

Home on the Range

Sweets for the Sweet

A Foolproof Way to Win Hearts this Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is a day set aside to show the special ones in your life just how much you care. What better way to show your affection than with homemade indulgent treats. So decadent and delicious that your valentines will think your treats are from a premium chocolate shop, and more importantly, your special ones will know just how much they mean to you.

Try one of these fun valentine ideas, and treat family, friends and/or coworkers to a special gift from the heart and hands. Treats so easy, even children can create them and be the cupids of their class.

Whether a heart-shaped brownie or cheesecake bar, decadent truffles, chocolate fondue or cappuccino frost, the object of your affection is sure to be charmed and impressed with these unique, homemade gifts that echo an early 1900 valentine's sentiment, "My thoughts are all of thee."

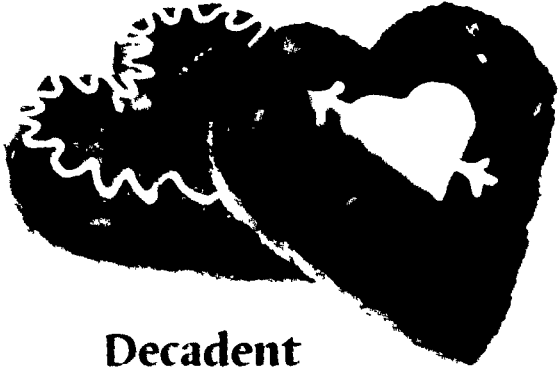


Triple Chocolate Valentine Brownies

Prep Time 15 minutes Makes 12 (3-inch) hearts

- 1 1/4 cups unsifted flour, divided usage
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup cold butter
- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk (NOT evaporated milk)
- 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 (8-ounce) milk chocolate bar, broken into chunks
- 3/4 cup chopped nuts (optional)

- 1 Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 13x9-inch baking pan with heavy foil, set aside.
- 2 In medium bowl, combine 1 cup flour and sugar, cut in butter until crumbly. Press on bottom of baking pan. Bake 15 minutes.
- 3 In large bowl, beat sweetened condensed milk, cocoa, egg, remaining 1/4 cup flour, vanilla and baking powder. Mix in chocolate chunks and nuts. Spread over prepared crust. Bake 20 minutes or until set.
- 4 Cool. Use foil to lift out of pan. For hearts, cut with heart-shaped cookie cutter, or with knife, cut around waxed paper heart shape. Or cut into bars. Store tightly covered. Decorate bars with white icing or gels if desired.



Decadent Chocolate Truffles

Prep Time 10 minutes Makes about 6 dozen truffles

- 3 cups (18 ounces) semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 (14-ounce) can original or creamy chocolate sweetened condensed milk (NOT evaporated milk)
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- Finely chopped toasted nuts, flaked coconut, chocolate sprinkles, colored sprinkles, unsweetened cocoa, confectioners' sugar or colored sugars

- 1 In saucepan, over low heat, melt chips with sweetened condensed milk. Remove from heat; stir in vanilla.
- 2 Chill 2 hours or until firm. Shape into 1-inch balls, roll in any of the listed coatings.
- 3 Chill 1 hour or until firm. Store tightly covered.



Marbled Cheesecake Hearts

Prep Time: 20 minutes Makes about 12 (3-inch) hearts

- 2 cups finely crushed cream-filled chocolate sandwich cookies (about 24 cookies)
- 3 tablespoons butter melted
- 3 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese, softened
- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk (NOT evaporated milk)
- 3 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 (1-ounce) squares unsweetened chocolate, melted

- 1 Preheat oven to 300°F. Line 13x9-inch baking pan with heavy foil; set aside.
- 2 Combine crumbs and butter; press firmly on bottom of foil-lined pan. With mixer, beat cream cheese in large bowl until fluffy. Gradually beat in sweetened condensed milk until smooth. Add eggs and vanilla; mix well. Pour half the batter evenly over prepared crust.
- 3 Stir melted chocolate into remaining batter, spoon over vanilla batter. With table knife or metal spatula, gently swirl chocolate batter through vanilla batter to marble.
- 4 Bake 45 to 50 minutes or until set. Cool. Chill at least 1 hour. Use foil to lift out of pan. For hearts, cut with heart-shaped cookie cutter, or with knife, cut around waxed paper heart shape. Or cut into bars. Store covered in refrigerator.



Cappuccino Frost

Prep Time: 5 minutes Make 5 servings

- 1 (14-ounce) can original or creamy chocolate sweetened condensed milk (NOT evaporated milk)
- 2 cups cold water
- 1 tablespoon instant coffee crystals
- 1 cup ice cubes

- 1 In blender container, combine sweetened condensed milk, water and coffee crystals. Add ice cubes. Cover and blend until smooth and frothy.

Almond Cappuccino Frost: Add 2 tablespoons amaretto or crème d'amande or 1/4 teaspoon almond extract. Proceed as above.

Minty Cappuccino Frost: Add 2 tablespoons crème de menthe or 1/4 teaspoon mint extract. Proceed as above.

Chocolate-Caramel Fondue

Prep Time 5 minutes Makes 2 1/2 cups

- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk (NOT evaporated milk)
- 1 (12 1/4-ounce) jar caramel ice cream topping
- 3 (1-ounce) squares unsweetened chocolate, chopped

Dippers: Cookies, fruit slices, berries, pound cake squares, angel food cake pieces and/or dried apricots

- 1 In medium saucepan, combine sweetened condensed milk, caramel topping and chocolate.
- 2 Cook and stir over low heat until chocolate melts.
- 3 Pour into serving bowl or individual cups. Serve with desired dippers.



Tips to Make Desserts Extra Special

- ♥ **Fun Gift Giving Ideas:** To create a fun gift box to showcase your homemade treats, simply take any small box or container, wrap with decorative paper or have kids decorate with crayons or stickers.
- ♥ **Heart Shapes:** To cut bars in a heart shape, use a heart-shaped cookie cutter, or simply cut around a wax paper heart shape with a knife.
- ♥ **Dress Up Your Drinks:** Top beverages like Cappuccino Frost with whipped topping.

For additional delicious recipes visit the Best-Loved Desserts web site at www.eaglebrand.com