the third finger ran the "nerve of love" directly to the heart. In Italy today 'fede' rings are still very much a part of Italian engagement ring traditions.

Ancient Romans loved diamonds. They endowed them with romantic powers, believing they were splinters from falling stars, the tips of the arrows of Eros. However, diamond engagement rings were not seen in Italy until the 1400s. Italian jewelry manufacturers embraced diamonds enthusiastically. Modern Italian engagement rings now feature diamonds in a variety of settings, and Italian wedding rings are also often set with a single diamond stone for men and a circle of diamonds (signifying eternal love) for the brides' ring.

It is part of Italian culture traditions that, if the man's family owns a ring they leave it to their eldest son, who will give it to his fiancée as a symbol not just of love but of welcome into her new family.

WHY CHOCOLATES ON VALENTINES DAY?



Chocolates are considered aphrodisiac foods since the time of the Aztecs. Chocolates are said to contain substances that inflame desire and make the beloved one more open to romance. In olden days, this resulted in the tradition in European royalty to give their lovers chocolates mixed with amber to stimulate their love.

Everyone is involved in eating and sharing chocolates because of emotional reasons. They are the best known mood elevators, especially during the gray winter months. When someone is angry, chocolates can bring a mood change.

A gift of chocolates reflects a person's time and effort selecting just the right chocolates. Just think of all the hours spent thinking, considering, deciding what to give. There are so many choices – brands, quality, types like bars, nougats and percentage of cacao. Then, there's gift packing to consider – boxed, gift sets, baskets, gold foil, ribbons. To make someone feel special and to send a clear message, choose the sweetheart box.

Chocolates make people feel delighted. They are not just ordinary chocolates; they are keys to elevate a person's love and relationships. Even when chocolates are anticipated, like Valentine's Day, chocolates are still important in their own way, personal and thoughtful. So why not chocolates on Valentine's Day? Let's make that any day is a good day for chocolates.

Prepared by Jennifer Murphy

References

- <https://www.explore-italian-culture.com/engagement-ring-tradition.html>
- <https://www.slideshare.net/bikanervalva/chocolate-a-symbol-of-love-and-commitment>