

CHEF'S CORNER

CHOCOLATE POTS DE CRÈME

Makes four demitasse cups

- 2/3 cup whole milk
 - 1 egg
 - 1 tablespoon sugar
 - Pinch salt
 - 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips (substitute dark or bittersweet chocolate if you like)
 - 2 tablespoons flavored liqueur (such as Cofia, Frangelico, Kahlua or Grand Marnier)
 - 4 demitasse cups
- Sweetened whipped cream or marshmallow fluff for garnish
- Heat milk in a small pan over moderate heat until it just comes to a boil. In blender combine egg, sugar, pinch of salt, chocolate and liqueur. Turn blender on to slow setting. Pour in hot milk in a slow steady stream (this will “cook” the egg). Blend until smooth. Pour into demitasse cups and chill. Garnish Pots de Crème with sweetened whipped cream or marshmallow topping and a bakery cookie.

COOK YOUR WAY INTO YOUR VALENTINE'S HEART

Story and photos by Lisa Glickman


Most of us remember Valentine's Days in elementary school when we decorated our personal delivery boxes and waited for them to be filled with flimsy paper “Be My Valentine” cards from all our schoolmates. As we grew older, valentines hopes turned to a more specific choice, like a steady boyfriend or another hopeful suitor delivering us a heart-shaped box of chocolates or the perfect single red rose. Valentine greetings were popular as far back as the Middle Ages, though written valentines didn't begin to appear until after 1400. The oldest known valentine still in existence today was a poem written in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following his capture at the Battle of Agincourt. Several years later, it is believed that King Henry V hired a writer to compose a valentine note to Catherine of Valois.

Now, as we find ourselves leading busy lives with families to tend to, just the act of picking up that dirty pair of socks off the floor may suffice as a gesture of love, but as we think of Valentine's Day, we should remember that it is a day to show someone how much you truly care and appreciate them. For me, cooking has always been an act of love. When asked what my favorite food is, the answer is always: Anything someone cooks for me!

You might expect that a table at a fine restaurant would be my idea of the perfect valentine, but actually, I suggest that you skip the fancy restaurant reservation. Why spend Valentine's Day with other couples going through the motions, when you could prepare something nice for the love of your life? When planning

your menu, try to think of your valentine's favorite dish. Maybe it's a favorite food from childhood, or the meal you shared on your first date. A pinch of thoughtful makes up for a whole bunch of clumsy in the kitchen! Just remember to keep it special, keep it simple and keep it romantic!

Seafood lovers will appreciate this delicious halibut recipe. Pacific halibut is a firm, dense and sweet white fish that requires little seasoning to enhance its fresh flavor. Serve bathed in this beautiful sauce made with port wine and sour cherries, which adds a beautiful rich red color to the plate, then sprinkle with toasted macadamia nuts for an exotic crunch.

For dessert, a melt-in-your-mouth chocolate pot de crème is not only quick to prepare, but so simple that even the most challenged cook will master it easily. For flavoring I used a hazelnut espresso liqueur from Bend Distillery called “Cofia,” but you can vary the liqueur by adding Frangelico, Kahlua, Casis or even Grand Marnier. Only you know which one is your valentine's favorite! Serve topped with whipped cream and a bakery cookie or use your crème brulee torch to make this caramelized marshmallow topping for your sweetheart! 

Lisa Glickman is a private chef and teacher, and she recently made a TV appearance on the Cooking Channel's “The Perfect Three.” She can be reached via email at lisa@lisaglickman.com.



**FILLET OF HALIBUT IN PORT WINE AND SOUR CHERRY SAUCE
WITH TOASTED MACADAMIA NUTS**

- 2 six- to eight-ounce portions halibut fillet
 - 1 cup port wine
 - ¼ cup dried sour cherries
 - ¼ cup all purpose flour
 - 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, margarine or extra virgin olive oil
 - Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
 - 1 cup vegetable stock
 - 1 medium shallot, minced
 - 2 tablespoon chopped and toasted macadamia nuts
- In a small saucepan place port and cherries and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to simmer about 10 to 12 minutes to allow wine to reduce by a third. Strain and reserve wine and cherries in separate bowls. Heat a 12-inch non-stick skillet over medium high heat. Add butter or olive oil and heat till hot but not smoking. Season fish with salt and pepper and dredge in flour. Shake off excess. Brown fish on all sides until evenly cooked through, about 2 to 3 minutes per side. Set fish aside and cover with foil to keep warm. Add shallot to pan and sautee until soft. Add reduced port wine and deglaze pan. Add vegetable stock, bring to a boil and reduce by half. Strain sauce into a smaller saucepan and add cherries. Taste and adjust seasonings. Place halibut fillets on warm plate and spoon sauce over. Sprinkle with toasted Macadamia nuts and serve immediately.



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