



Dishes With A Touch Of Romance

Interested in feeding an appetite for love, health, and happiness on Valentine's Day?

Start your morning off by treating the special person in your life to Orange-Kissed Mini Pancakes with Orange Syrup. When it comes to romantic treats, strawberries offer everything your heart desires: flavor, fragrance, and fancy.

According to strawberry lore the luscious, heart-shaped berry has long been considered an aphrodisiac. For instance, newlyweds in provincial France traditionally were served strawberries in a honeymoon soup.

It was believed that the "double" strawberry had romantic powers. When broken in half and shared with the opposite sex, legend has it that the pair would soon fall in love.

Smooth the way to love with berries, souffle, and custard. Chocolate Covered Strawberries and Mushroom Kisses offer tantalizing new tastes. Then finish off the evening with either Valentine Butter Cookies or Heart-Shaped Chocolate Chip cookies.

HEART-SHAPED CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

½ cup butter
 ½ cup packed brown sugar
 ¼ cup granulated sugar
 1 egg
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 Cream the above together.
 ½ teaspoon baking soda
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 1½ cups flour
 1 cup chocolate chips
 ½ cup chopped nuts, if desired
 Measure ¾ cup dough and press into a heart on the cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 12 minutes. Makes 3 hearts.

When cool, write a message with icing. Note: you can also make a large heart on a pizza pan.

Eileen Murphy

Pa. Alternate Dairy Princess

ORANGE YOGURT

8 ounces orange juice concentrate
 1 orange, segmented
 16-ounce container of non-fat plain or vanilla yogurt
 Fresh mint leaves
 Mix orange juice concentrate with yogurt. Spoon into 4 dishes. Garnish with orange segments and mint leaves. Makes 4 servings.

ORANGE KISSED MINI PANCAKES WITH ORANGE SYRUP

Batter:
 ½ cup orange juice
 1 cup all-purpose flour
 1 tablespoon sugar
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ cup low-fat buttermilk
 2 egg whites, slightly beaten
 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
 Nonstick vegetable cooking spray

Orange syrup:
 1 cup orange juice
 1 teaspoon grated orange peel
 1 tablespoon cornstarch
 ½ cup sugar
 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Prepare the orange syrup by combining all ingredients in a medium saucepan and mix until smooth. Cook over medium heat until mixture comes to a boil. Remove from heat and cool slightly before serving. (Note: orange syrup can be made ahead and stored, covered in refrigerator, for up to three days. Heat before serving).

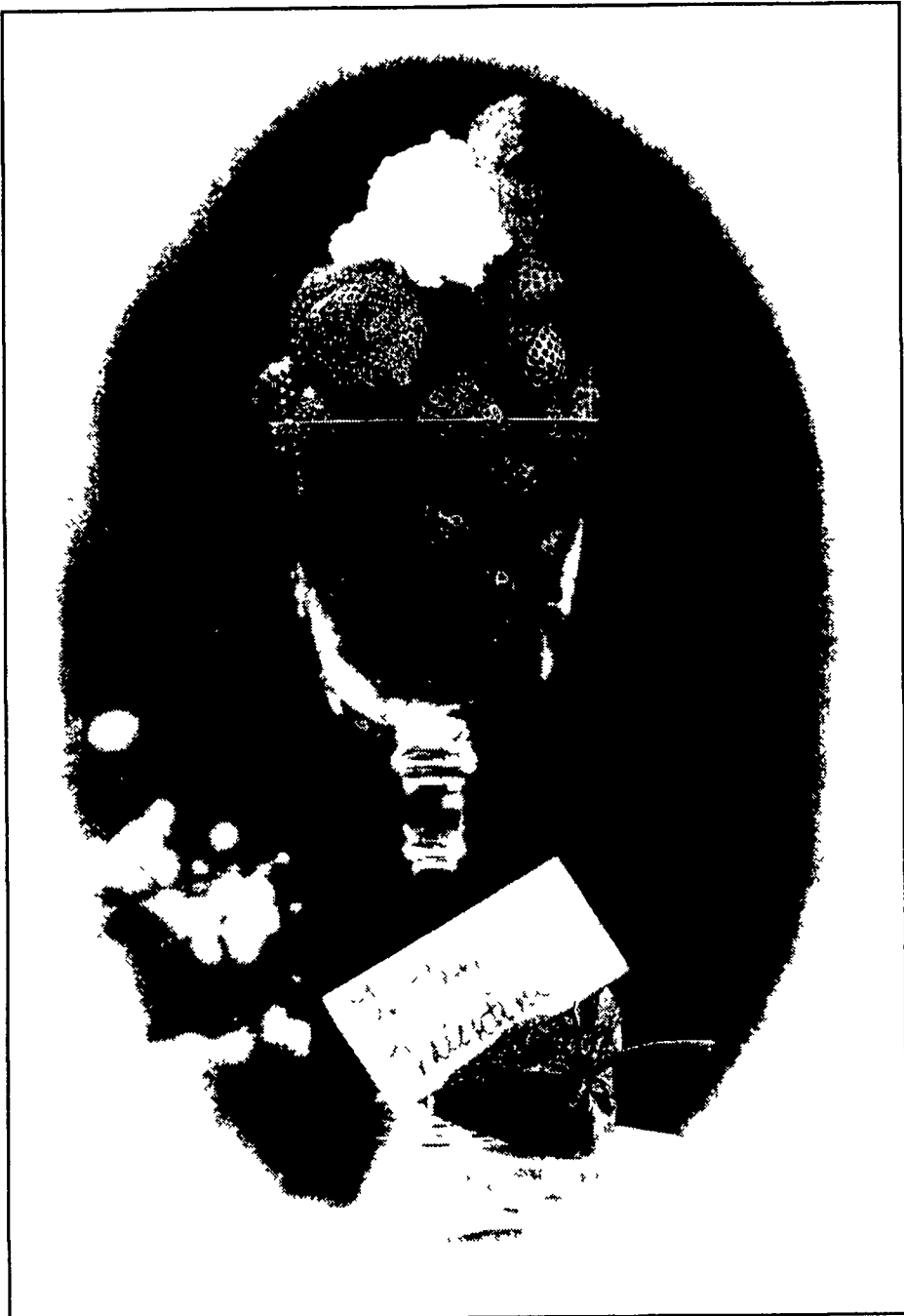
To prepare pancakes; combine ingredients. Spray a large skillet with non-stick vegetable spray; heat over medium heat. For each pancake, spoon a tablespoon batter onto the hot skillet. Cook over medium heat until a few bubbles appear on the tops and the undersides are golden brown. Turn once and continue cooking until the undersides are browned. Place 3-4 pancakes on a plate and drizzle with orange syrup. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings (six pancakes and ¼ cup syrup per serving).

