Food is a great way to say "Happy Valentine's Day" to the special people in your life.
Hope you find some inspiration for your Valentine with one of these recipes.
Happy Valentine's Day from all of us at The Drummer test kitchen!

Eggs Benedict

Prep Time: 15 min
Cook Time: 15 min
Total Time: 30 min
Servings: 4

Hollandaise Sauce:
4 egg yolks
1 to 3 1/2 T. lemon juice, to suit your taste
1 T. water
1/8 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 pinch ground white pepper
1 C. butter, melted
1 tsp. hot water, or more as needed (Optional)
1/4 tsp. salt, or to taste

Eggs Benedict:
1 tsp. distilled white vinegar
8 eggs
8 strips Canadian-style bacon
4 English muffins, split
2 T. butter, softened

To make the Hollandaise: Whisk egg yolks, lemon juice, 1 T. of water, Worcestershire sauce, and white pepper in the top of a double boiler over simmering water. Add melted butter, 1 or 2 T. at a time, while whisking yolks constantly. If Hollandaise begins to get too thick, add a tsp. or two of hot water. Continue whisking until all of the butter is incorporated. Whisk in salt, then remove from heat. Place a lid on the pan to keep sauce warm.

To poach the eggs: Fill a large saucepan with 2 to 3 inches of water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, pour in vinegar, and keep water at a gentle simmer. Crack an egg into a small bowl then gently slip egg into simmering water, holding the bowl just above the surface of water. Repeat with the remaining eggs. Cook eggs until whites are firm and yolks have thickened but are not hard, 2 1/2 to 3 minutes. Remove eggs from water with a slotted spoon, dab on a kitchen towel to remove excess water, and place onto a warm plate.

Meanwhile, set an oven rack about 6 inches from the heat source and preheat the oven's broiler. Brown bacon in a medium skillet over medium-high heat.

Toast English muffins on a baking sheet under the preheated broiler.

To serve eggs Benedict: Spread toasted muffins with softened butter and top each one with a slice of bacon, followed by one poached egg. Place 2 muffins on each plate and drizzle with Hollandaise sauce. Sprinkle with chopped chives and serve immediately.

Strawberries and Cream Scones

Prep Time: 30 min
Total Time: 2 hrs
Servings: 16

For the scones:
3 C. all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1/2 C. granulated sugar
4 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. kosher salt
1 stick cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces
3/4 C. chopped dried strawberries
1 C. heavy cream, plus more if needed
1 large egg
2 T. strawberry preserves
1 tsp. vanilla extract
4 drops red food coloring (optional)

For the glaze:
2 C. powdered sugar, sifted
2 T. unsalted butter, melted
2 T. milk

For the scones: Preheat the oven to 400˚. Sift together the flour, granulated sugar, baking powder and salt into a large bowl. Add the butter and use a pastry blender or two knives to cut the butter into the dry ingredients until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs and there are no large chunks of butter. Toss in the dried strawberries.

Mix the heavy cream, egg, strawberry preserves, vanilla and food coloring in a medium bowl. Add the cream mixture to the flour mixture; stir gently with a fork until combined. The dough should be crumbly, but if it's too crumbly to work with, splash in a small amount of heavy cream.

Turn out the dough onto a floured surface and lightly press it together into a rough rectangle. Use a rolling pin to roll it into an 8-by-12-inch rectangle (use your hands to help shape it if necessary). Trim the edges with a knife. Cut the dough in half crosswise, then cut lengthwise into quarters to make 8 rectangles. Cut each rectangle in half diagonally to make 16 triangles.

Transfer the scones to a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake until just golden, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool 15 minutes on the pan, then transfer the scones to a rack to cool completely.

For the glaze: Combine the powdered sugar, melted butter and milk in a medium bowl until smooth and somewhat thick. Place the rack of scones over a baking sheet to catch drips, then use a spoon to drizzle the glaze over the scones. Let the glaze set completely, about 1 hour.

Marry Me Chicken

Prep Time: 15 Min
Cook Time: 15 Min
Total Time: 30 Min
Servings: 4

3 T. all-purpose flour
Salt
1/4 tsp. ground black pepper
4 thin-sliced chicken breasts
2 T. extra-virgin olive oil
1 sm. yellow onion, finely chopped
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 C. heavy cream
1 C. chicken broth
1/3 C. sun-dried tomatoes packed in oil, drained and finely chopped
2 tsp. tomato paste
1/2 tsp. dried oregano
1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
1/4 tsp. sugar
2 T. grated Parmigiano Reggiano or Pecorino Romano cheese
2 T. fresh chopped basil, plus more for serving

Place the flour, 3/4 tsp. salt, and the black pepper in a Ziplock bag and shake to combine. Add the chicken to the bag; seal the bag tightly and shake to coat the chicken evenly. Set aside.

Heat the oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Place the flour-dusted chicken in the pan and cook, flipping once, until the chicken is lightly golden and just cooked through, about 3 min. total. Transfer the chicken to a plate and set aside.

