

# Be my Valentine, pet owners tell their pampered pooches

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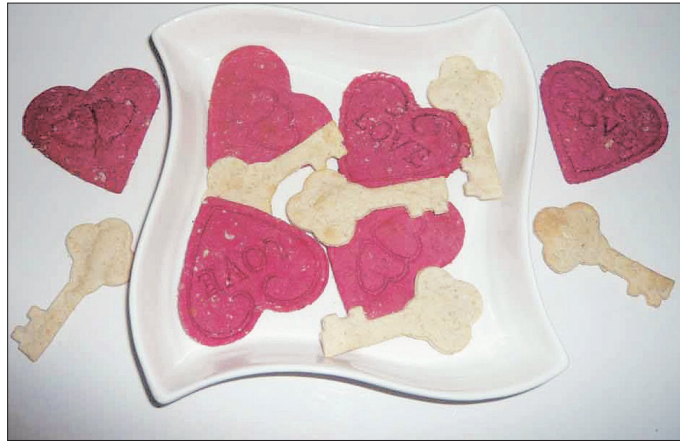
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I LOVE the way you lick my face, and love the world you help me see. And whether you're naughty or nice, There will always be a "you" with "me"! This is the sweet message that pets will receive along with a hamper of goodies as their owners ask them to be their Valentine. Valentine's Day is all about flowers, candles, cards and candy. This year, it's no different, except that there's a growing trend of pet families and owners showering their pampered pooches with these tokens of love.

Yadika Sharma, the owner of The Spoilt Brat Barkery, Mumbai, has been busy baking

fresh 'Key to my Heart' Strawberry and Vanilla Biscuits, Beetroot and Cheese Love Straws, and Strawberry Cheese Cake Fantasy. Sharma couriers these hampers across India and pet owners in Pune are some of her main clients. "I ship the hampers directly to the doggie's doorstep. I am also in talks with Pet Sitters in Pune," Sharma said.

Sharma describes Valentine's Day as the time when business booms. "Pet owners get excited about showing their love to their four-legged friends and showering them with goodies," she said. The biscuits and cakes are accompanied by a sweet message declaring love for the pets as well as two squeaky toys.



Valentine's Day treats for pets.

The celebrations aren't merely limited to sweet treats. At Pet Sitters, Hinjewadi, a grand Pet Valentine's Day is on the cards. "We had initially

slated it for February 12, but so many keen participants called in and requested us to postpone it because many are busy with weddings. Thus, we will

now have it on February 26," said Shalaka Mundada, owner, Pet Sitters.

This is the second year that this pet resort is organising V-Day celebrations. "Like last year, we will limit the participants to 10 or 12 so that it's easier to manage," she said. There are fun games, obedience training and a splash pool party on the agenda. "We play musical chairs. The catch is that the dog too has to sit down within five seconds. Another game is one where the owner is blindfolded and he or she, along with the dog, have to cross obstacles without touching them. These games are fun and also show how well the owners and pets bond," she described.

The Doggy's Den Pet Resort, Wagholi, is also ready to welcome the couples today. Said Harish Rughani, co-owner, "We have arranged a pool party for dogs and owners in the afternoon." Ten couples will spend the day at the resort, playing in the pool and enjoying a sumptuous meal.

Priya Sharma, a professor better known as her dog Raghunath's mom, said, "The party at Pet Sitters is a way to get my five-year-old Golden Retriever to interact with other dogs, play games and have fun." For her, he is an integral part of her life. "He's more my son than my Valentine, actually. I don't know what I would do without him," she added.