



Karan's Korner



February 9, 2017
Valentine's Day Treats

How often have we heard that Valentine's Day is for lovers? If you're like me, when you think of Valentine's Day it probably translates to chocolates or perhaps some flowers for your honey or a delicious getaway romantic dinner for two! But there's a lot more to the holiday than just gifts and a little spooning. Saint Valentine's Day, commonly referred to as Valentine's Day, is annually observed on February 14th. The holiday honors a Christian martyr named Saint Valentine. The day first became associated with romantic love by Geoffrey Chaucer during the High Middle Ages. Pope Gelasius I in 496 made it a Holy Day when the tradition of courtly love flourished; but, in 1969 Pope Paul VI dropped the holiday. When Valentine's Day is mentioned, many different thoughts come to mind. Modern However, most assuredly we think of Valentine's Day symbols or icons that include the heart-shaped outline, doves, and the figure of the winged Cupid. Many other things come to mind as well, such as, hearts, flowers (particularly roses), Cupids, even the color red. Still, how many know the origin of some of them and the story behind them?



Red is a symbol of warmth, feeling and the color of the human heart. White, which is the absence of all color, represents purity and faith between two people who love each other. Pink is seen as a delicate, almost innocent shade of red. Hearts are an old symbol that represents undying love. The heart represents giving oneself whole-heartedly and stands for the most intense human emotion, which is love. To give one's heart to someone means to give that person your whole being. But where did Cupid come from? Cupid, whose name in Latin means "desire," is the most famous of the valentine symbols. He is the son of Venus, the goddess of love and is often depicted as a chubby, naked boy with wings armed with a bow and arrows. The arrows signify desire and emotions of love and anyone who is hit by one of Cupid's arrows will fall in love with the first person they see. Chocolate and Roses signify love and sweetness. The rose is the most popular flower in the world and has been the choice of lovers in every century. According to Greek literature, roses were the sacred flowers of Aphrodite and chocolates her love of sweetness. Aphrodite is known as the goddess of love and beauty. In fact, if you rearrange the letters of the word "rose," they spell the name of the god of love "Eros," Aphrodite's son. A red rose symbolizes passion, beauty, peace and war, love and forgiveness; while white roses represent true love and purity of the mind and yellow roses represent friendship and pink roses symbolize sweetheart or friendship.

If you are like me, you enjoy going out for that special dinner on Valentine's Day. But, I also enjoy preparing special treats for my family to enjoy. One such treat is Homemade Heart Shaped Sugar cubes. They are super easy to make and add such a nice detail to a party or just make daily tea drinking extra special. These homemade shaped sugar cubes would also make a nice homemade gift. All you need is a mold, granulated sugar, water and paste food coloring.

Ingredients:

Mix 1/2 cup sugar with 1 teaspoon water and tiny (pin drop) bit of paste food coloring.

Preparation:

Mix well. It will feel like damp sand. Firmly press the sugar into the heart mold. Carefully flip mold over and remove the hearts. It is a bit tricky during the flip but, I found it easiest to fill mold and immediately remove so I could keep making the sugar cubes. Wipe mold between fillings. Allow sugar cubes to dry and harden. It doesn't take long to have beautiful homemade sugar cubes!

From what I see of the weather forecast, on Valentine's Day it is supposed to be chilly this year. Why not prepare a Chicken Chili soup. That's correct, try white chicken chili that is spiced with green chilies and thickened with tomatillos. This is one chili that will hit the spot and get you ready to venture out into the cold. This recipe makes 5-6 servings.

Ingredients:

2 Tablespoons olive oil
1/2 cup diced onion
3 cloves garlic, minced
3 Tablespoons butter
1/4 cup flour
1/2 cup whole milk
7 oz. diced green chilies
11 oz. tomatillos, diced
2 cups cooked chicken
3 teaspoons cumin
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
2 cups chicken broth
3 cups navy beans, or 2 cans Navy Beans
salt and pepper

Preparation:

Add oil to a large stockpot over medium-high heat. Saute onions until translucent, about 7 minutes. Stir in garlic and butter. When the butter is melted, whisk in flour. Cook for three minutes. Whisk in milk until smooth. When no lumps remain, add in chilies, tomatillos, chicken, cumin and cayenne. Stir to combine and allow to cook for 1 minute. Add in chicken broth and beans. Salt to taste and allow to simmer for at least 30 minutes or until broth thickens and becomes thick and gravy-like in consistency. Top with your favorite chili toppings. I like Asadero cheese, sour cream and a bit of chopped green onion?

I cannot count the number of requests I receive for a Red Velvet Cheesecake this time of year. If you have been thinking about what to serve with your Champaign on that special day, this recipe is the one! It serves 8. Is called Red Velvet Cheesecake; but after tasting it you will change the name to "Dreamy Cheesecake"!

Ingredients:

1-1/2 cup OREO chocolate cookie crumbs
1/4 cup butter, melted
1 tsp. sugar

Cheesecake:

3 packages (8 oz. size) cream cheese, softened
1-1/2 cups sugar
4 large eggs, lightly beaten
3 Tbsp. unsweetened cocoa
1 cup sour cream
1/3 cup buttermilk
2 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp. white vinegar
2 bottles (1 oz. size) red food coloring

Frosting:

1 package (3 oz. size) cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup butter, softened
2 cups confectioner's sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract

Preparation:

Crumb preparation:

Separate both halves of the cookie from the icing

Discard the icing leaving only the cookie halves
Place cookie halves in food processor and crush until fine or medium fine texture

Crust:

Combine cookie crumbs, melted butter and sugar.
Press into a 9 inch spring-form pan on top and sides creating shell

Cheesecake:

Beat cream cheese with sugar for 1 minute.
Add eggs, cocoa, sour cream, buttermilk, vanilla, vinegar and food color.
Mix on low speed until fully combined.
Pour into prepared crust.
Bake at 325°F for 10 minutes.
Reduce heat to 300°F.
Bake 1 hour and 15 minutes until center is firm.
Cool on wire rack for 30 minutes.
Cover and chill 8 hours.

Frosting:

Beat cream cheese and butter until smooth.
Gradually add powdered sugar and vanilla.
Spread over cheesecake.
Remove sides of pan.
Garnish as desired.

Mark your calendars for the 2017 Annual Matthies-Bennett 4-H Scholarship Auction. The 4-H Scholarship Auction will be held on April 1, 2017 at the Pecos County Coliseum, Ft. Stockton. If you have items to be sold, please contact the Pecos County AgriLife Extension Office for selling details. If you have any questions or would like to share some of your tips for working and living in Pecos County with our readers, please call me at the Pecos County AgriLife Extension Services, 432-336-2541.

For more recipes or if you have questions, please contact Karan Heffelfinger, CEA-FCS at 336-2541.



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