Reduce the heat to medium and add the onions to the skillet. Cook, stirring frequently, until softened and translucent, 2 to 3 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring constantly, for 30 seconds more; do not brown. Add the cream, broth, sun-dried tomatoes, tomato paste, oregano, red pepper flakes, sugar, and 1/4 tsp. salt; use a wooden spoon to scrape any brown bits from the pan into the liquid. Bring the liquid to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium and gently boil, uncovered, until the sauce is thickened, about 5 min. Stir in the Parmigiano Reggiano (or Pecorino Romano) and basil. Add the chicken back to the pan, along with any juices that accumulated on the plate; reduce the heat to low and simmer until the chicken is warmed through and the sauce thickens a bit more, 1 to 2 min. Sprinkle with more fresh basil, if desired, and serve.

Strawberry Spinach Salad

Prep Time: 10 min
Additional Time: 1 hr 10 min
Total Time:1 hr 20 min
Servings: 4

Dressing:
1/2 C. white sugar
1/2 C. olive oil
1/4 C. distilled white vinegar
2 T. sesame seeds
1 T. poppy seeds
1 T. minced onion
1/4 tsp. paprika
1/4 tsp. Worcestershire sauce

Salad:
1 quart strawberries - cleaned, hulled and sliced
10 oz. fresh spinach - rinsed, dried and torn into bite-size pieces
1/4 C. almonds, blanched and slivered

Make dressing: Whisk together sugar, oil, vinegar, sesame seeds, poppy seeds, onion, paprika, and Worcestershire in a medium bowl. Cover and chill for 1 hour.

Make salad: Combine strawberries, spinach, and almonds in a large bowl.

Pour dressing over salad; toss to coat. Refrigerate for 10 to 15 minutes before serving.

Red Velvet Layer Bars

Prep Time: 15 min
Cook Time: 35 min
Total Time: 3 hours
Yield: 24-30 bars

1-1/4 C. all-purpose flour
1 T. unsweetened cocoa powder
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/8 tsp. salt
8 T. unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
3/4 C. granulated sugar
1 large egg
1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract
1 T. liquid red food coloring
1-1/3 C. sweetened shredded coconut
1 C. semi-sweet chocolate chips
1/2 C. white chocolate chips
1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
1 C. chopped pecans

Set your oven rack to the center position and preheat oven to 350°F. Line the bottom and sides of a 9×13-inch baking pan with aluminum foil (or use parchment), leaving an overhang on all sides. Set aside.

Whisk the flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt together in a large bowl until combined. Set aside.

In a large bowl using a handheld mixer or stand mixer with paddle attachment, beat the butter for 1 minute on medium speed until completely smooth and creamy. Add the granulated sugar and beat on medium high speed until fluffy and light in color. Beat in egg and vanilla on high speed until combined. Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed. Beat in the food coloring until combined. With the mixer running on low speed, slowly mix the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until combined. The red velvet dough will be quite thick and sticky.

Using a silicone spatula, spread dough in an even layer into the prepared baking pan. It's very sticky, so take your time pushing it to each corner of the pan. Bake for 8 minutes. Remove from the oven and leave the oven on.

Sprinkle the coconut over the cookie layer, followed by the chocolate chips, then the white chocolate chips. Pour the sweetened condensed milk evenly over the top. Sprinkle with pecans. Bake until set, about 25 min. Cool on a rack for at least 2 hours before cutting into squares.

Make Ahead & Freezing Instructions: Store in an airtight container at room temperature or in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Bars can be frozen, up to 2-3 months. Thaw overnight in the refrigerator.

Persian Love Cake

Total Time: 1 hour 10 min
Yield: 9-12 servings

2/3 C. unsalted butter, softened
3/4 C. granulated sugar
2 lg. eggs, at room temperature
1/2 C. plain yogurt (or sour cream)
1 T. rose water
zest of 1 lemon
1 C. all-purpose flour
2 C. almond flour
2 tsp. ground cardamom
1/4 tsp. salt

For the icing:
1 + 1/4 C. confectioners' sugar
1 T. lemon juice
1 T. water
1-2 T. pistachios, chopped
1 T. dried rose petals

Make the cake: Preheat oven to 350ºF. Spray a 9-inch round cake pan with cooking spray or line it with parchment paper.

In a large mixing bowl, use a hand mixer (or stand mixer) to beat the butter and sugar together until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Add eggs, one at a time, and beat until each is incorporated. Add yogurt, rose water, and lemon zest and beat until incorporated.

Turn the mixer to low speed and add the flour, almond meal, cardamom, and salt. Beat until just combined. Note that the batter is very thick.

Transfer the batter into the lined cake pan and spread it smooth with a spatula.

Bake for 50 to 60 min, or until the top of the cake is golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Allow the cake to chill in the pan for 15 minutes, then carefully transfer it to a wire cooling wrap to cool completely before icing.

Make the icing: In a medium mixing bowl, combine confectioners' sugar, lemon juice, and water. The icing should be thin enough to pour but thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. If the icing is too thin, add in a little more sugar. If it is too thick, add in a little more milk.

Use a spoon to slowly drizzle the glaze over the cooled love cake and sprinkle chopped pistachios and dried rose petals on top.

Glazing tips: Wait until your Persian Love Cake has cooled completely, or it will not set properly.

How to store: Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 3-5 days.

Quote of the Week:

"Love means to see the one you love happy."

~Nicholas Sparks