



Valentine's Day • February 14, 2003 Recipes, Hints & Tips

Valentines Day is *the* day for romance, a perfect excuse to pamper the person you love. We've made it easy for you to look like Casanova or Cleopatra with our hints and tips, so read on and then plan ahead for a sublime day of passion!

Menu: Our Valentines Day menu is light and fun, with emphasis on small bites and interesting textures. If you're going to have dinner out, be sure to come home for the sinfully rich chocolate fondue to cap off the evening!



Baked Camembert with Carmelized Onions and Shallots

If you love cheese, then you'll swoon over this ooey, gooey cheesy delight. Creamy camembert is made even more decadent with the addition of soft, carmelized onions and then wrapped in a flaky phyllo crust. Dip into it with a crispy piece of pear or spread it onto a piece of toast or take out your spoon and eat it straight up... whatever method you choose, it's all good.

Ingredients:

- 1 mini wheel of Camembert (8 oz)
- 1 small sweet white onion, thinly sliced
- 1 shallot, thinly sliced
- Salt
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- 3 tbsp. butter
- 4 medium sheets of phyllo dough

Prepare:

Heat oven to 325 F. In a sauté pan over medium-low heat, melt 2 tbsp. of butter, then add the onion and shallot, salt and pepper. Sauté slowly until golden brown and limp, then remove from heat.

Melt the remaining 1 tbsp. butter.

Remove the phyllo dough from its package and spread two sheets on a cool, flat surface. Place the Camembert wheel in the middle. With a sharp knife, peel away the upper crust of the cheese, leaving the crust on the sides and bottom intact.

Spread the cooled onion mixture over the top. Fold the phyllo dough over the top. Take another two sheets of dough and fold them gently around the other way to create a secure envelope. Brush with melted butter.

Place into a small round casserole and place in the oven for 20-25 minutes, or until the phyllo dough has turned golden brown.

How To Serve:

Place the cheese on a platter and surround with grapes or toast points, whatever you want to accompany it with.



Mixed Greens Salad w/ Green Apple, Sugared Pecans & Stilton Blue Cheese

This salad is wonderfully refreshing, a blend of tart, crunchy apple contrasted with sugary nuts and creamy blue cheese. This is a perfect way to start a meal, or could even be eaten as a light lunch with a baguette.

Ingredients:

- 1/2 bunch red leaf lettuce, roughly torn
- 1/2 cup raw pecan halves
- 1 tblsp. butter
- 1 tblsp. sugar
- 1/2 bunch leafy green lettuce, roughly torn
- 1 firm Granny Smith apple, washed and sliced thinly
- 3 oz. Stilton blue cheese, crumbled with a fork
- Juice of one lemon
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- Salt

Prepare:

In a skillet over medium heat, melt the butter with the sugar and add the pecan halves. Stir to coat, turning often until the pecans are hot and crisp around the edges. Remove from pan. Cool.

In a bowl, mix together the lettuce and apple slices; add a splash of olive oil and the lemon juice, and toss to coat. Salt and pepper to taste. Toss in the pecans.

How To Serve:

Arrange the salad on a plate and sprinkle the blue cheese over the top.



Sizzling Scallops with Smoky Bacon and Onion

Scallops are one of our favorite foods, because they're so easy to cook and yet so decadent. Fresh, fat scallops are tender with a hint of chewiness and a sweet aftertaste, perfect for pairing with stronger flavors like bacon, which we've done in the dish below. Don't use just any onion; the Maui is mellow and lacks the harsh bite of other onions, so be sure to use that one if you can find it.

Ingredients:

- 6 large scallops (recommended) or 12 small scallops
- 1 small Sweet Maui onion, chopped
- 1/2 pound high-quality smoked bacon, chopped

© 2003, Sex and the Kitchen, Inc. All Rights Reserved. This information is intended for your personal, noncommercial use.

- Extra Virgin olive oil
- 2 tblsp. sweet cream butter
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1/2 lemon
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- Salt
- Finely chopped parsley (to garnish)

Prepare:

In a small pan, sauté bacon and onion together until bacon is crisp and onion is soft and golden. Remove from heat and drain excess fat and bacon drippings.

In another skillet, melt butter until hot, but not scorching. Add scallops and sear on both sides until brown. Squeeze lemon juice over the top to create a rich caramel colored crust. Remove scallops to a plate, and deglaze the skillet with butter and wine. Add the bacon and onion, then salt and pepper to taste.

How To Serve:

Arrange the scallops on a plate, and pour the warm bacon-onion mixture over the top of them. Sprinkle with finely chopped Italian parsley to garnish.



Crab-Stuffed Mushrooms

The little cavity made when the stem is popped off a mushroom just begs to be filled with something scrumptious. Instead of the usual spinach or cheese, we've created a creamy crab filling, seasoned with shallots and fresh thyme, that makes these mushrooms a sensual treat.

