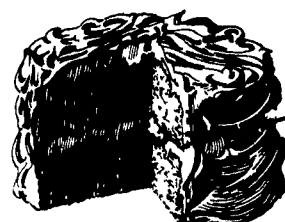


Home On The Range



Food That Says 'I Love You'

February 14 is Valentine's Day. It's a day to say "I love you," in a special way to your valentine.

Traditionally, Valentine's Day is the time to shower your sweetheart with chocolate and rich desserts, but to an ever growing number of people, February is synonymous with heart healthy eating. In 1963, it was the American Heart Association which had February decreed as American Heart Month.

The tug between indulging in chocolates or maintaining a heart-healthy diet continues. Some reach a compromise and choose desserts made with light dairy products, non-cholesterol oils, and sugar substitutes. Others see no harm in indulging in the "real thing."

"Serve me seafood, if you want to say 'I love you with food,'" said one woman, "but don't try that with my husband. Give him raw fried potatoes and cheese."

So this column carries a little bit of everything because food that says, "I love you," translates into a different choice for each person.

CHOCOLATE PIE

2 baked pie shells
Mix together:
2 tablespoons cornstarch
4 tablespoons flour
½ cup sugar
4 egg yolks
2 tablespoons cocoa
Add 3 cups hot milk. Boil 1 minute together. Add 1 teaspoon vanilla. Put in pie crust and top with meringue. Bake in 425-degree oven until golden brown.

Meringue:

4 egg whites, beaten
3 tablespoons sugar
¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
Ivy Seyler
Clinton Co. Dairy Princess
Jersey Shore

PUNCH BOWL CAKE

2 layers prepared yellow cake
1 can cherry pie filling
1 15-ounce can crushed pineapples
1 large box instant vanilla pudding, prepared
1 15-ounce can fruit cocktail
1 small package coconut
1 cup chopped nuts
1 large container whipped cream topping

Cut cake into 1-inch cubes and line bottom and sides of large serving bowl. Layer remaining ingredients in the order given, ending with whipped topping. Chill well before serving.

Susan Martin
Romulus, NY

BROWNIE LOVER HEARTS

2 1/2 -ounce box fudge brownie mix
½ cup water
½ cup oil
1 egg
Glaze:
1 can swirl vanilla or milk chocolate frosting with fudge swirl
Heat oven to 350 degrees. Line 13x9-inch pan with foil; grease bottom. In large bowl, combine all brownie ingredients; beat 50 strokes with spoon. Spread in greased pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes or until set. Do not overbake. Cool completely. Freeze brownies 30 minutes.

Lift foil to remove brownies from pan; place on cutting board. Using 2 1/2 -inch heart shaped cookie cutter, cut into 8 to 10 brownie hearts. In small saucepan, melt frosting over low heat, stirring occasionally until smooth; keep warm. Line cookie sheet with waxed paper. Place wire rack on waxed paper. Place brownies on wire rack. Quickly spoon frosting over brownies, covering completely. Refrigerate 15 to 20 minutes or until frosting is set. Decorate brownie hearts with swirl from swirl packet as desired. Makes 8 to 10 brownies.

VALENTINE GIFT CAKE

2 1/2 cups flour
1 1/2 cups sugar
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup shortening
½ teaspoon vanilla
1 cup milk
5 egg whites
Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Grease and flour two layer pans or an oblong pan. Sift dry ingredients into bowl. Add shortening, vanilla, and ½ cup milk. Beat 2 minutes and scrape sides and bottom of bowl constantly. Add remaining milk and egg whites. Beat 2 minutes more. Pour into prepared pans. Bake layers 30 to 35 minutes.

Decorative icing:
2 cups confectioners' sugar
1 egg white
2 tablespoons butter
Beat together ingredients until smooth. Frost cooled cake.

Betty Biehl
Mertztown



LIGHT-HEARTED STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

Makes 16 servings
2 1/2 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 1/4 cups sugar
½ cup butter
1 teaspoon vanilla
½ cup Egg Beaters (99% egg product)
½ cup skim milk
3 pints strawberries
8-ounce whipped cream topping
Combine flour and baking powder; set aside.

Reserve 2 tablespoons sugar. In large bowl, beat sugar, butter, and vanilla until creamy. Add egg product; beat 1 minute. Alternately add flour mixture and milk, blending well after each addition. Divide batter between a greased 8-inch round pan and a greased 8x8x2-inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes or until toothpick inserted comes out clean. Cool in pans on wire racks 10 minutes. Remove from pans; cool completely on wire racks.

In medium bowl, mash 2 pints hulled strawberries and reserved 2 tablespoons sugar; set aside. Hull and halve remaining strawberries.

Place square cake on large plate. Cut round layer in half crosswise; place cut edge of each half against 2 adjacent sides of square cake to form a heart. Slice round and square layers in half horizontally to make 2 layers. Spread top of bottom layer with mashed strawberries; replace top layer, cut side down. Frost top with whipped topping; garnish with strawberry halves.

