



Single person contemplating the Andaman Sea - Büyükada Island, Turkey (Source: Jordan Steinberg)

Everyone loves a good holiday. Barbecues on the fourth of July, parties on New Year's and family get-togethers on Thanksgiving — people can mark the passage of the year based on upcoming holidays. If it's October, then it's Halloween season. The same goes for December, with Christmas and Hanukkah, and in July, with Independence Day.

The vast majority of annual holidays are a great excuse to see friends and family, as they are universal in nature. One does not have to be a veteran to take part in Veteran's day, and being part of the Christian faith is not required to appreciate Christmas.

There is one holiday, however, that can be exclusive —Valentine's Day. Celebrating couples and love around the world, the sheer avalanche of pink hearts —in the West— can overwhelm even the most cringe-immune of cynics. Between gifts, meals and other commemorative trinkets for Valentine's, [an average of \\$131 was spent](#), in the United States, per person in 2013.

Don't be misled into thinking that Valentine's day is only recognized in the United States and Europe. Known as 'White Day' in Vietnam, it is celebrated on March fourteenth. The same goes for Japan's Tanabata on July seventh and Brazil's lovers' day on the twelfth of June. Regardless of the calendar day, or the country in question, the tenets remain the same — celebrating love and lovers.



A typical day in Vietnam - Hanoi, Vietnam (Source: Jordan Steinberg)

Negatively deemed a 'Hallmark holiday', those outside of the typical Valentine's demographic have had varying degrees of success in establishing alternatives to the holiday. One such tongue-in-cheek alternative is [Singles' Awareness Day](#) (S.A.D, for short), celebrated by gift-giving to oneself in the form of activities, items or travel, SAD celebrates the simple fact of being alone.

While humorous, SAD is not an occasion with a culturally popular following. Moving back to China, they've formed their own version of SAD, called Guanggun Jie, or [Singles' Day](#). It is celebrated on the ironic date of November eleventh, otherwise depicted as 11/11. The ones are meant to represent people that are alone. Even if trying to date, whether by online dating via TanTan — China's Tinder — or otherwise, the holiday is seen as an excellent opportunity to treat oneself. Similar to SAD, it takes the form of vacations or the purchase of items.

Speaking of shopping, it's likely that you've never heard of this holiday until now, but it's well-known in the financial world as the single largest online shopping day the world. In 2016, nearly 18 billion in US dollars changed digital hands. For lesser online holidays, such as Black Friday and Cyber Monday, a certain stock uptick for benefiting companies would be expected, considering the gross. In the case of singles' day, however, where Alibaba posted \$5.2

billion in sales in the first hour alone, the [sheer volume was expected](#). In fact, by the end of the week, the retail's stock was down by 1.23%.



Potential shoppers entering the walls of old town - Dali, Yunnan, China - (Source: [Jordan Steinberg](#))

Chinese Singles' Day, much the same as the perception of Valentine's day, is a completely fake holiday. Valentine's Day has history going back to the eighteenth century, but Singles' Day has only been adopted and propagated by Alibaba. The e-commerce giant has used China's ever-increasing consumer culture, as well as its marital customs, to its advantage.

The unmarried in China are often challenged in regards to their single status. It's a pervasive stigma, and one as old as time. As it goes, the young are meant to go to school, get a good job, get married, have children, and thus, keep the culture alive. At 1.4 billion citizens, that is no longer a practical issue and yet, the culture persists. This is due to the [dangerous gender ratio](#), which, due to the One Child Policy and Cultural Revolution, has put males in the far majority. As of 2015, men still outnumbered women by 33 million, or 1.15:1. Literally, there is not someone for everyone, so it is understandable that the unmarried are pressured to 'get moving'.

Furthermore, as the population has swelled, China famously experienced an economic explosion. For many years, it was the fastest-growing economy in the world. As some of the poorest of its population have been lifted out of poverty, they have been ever-encouraged to spend, however and whenever possible. By 2025, [it's projected](#) that Chinese consumers will collectively spend \$6.4 trillion annually.

Singles' Day has capitalized on these trends to admirable effect. Bearing initial similarities with SAD, Singles' Day was initially a college-based holiday in Nanjing meant to cater to the single cynics. Today, those cynics drown their sorrows in corporation-perpetuated shopping. The question then becomes, "how does one break out of the cycle?". Answering that, it would be behoove oneself to no longer fall into the 'singles' demographic of Singles' Day. To that end, our [top online dating services](#) might be a good place to begin that journey.