

Recipes that will Make Your Valentine's Day Special and Easy

BLOOMFIELD, CT, Jan.15, 2010-- As visions of sugar plums give way to visions of romance, the chefs at Duncaster Retirement Community are already planning their Valentine's Day menu. They offer these simple but elegant suggestions for your special Valentine's Day dinner:

Herb-Roasted Lamb Chops - "On special occasions we have had roasted lamb chops. They have been popular at various private parties and the rare Saturday night. We think they are special enough to be included on any Valentine's Day menu," says Robert Sherlock, a chef at Duncaster. "These chops are also an easy and quick dish to prepare because they don't need to marinate long to take on great herby flavor."

4 servings

Ingredients

- 4 large garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves, lightly crushed
- 1 tablespoon fresh rosemary leaves, lightly crushed
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons oil, divided
- 6 1-1/4-inch-thick lamb loin chops

Preparation

- Mix first 4 ingredients and 1 tablespoon olive oil in large bowl. Add lamb; turn to coat. Let marinate at room temperature at least 30 minutes and up to 1 hour.
- Preheat oven to 400°F. Heat remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil in heavy large ovenproof skillet over high heat. Add lamb; cook until browned, about 3 minutes per side. Transfer skillet to oven and roast lamb chops to desired doneness, about 10 minutes for medium-rare. Transfer lamb to platter, cover, and let rest 5 minutes.

Chocolate Covered Strawberries – These delicacies are a Valentine’s Day staple, but that doesn’t mean they don’t feel special when you receive (or eat!) them.

Serves: 20 strawberries

Ingredients

- 1 pound (about 20) strawberries with stems, washed and dried very well
- 6 ounces semisweet chocolate, chopped

Preparation

Rinse, but do not hull the strawberries. Drain and pat completely dry.

Put the semisweet chocolate into a heatproof medium bowl. Fill medium saucepan with a couple inches of water and bring to a simmer over medium heat. Turn off the heat; set the bowl of chocolate over the water to melt. Stir until smooth. Once the chocolates are melted and smooth, remove from the heat. Line a sheet pan with parchment or waxed paper.

Note: Alternatively, melt the chocolate in a glass dish in the microwave on high power for 60 seconds. Remove, stir and microwave for 10 seconds more until the chocolate has melted. Allow the chocolate to cool slightly to thicken.

Holding the strawberry by the stem, dip the bottom half of each strawberry in the melted chocolate. Twist the strawberry so that the chocolate forms a "tail" at the end. Set strawberries on the parchment paper. Repeat with the remaining strawberries.

Amaretto Cookies – “Over the years at Duncaster we have made Amaretto cookies for a variety of special occasions,” says Chef Rob. “In the past they we offered them as “horseshoe cookies” because of their shape. This is our latest variation, an adaptation of Mozzicato’s recipe.”

Yields: 3 ½ dozen

Ingredients

- 1 cup of superfine sugar
- 2 egg whites
- Granulated white sugar (for dusting cookies)
- 8 ounces of Almond Paste

Preparation

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line 2 baking sheet pans with parchment paper.

Break the almond paste into small pieces and place in the bowl with the sugar. Pulse until the mixture is very fine. Add the egg whites in three additions, processing well after each addition. Continue to process the dough until it is very smooth. (Approximately. 1 minute).

Fill a pastry bag with the mixture. Pipe 1 ½ inch mounds onto the parchment paper, spacing about 1 inch apart. After you have filled the baking sheet with cookie mounds, take a damp paper towel and lightly press the top of each cookie to smooth out the surface. Lightly sprinkle a little sugar on top of each cookie.

Bake for 15 minutes, or until the cookies have risen, and are a deep golden color and have tiny cracks. Remove from the oven and place baking pan on a rack to cool.

Through Duncaster's dining services, chefs Rob Sherlock and Justin Williams offer many options to the residents. Dining can take place in the main dining room, the café, in the private dining room and even in their apartments with a program called "Meals to go."

About Duncaster

Duncaster is Bloomfield's signature retirement community. Celebrating 25 years, this campus of 190 independent residences, assisted living and Duncaster's Caleb Hitchcock Health Center is designed to help residents live life to the fullest by providing security and fulfillment. The community includes an aquatic and fitness center and an on-site health clinic. Residents can participate in ongoing education, social and cultural programs. For more information, see www.duncaster.org or call (860) 380-5005.

Media contact:

Andrea Obston aobston@aomc.com
(860) 243-1447 (office) (860) 803-1155 (cell)
(860) 653-27612 (home)