TWO-FRUIT FROSTY

1½ cups fresh or frozen blueberries or huckleberries
 1 cup frozen unsweetened sliced peaches, thawed
 1 cup milk
 1 cup vanilla yogurt
 ¼ -½ cup honey
 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
 Cinnamon sticks, optional
 Combine blueberries, peaches, and milk in a blender; cover and process on high. Add yogurt, honey, cinnamon, and nutmeg; blend well. Pour into glasses. Garnish with cinnamon sticks if desired. Serve immediately. Yield: 4 servings.

Liza Haas

Penn State Dairy Princess



Warm your Valentine's heart with a glass filled with plump, juicy, red strawberries. According to strawberry lore, this luscious, heart-shaped berry has long been considered an aphrodisiac. It was also believed that the "double" strawberry had romantic powers. When broken in half and shared with the opposite sex, legend has it that the pair would soon fall in love.

BAKED CUSTARD

4 cups milk
 6 eggs, slightly beaten
 ½ cup sugar
 ½ teaspoon salt
 2 teaspoons vanilla
 Nutmeg
 Heat milk to very hot; cool slightly. Combine eggs, sugar, salt, vanilla, and milk just until blended. Set 1½ quart shallow baking dish in shallow pan on oven rack; pour custard into baking dish; sprinkle with nutmeg. Pour hot water in pan around baking dish, 1-inch deep. Bake in preheated 325 degree oven for one hour or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Remove from water immediately and place on wire rack to cool. Chill.

Variations:

Caramel Custard: Increase sugar to 1 cup. Melt sugar to an amber-colored syrup in a small heavy skillet over medium heat, stirring constantly. Gradually stir melted sugar into heated milk until dissolved. Proceed as above.

Coconut custard: Add ½ cup shredded coconut. Omit nutmeg.

Chocolate custard: Add 2 squares (2-ounces) unsweetened chocolate to the milk before it is heated.

Jodi Musser

SUN Area Dairy Princess

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Featured Recipe

Plump, juicy, and red, strawberries are the perfect accent to a Valentine's Day menu. Thanks to the Winter Strawberry Capital of the World, you can find fresh berries at your local supermarket now.

Fresh or dipped in chocolate, strawberries are a delicious treat. Combine white and dark chocolate to elegantly accent berries for the perfect dessert or romantic gift.

Give yourself a valentine by sending a self-addressed, stamped business-size envelope for a collection of quick and easy ways to enjoy strawberries. Send to Florida Strawberry Growers Association, P.O. Drawer 2550, Plant City, FL 33564.

If you really love strawberries, a cookbook of more than 200 strawberry recipes, is available by sending a check or money order in the amount of \$9, which includes postage and handling to the address above.

In the meantime, enjoy this recipe for romance.

CHOCOLATE COVERED STRAWBERRIES

2 pints strawberries (preferably with stems), washed
 6-ounce package dark or milk chocolate chips
 6-ounce package white chocolate chips
 2 tablespoons vegetable shortening

Line 2 baking sheets with waxed paper. Fit 2 pastry bags with small writing tips. Melt dark chocolate chips with 1 tablespoon shortening in a double boiler. In another double boiler, melt white chocolate chips with remaining shortening.

Dip half the strawberries in dark chocolate: Hold strawberries at stem and dip to cover two-thirds of the berry. Allow excess chocolate to drip off. Place berries on waxed paper-lined baking sheets to cool. Repeat process with remaining strawberries and white chocolate.

Scrape remaining chocolate coatings into pastry bags. If chocolate is hardening, reheat briefly over simmering water. Pipe dark chocolate designs on white chocolate-dipped strawberries, and pipe white chocolate designs on dark chocolate-dipped strawberries. Let chocolate harden.

Makes about 24 berries.

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- 21 - Potato Lover's Month
 28 - Cooking for the Diabetic
 March- 7 - National Nutrition Week
 14 - Peanuts & Other Nuts