



Journey through Thyme

Jodi Schneider
Columnist

A Valentine's Day date night at home

Love is a positive emotion with many tangible health benefits, and you can express it in many ways — including a home-cooked meal.

Cooking is an expression of love, so plan a night in with your significant other and make your meal just as special as if you had gone out. It's possible to keep the romance alive by staying in and cooking an elegant, affordable meal that will sweep your sweetheart off his or her feet.

Everyone can cook. Even if you've never cooked, this is the perfect time to try it out. It will be more romantic, more personal, and leave you extra money to spend on wine and a gift. If you're really afraid of cooking, stick to something simple.

Dinner for your sweetie on Valentine's Day doesn't have to be a big production. Choose an easy Valentine's dinner menu.

Creating that Valentine's dinner at home with your significant other can include a romantic Valentine's theme with candlelight, a bottle of wine, and a delectable home-made meal.

Lighting is important when creating the perfect atmosphere. Too much light makes a room look stark, but not enough will have you fumbling for your silverware. Candles are the obvious choice to set your romantic scene, whether they are votives, tea lights, taper or pillar candles — they are all perfect.

Make Valentine's Day feel even more special by

decorating the house in festive, love-themed decor. Rose petals are the quintessential Valentine's Day decoration. Scatter them on the dinner table, mantelpiece or pillow. If you don't have access to fresh roses, you can make your own from colored paper

Then you could go for relaxing music that you both love such as jazz, soul or lounge music; they are sure to set the perfect mood for your romantic dinner.

The secret to a flawless romantic dinner for two is preparation. Think your menu through before you try to create anything too elaborate. All of your courses should be able to be cooked in advance, with minimum attention required until just before serving. Make a salad to go with it and simply drizzle the dressing on just before serving. If you have time the day before, why not make your own dessert, too?

You've set a scene for love and romance; you've cooked a delicious meal, now it's time to enjoy each other's company. Good food, good wine and good company deserve to be savored, not rushed.

What could be better than an entrée that comes with its own creamy vegetable side?

This is an easy recipe for a romantic dinner for two at home. It looks delicious and goes together in no time for a perfect supper.

Chicken Thighs With Shallots & Spinach



- 6 boneless skinless chicken thighs
- 1/2 tsp. seasoned salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1-1/2 tsp. olive oil
- 1/3 cup white wine or reduced sodium chicken broth

- 4 shallots, thinly sliced
- 1 pkg. (10 oz.) fresh spinach, trimmed
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup sour cream

Sprinkle the chicken with seasoned salt and pepper. In a large nonstick skillet coated with cooking spray, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add chicken and cook for 6 minutes on each side or until a thermometer reads 170 degrees. Remove from pan and keep warm.

In same pan, cook and stir shallots until tender. Add wine and bring to a boil. Cook until wine is reduced by half. Add spinach and salt. Cook and stir just until spinach is wilted. Stir in sour cream. Serve with chicken.

PROMISE: Self-care helps us be there for others

Continued from page 7

can allow for perspective, empathy, and hope. Don't have a sense of meaning? It might be worth exploring.

5. For goodness sakes, ask for help.

- Again, editing your story is not necessarily easy. Some of the elements of our story may be completely sub-conscious — hard-wired responses to trauma that may be lodged in primitive parts of our brain and body. Some of our story elements may be very strong defense mechanisms that are no longer so necessary. Some of us are very bonded to our defenses, and it takes gentle questioning and encouragement to let go. And, sometimes our ability to edit the story can be inhibited by very real physiological processes that may require treatment and intervention.

While our significant other can add to our wellness (and sometimes subtract), our response is ultimately our responsibility. When we own our wellness, our connection with ourselves and significant other is more whole, authentic, empathetic, and forgiving. In the end, owning our wellness means more room for love...

Happy Valentine's Day.

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