Ingredients:

- 10 large white mushrooms, cleaned, stemmed and dried
- 1 tblsp. butter
- 1 large clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 handful of fresh thyme, finely chopped
- 1/4 c. grated Pecorino cheese
- 1/3 c. creme fraiche
- 4 oz. fresh crab meat

© 2003, Sex and the Kitchen, Inc. All Rights Reserved. This information is intended for your personal, noncommercial use.

- Extra Virgin olive oil
- Freshly cracked black pepper
- Salt

Prepare:

Place the mushrooms, cap side down, on a non-stick baking sheet. In a non-stick skillet, melt the butter over low heat and sauté garlic and shallot until golden brown. Add creme fraiche, stirring to create a creamy consistency. Add the thyme, cheese, salt and pepper. Add crab and stir briefly. Remove from heat.

Spoon crab mixture into the stem end of the mushrooms. Place stuffed mushrooms on the baking sheet and place into a 325 degree oven for 5-7 minutes or until the mushrooms are slightly softened. Remove.

How To Serve:

Arrange the mushrooms in a circle on a round plate to serve.

Red Wine and Dark Chocolate Fondue

This simple fondue has only four ingredients, and yet it tastes simply divine. The secret to this recipe is in the quality of the chocolate... only buy the very best chocolate you can find, preferably in bar form, and melt it verrrry slowly to keep it from burning. Fill up your favorite tray (that antique silver one would be perfect) with the right dippers (angel food cake and strawberries are our favorites!), light the candles and savor every bite!

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 10 oz. Bittersweet chocolate - use chips or cut a bar into pieces
- 1/2 c. red wine
- 1/2 tsp. chili powder

Prepare:

Stovetop: in a heavy saucepan, heat the cream until it bubbles, and drop in the chocolate, immediately reducing heat. Stir slowly until the chocolate melts, then stir in the wine and chili powder until smooth and well combined.

Microwave: place the chocolate in a small glass bowl and heat on high for 2 minutes. Once chocolate has melted, stir in the wine and chili powder until smooth and heat again to combine all ingredients.

© 2003, Sex and the Kitchen, Inc. All Rights Reserved. This information is intended for your personal, noncommercial use.

How To Serve:

Transfer mixture to a fondue pot and light a low flame, or pour into a warmed ceramic dish and serve immediately. Serve with dippers.

Experiment:

Create a platter with an assortment of fun and delicious dippers, such as:

- Graham cracker pieces
- Fruit slices/chunks: strawberries, grapes, oranges
- Biscotti
- Cream cheese balls, made by shaping small chunks of chilled cream cheese and rolling them in cocoa powder and cinnamon
- Marshmallows
- Small pieces of candy bars, like Snickers or Mars Bar
- Cake squares - angel food, chocolate, lemon
- Brownies or pieces of cookies

Wine Pairings: With wine already in the fondue, why not pour a glass alongside? The dark chocolate can stand up to whatever you're in the mood for, so go ahead and break out that big, juicy Cabernet for a double dose of decadence.



Music: We love Frank Sinatra's *Come Dance With Me!* The classic title track will make you want to sweep your partner from the chair and dance around the table! From "Cheek to Cheek" to "Baubles, Bangles and Beads," this is a collection that is guaranteed to bring a smile to your face and a swing to your step.

Candlelight: Lighting is crucial to setting the perfect mood for your celebration. Candlelight is flattering and fun, and candles are easy to dress up for the occasion:

- *Buy floating candles* and float them in water in shallow bowls or glass vases. For extra interest, add leaves, shells or sand to the water.
- *Festoon pillar candles* with fresh greens, extra flowers, or strings of beads from old costume jewelry.
- *Place tea lights* in unexpected containers - vintage saucers, etc., and cluster them all around.

© 2003, Sex and the Kitchen, Inc. All Rights Reserved. This information is intended for your personal, noncommercial use.

Flowers: Don't even *think* about grabbing that cellophane-wrapped dozen of sorry roses that wilt the next day. This year, do something different and special! How about creating a gorgeous arrangement by filling a wide, round glass vase with small fruits like baby apples or kumquats and then filling the middle of the vase with flowers so that the stems are hidden by the fruit? It can be a bit tricky to arrange the fruit around the stems while in water, so don't be afraid to plunge your hands in and move things about until it works.

Here are some suggestions for combinations:

- red striped baby apples with deep, red-orange roses
- green baby apples with white tulips
- orange tangerines with stargazer lilies and pink peonies

Extra Special: If you want to make your sweetheart feel especially loved this Valentine's Day, do something fun and unexpected. For instance:

- *Take out an ad in the personals section* of the newspaper with a special message, then get a copy of the paper, circle the ad with a heart, roll the paper up with a bow, and place it at your sweetheart's plate at the table.
- *Put fresh sheets on the bed*, and place a treat on the pillow - a chocolate truffle or a chocolate-dipped strawberry, for instance.
- *Give your partner the gift of a surprise* appointment for a spa treatment the next day, extending the glow from the day just a little bit longer.

© 2003, Sex and the Kitchen, Inc. All Rights Reserved. This information is intended for your personal, noncommercial use.