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## Not sure what to do for Valentine's Day? You might consider Dublin

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Courtesy of Whitefriar St. Church in Dublin

Or maybe you might.

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No, not the Dublin in Alameda County, but Dublin, Ireland. Whitefriar Street church has been a place of pilgrimage on Valentine's Day for many years. Of course, for those who have already found love, Lamorinda offers many lovely ways to celebrate this February as well.

The heart and blood of St. Valentine rests in this Dublin Church, and many visitors come for prayers of love and blessings for engaged couples. Today a statue of the saint stands over the reliquary that is emblazoned with the words, "This shrine contains the sacred body of the martyr, together with a small vessel tinged with his blood."

Legend has it that Valentine was a priest from Rome in the third century AD. Emperor Claudius II prohibited soldiers to marry because he thought married men were bad soldiers. Valentine allegedly felt this was unfair, so he broke the rules and arranged marriages in secret. Valentine was imprisoned and condemned to death. Some say he fell in love with the jailer's daughter and when he was taken to be killed on Feb. 14 he sent her a love letter signed "from your Valentine," leading to the subsequent exchange of "valentines" between sweethearts and even school children.

And what better way to spend time together for Valentine's Day than by visiting Dublin? Mind you, the weather forecast isn't great. Expect drizzles and a high of 50 degrees. Still, you probably won't have to fight hordes of tourists to pay your respects to St. Valentine.