

# HEART~FULL IDEAS FOR A SPECIAL DINNER

Love is in the air as we present these heart-full ideas for preparing a romantic dinner. Enjoy this meal by candlelight with your favorite, soft music playing in the background and, of course, your special valentine...

## Four Cheese Ravioli

### FILLING INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup ricotta cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded fontina cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese
- 1/4 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/4 tsp. dried basil
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, combine the ricotta, mozzarella, fontina, parmesan, spices, garlic, salt and pepper. Mix until well blended.



## Heart-shaped Pasta

You will need: 10-15 cannelloni shells, salt, and a heart-shaped cookie cutter.

Bring water and a tablespoon of salt to a boil in a large pot. Add cannelloni shells and boil until they start to flatten out. Remove from heat until slightly cool. Using a paring knife, cut along the length of the shell to open it up to a square. Use a heart-shaped cookie cutter to cut out the shapes.

Place about 2 teaspoons of filling in the middle of one heart, leaving an edge around the perimeter without filling. Wet your finger with water and gently brush the edges of the heart. Place another pasta heart on top and press the edges together to bind around the filling, pressing out any excess air. Repeat with the remaining heart shapes.

## Garlic and Basil Pomegranate Sauce

### INGREDIENTS

- 5 cloves of garlic • 1/3 cup olive oil • 1 bunch of fresh basil, chopped
- 1 cup pomegranate seeds • Grated parmesan cheese to sprinkle
- 1 to 2 tsp. salt • Pepper to taste

### DIRECTIONS

Finely chop garlic and sauté in olive oil over very low heat for 3 minutes. Add chopped basil and pomegranate seeds. Stir and remove from heat. Pour sauce over the heart shaped pasta. Sprinkle grated parmesan, salt, and pepper on top.



## Strawberry Mozzarella Salad

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound of fresh strawberries—washed, destemmed and quartered
- 1 package of fresh arugula—thoroughly washed and dried
- 8 ounces of small mozzarella balls
- 4 fresh basil leaves, finely chopped

### DIRECTIONS

Select heart-shaped plates and platters to present your salad. Arrange strawberries, arugula and mozzarella balls in a creative way on the plates. Sprinkle finely chopped basil over each plate. Drizzle balsamic dressing over the greens, mozzarella cheese and strawberries.

### Balsamic Dressing

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 Cup of olive oil
- 1/4 Cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp Honey
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

### DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid and shake until thoroughly combined. Drizzle over the salad.

## Valentine Bread



### DIRECTIONS

Using different sizes of heart-shaped cookie cutters, cut out a valentine heart to keep with the heart theme in your menu. Generally, sandwich size bread is the easiest to accomplish; but, experiment with different densities and sizes to see what you like the best!



## Red Velvet Cake with Cream Cheese Frosting

### INGREDIENTS

- 2-1/2 cups flour
- 1/2 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 sticks butter, softened at room temperature
- 2 cups sugar • 4 eggs
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 Tbsp. red food color
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

### *Cream Cheese Frosting*

### INGREDIENTS

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 stick salted sweet cream butter, softened
- 2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 4 cups powdered sugar



### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease and flour two 9-inch cake pans; set aside.

Combine flour, cocoa powder, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl; set aside. Place butter and sugar in the large bowl of an electric mixer. Beat on medium speed for 5 to 7 minutes or until light and fluffy. Crack one egg at a time into mixture and blend after each addition until yellow streaks disappear. Mix in sour cream, milk, food color and vanilla extract. Reduce speed to low and gradually beat in flour mixture just until blended. Do not overbeat. Divide batter evenly into prepared pans; place in oven to bake for 30 minutes or until a wooden pick inserted into cake comes out clean.

While cakes are baking, prepare frosting by placing cream cheese, butter and vanilla extract into the large bowl of an electric mixer; beat on medium-high speed until smooth. Reduce speed to low, slowly add sugar and mix until well blended. Increase speed to high; beat until light and fluffy.

After removing cakes from oven, let set in pans for 10 minutes. Run a knife around the inside of each pan before inverting onto wire rack; cool completely. When the cakes are no longer warm to the touch, frost the top of one cake, place the remaining cake atop the frosted layer and continue icing until cake is completely covered. Place any unused frosting in the refrigerator or freezer.

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 shots of raspberry vodka • 1 shot of raspberry schnapps
- Lime juice • Fresh raspberries
- Champagne, chilled • Sugar

### DIRECTIONS

Pour the vodka, schnapps and a splash of lime juice into a cocktail shaker with cracked ice and shake. In the bottom of a beautiful red, sugar-rimmed glass place 3 fresh raspberries. Strain the drink mixture into the glass and fill to the top with chilled champagne. Place the glasses on a festive heart tray or on top of a chocolate heart-shaped candy box.



## Homemade Raspberry Sherbet

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups frozen raspberries or berries of choice
- 1/4 cup sweetened condensed milk
- 1/4 tsp. lemon extract (optional)
- Fresh mint

### DIRECTIONS

Place raspberries and sweetened condensed milk into a blender. Process until smooth and creamy. Add lemon extract and blend a few seconds longer. Transfer mixture into a container with a tight-fitted lid. Freeze for 4 to 6 hours or until firm. When ready to serve, scoop sherbet into dessert dishes and garnish with fresh mint.

