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Culture and Personality Week 6

Happy Valentine's Day

This week think Chocolate . . . it's a Valentine's Day tradition . . .

Why chocolate?

No.

It's not **an aphrodisiac**—or at least if it is, there is no scientific proof of that. Phenylethylamine in chocolate *is* an aphrodisiac, but it's not likely that enough of it makes it to your brain while eating chocolate “to make a difference,” so to speak. But there's always **the power of suggestion** . . . and chocolate sugar pills (placebos) are powerful psychosomatics <<http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anth4616/cpplacebo.html>>. And you will see as we go along in the semester that **psychosomatics** are key in understanding Culture and Personality. . . .

[Chocolate snorting offers new way to a cocoa high](#) -- Reuters (06 February 2015)

Giving chocolate goes back to the days of the Ancient Mesoamericans who “invented” chocolate, as a byproduct of beer making. So gifting chocolate has been around for a long time—probably for 3000 years. And people have probably been thinking that it is an aphrodisiac all of that time.

More information on chocolate is available from the class Chocolate page at

<<http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afchocolate.html>>.

As for St. Valentine, as in “St. Valentine's Day,” there are more than a dozen St. Valentines in the Roman Catholic Church, and neither of the two Valentines thought to be responsible for “Valentine's Day” ate chocolate (Valentine of Rome, and Valentine of Terni in Central Italy). And Valentine's Day itself became associated with romance only in the Middle Ages.

What's new for 2016? . . . Chef Oscar Ortega of Jackson, Wyoming—one of the folks featured in the Who's Who section of the course—one first place in the world competition in Europe for his praline creation. He is now recognized as one of the world's greatest chocolatiers. And, at least equally important, he's a very nice person.

<http://atelierortega.squarespace.com/#oscar-ortega>



Enjoy your chocolate . . . and Valentine's Day,

Tim Roufs