



Get out your green outfits — St. Patrick's Day arrives on Tuesday. While legend has it that St. Patrick used the shamrock to explain the holy trinity, revelers in Taipei will find another symbolic trio to mark the celebration: Guinness, Jameson and Bailey's at their local pub and at reduced prices.

But before rushing off to the usual nightspots, consider a relatively quiet day and a view at **Donovan's Coffee** (2F, 10-1, Ln 56, Gongming St, Tamsui Township, Taipei County (台北縣淡水鎮公明街56巷10之1號2樓), www.donovans.com.tw, (02) 2625-6234), located a five-minute walk from Danshui MRT Station (淡水捷運站). This second floor cafe and restaurant, run by Irish expatriate Tim Donovan, has a small balcony overlooking the harbor and Guanyin Mountain (觀音山) — a perfect setting to try one of the house specialties, Irish coffee (NT\$110). Tall cans of Guinness normally go for NT\$190; on Tuesday, there's a 15-percent discount on all alcohol and food. Donovan says he will also be there to chat about the story of St. Patrick and offer free Gaelic lessons to anyone who's interested.

Back in town, the parties start tomorrow. Sports bar **Tavern Premier** (415, Xinyi Rd Sec 4, Taipei City (台北市信義路四段415號), www.tavern.com.tw, (02) 8780-0892) is throwing its "St. Patrick's Madness" party tomorrow and Saturday, with NT\$99 specials on pints of Guinness from 8pm to 9pm, and various cocktails for NT\$99 from 10pm to 11pm. On Tuesday, there will be an Irish buffet for NT\$299, which includes dishes like Irish lamb stew and fried fish. Purchasing a buffet dinner allows you two pints of Guinness for NT\$99 each.

Get your jig on at the **Brass Monkey** (3F, 8, Nanjing E Rd Sec 5, Taipei City (台北市南京東路五段8號3樓), www.brassmonkeytaipei.com, (02) 2547-5050), which is holding an Irish dancing contest tomorrow at 9pm followed by a party hosted by the Taiwan Celts, an expatriate Gaelic football team. Guinness pints are NT\$199 for all of this month. For tomorrow's party, receive a free "green" shot (Bailey's and creme de menthe) by either wearing green underwear, providing proof of Irish nationality, wielding an Irish flag, sporting green hair, or proving it's your birthday.

Free beer, who can resist? The **Cosmopolitan Grill** (218 Changchun Rd, Taipei City (台北市長春路218號), www.cosmo.com.tw, (02) 2508-0304) thinks you can't. From tomorrow until Tuesday, wear green clothing or green make-up or carry an Irish flag to get one free bottle of Miller Chill beer. If that's not Irish enough for you, then go for tall cans of Guinness for NT\$100, Jameson whiskey for NT\$90 and Bailey's for NT\$75.

Free Guinness, need we say more? **Carnegie's** (100, Anhe Rd Sec 2, Taipei City (台北市安和路二段100號), www.carnegies.net, (02) 2325-4433) follows its own St. Patrick's Day tradition of offering free Guinness pints, from 7pm to 8pm on Tuesday. The rest of the day pints will cost NT\$150. Other drink specials include Bailey's and Jameson's shots for NT\$99 all day, while lunch and dinner menus offer corned beef and cabbage (NT\$360) and lamb stew (NT\$390).

For those who want an authentic Irish pub experience but can do without the crowds, **Hell's Kitchen** (1, Civil Blvd Sec 5, Taipei City (台北市市民大道五段1號), (02) 2748-6407) may be the ticket. One of the proprietors, Irishman Niall Clinton, says he and his partners are trying to run their latest establishment "more like an Irish bar," by adorning their smallish space with "Irish bits and pieces."

If Hell's Kitchen remains anything like Clinton's previous ventures at Spaceman or On Tap, expect to celebrate until the wee hours of the morning.

And it's one of the nicer deals in town: tomorrow, Saturday and Tuesday, the bar offers Guinness pints for NT\$150 from 8pm to midnight, and Jameson and Baileys for NT\$50 each, all night.