SWEETHEART PINWHEELS

2 1/2 cups flour
1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
½ cup butter, softened
1 cup sugar
½ teaspoon mint extract
½ cup Egg Beaters
¼ teaspoon red food coloring
Confectioners' sugar
Glaze, recipe follows
¼ cup finely crushed peppermint candies, optional

In small bowl, combine flour and baking soda; set aside.

In large bowl, beat butter, sugar, and mint extract until creamy. Add egg product; beat 1 minute. With mixer at low speed, gradually add flour mixture until blended. Divide dough in half; blend food color into half of dough.
On floured surface, roll each half of dough into 6-inch square. Place red square on plain square, gently roll double layer into 10-inch square. Roll up tightly; wrap in plastic wrap and chill 1 hour or until firm.

Cut dough into 1/4 -inch slices; place on ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 375 degrees for 7 to 9 minutes or until light and golden. Thinly spread warm cookies with confectioner's sugar glaze; sprinkle with crushed candies, if desired. Remove to wire rack to cool.

*Confectioners' sugar glaze: Blend 1 cup confectioners' sugar, 1 tablespoon light corn syrup and 1 tablespoon warm water until smooth. Add additional water, if necessary, until glaze consistency.



The Light-Hearted Strawberry Shortcake is a delicious end to a romantic meal.

CUPID'S GUACAMOLE

5 ripe medium avocados, seeded and peeled
½ medium onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 small tomato, diced
1 1/2 cups Monterey Jack cheese
2 hot green chilies, diced
½ cup fresh cilantro, finely chopped
8 teaspoons fresh lime juice
1 teaspoon seasoned salt
Tortilla chips

In a large mixing bowl, coarsely mash avocados with a fork, leaving some chunks. Add remaining ingredients and mix to blend. Garnish as desired with red pepper or color and serve with tortilla chips. Or, as a twist, serve in avocado shells. makes 3 1/2 cups. Preparation time: 5 minutes.

STRAWBERRY DAIQUIRI

2 cups milk
2 cups strawberry, slightly thawed
1 teaspoon granulated sugar
5 ice cubes
Combine all ingredients in blender until frothy. Serves 3.
Betty Biehl
Mertztown

EASY FUDGE

Mix together:
1 pound confectioners' sugar,
3 tablespoons cocoa
¼ cup peanut butter
Add 2 sticks margarine, melted
Mix together and spread in pan or roll into balls. Refrigerate.
Betty Biehl
Mertztown

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Featured Recipe

Fructose is a sweet naturally occurring sugar found in fruits, vegetables, and honey. Fructose is lower in caloric value than sugar and lesser amounts are needed to sweeten foods because fructose is sweeter than sugar.

Because fructose does not produce the highs and lows in blood sugar levels, diabetics use it as an alternative to other sweeteners. Remember, that all calories must be counted and diabetics should consult their physicians.

Both liquid and granulated fructose may be found either in the sugar or dietetic section of your supermarket. It is also available at many health food outlets. If you cannot find it, ask the store manager for it.

The principal commercial source of fructose today is corn. Through the combination of efficient production and advanced technology, corn is used to produce sweeteners at less cost than sugar can be produced anywhere in the world.

For more information and recipes for fructose, write to Illinois Corn Marketing Board, 2415 E. Washington St., Bloomington, IL 61704-4409. Phone (309) 663-0571. Here is a recipe using fructose that is sure to be a Valentine Day's hit.

CHERRY CHOCOLATE TURTLES

16 ounces unsweetened cherries, drained, reserve juice
2 cups crystalline fructose
½ cup butter, softened
2 pounds powdered fructose
8 ounces unsweetened chocolate
1 1/2 cakes paraffin wax
1 cup walnuts, optional
Night before: Soak drained cherries in 2 cups crystalline fructose for 12 to 15 hours.

Next day: Drain cherries again and reserve juice (approximately 6 tablespoons) of the reserved juices to make stiff dough. Roll into balls. Chill for 30 minutes or longer. Cut cherries into 1/4 sections. Let drain. Punch thumb print into ball and place cherry quarter in center and roll back into ball. Continue until all balls are filled (7 dozen). Melt chocolate squares and paraffin wax in double boiler. Using ice pick, spear one ball at a time, dip into chocolate mixture, and place on foil to cool. With teaspoon, pour small amount over top to cover hole. While still warm, place walnut halves on top to garnish. Candy will be soft. May be stored in freezer until ready to use. Makes 84 servings.

*Powdered fructose may be made by blending crystalline fructose on high speed in a food processor.

Recipe Topics

If you have recipes for the topics listed below, please share them with us. We welcome your recipes, but ask that you include accurate measurements, a complete list of ingredients and clear instructions with each recipe you submit. Send your recipes to Lou Ann Good, Lancaster Farming, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522. Recipes should reach our office one week before publishing date.

February

- 20- Cherry Month
- 27- Potato Lover's Month

March

- 6- Cooking With Dried Beef
- 13- Spinach Recipes