Leave your vehicles at home when celebrating, and let taxis and public transport be your chariots. Happy jiggling.

Have a craic this weekend. Slainte!

PHOTOS: AGENCIES



Let the shenanigans begin

St. Patrick's Day falls on Tuesday, but the parties in Taipei start tomorrow

BY DAVID CHEN
STAFF REPORTER



White Day: Valentine's Day redux

Thought you were off the hook after Feb. 14? Not if your significant other celebrates a Japanese holiday for lovers that is catching on elsewhere in East Asia

BY CATHERINE SHU
STAFF REPORTER

Single people who thought they had successfully weathered a pink-and-red storm of chocolates, flowers and annoying heart decorations on Valentine's Day will have to sit through another indignity this Saturday — White Day.

The holiday, which originated in Japan and is also celebrated in South Korea, is observed to varying degrees in other East Asian countries. In Japan, women give chocolate to the men in their life on Valentine's Day; the guys then return the favor by showering their paramours with goodies on White Day.

If you found out at the last moment that your ladylove celebrates White Day (or just decided that she celebrates White Day), don't panic. There is still plenty of time to find an appropriate present.

The traditional White Day gift is chocolate in white packaging. Patisserie Sadaharu Aoki on the ground floor of Breeze Center (微風廣場) sells

chocolates, macaroons and other treats by its namesake, a bakery chef who worked in Paris for 10 years, creating confections for clients including Yohji Yamamoto, Christian Dior and Chanel before opening his first boutique. His sleek chocolate Bonbons Maquillage come in a rainbow of colors, like an upscale version of M&M's. Macaroons in pretty pastel shades are also available by the dozen. Patisserie Sadaharu Aoki's goodies don't run cheap — a dozen bonbons will set you back NT\$1,200 — but their elegant white packaging and Japanese pedigree make them a surefire hit for White Day.

If your sweetheart does not have a sweet tooth, head over to Hands Tailung (台灣手創館) on the sixth floor of Breeze Center (微風廣場). The well-organized department store sells an eye-popping array of housewares, cosmetics, crafting supplies, stationery and kitchen supplies from Japan. Just make sure not to pick anything from Hands Tailung's prodigious selection of cellulite creams or fat-busting "massage" girdles.



This Saturday, the loving continues.

PHOTO: JUAN YU, TAIPEI TIMES

Francfranc, two floors below Hands Tailung, is another Japanese import that sells home decorating accessories. For NT\$980, you can buy your darling a white-flocked coin bank molded to look like a smiling bunny rabbit. NT\$499 will get you a transparent plastic apple-shaped container, which can be filled with your beloved's favorite candy and a note written in your best cursive telling her that she is the apple of your eye.

Sogo's Fuxing branch also offers plenty of gift ideas. Ju Ju Ama on the department store's fifth floor sells soft toys and accessories inspired by *zakka*, the home decorating movement that originated in Japan. You can buy a whimsical keychain wallet by the brand UglyFamily (NT\$280) or a colorful Lego brick pendant (NT\$300). Japanese accessory maker Bowu Si Ko Bo (帽子工房) on the same floor offers charming hats, including a gray UV-deflecting number (NT\$2,750) that is reminiscent of the clothes worn by women during the Great Depression — highly appropriate given the current global economic crisis.

If you are *really* short on time, 7-Eleven is currently having a promotion to coincide with the start of strawberry-picking season in Japan. Cheerful red displays are packed with plenty of imported Japanese strawberry-flavored treats, including what has to be the largest selection of pink Pocky and Pocky-like stick cookies ever gathered in one place. If your honey hates artificial strawberry flavoring, don't despair. You can pick up a bottle of *ume* liquor, with large plums floating inside, for NT\$299, or a box of Hello Kitty chocolates for just NT\$65.

If all your White Day efforts fail, you can take comfort in the fact that Black Day is right around the corner. The informal holiday originated in South Korea and has quickly picked up steam among unattached people irritated by the onslaught of Valentine's and White Day marketing. On April 14, bachelors and bachelorettes will gather and celebrate the fact that as singles, they are free to buy their own chocolate anytime they damn well please.