

Cheese blintzes good for heart

"Sweets at the sweet" on Valentine's Day has become a cherished expression buoyed by tradition with a gift of rich, palate-pleasing chocolates from your heart of your loved one's heart.

But a nutrition-conscious world now also has concern for the vitality of that precious heart, which has been threatened by an over-indulgence in rich foods.

"One need not sacrifice the romance of Valentine's Day for the sake of a healthy heart," said to Denise Vilven, registered dietitian and nutrition consultant for the Pitkin Longevity Centers, nationally known centers dedicated to lowering the risk of heart disease through sound diet, exercise and stress management.

The truth is that butter, sugar and salt are not essential in preparing intimate Valentine's meals," explains Vilven.

Appropriately enough, the American Heart Association has designated February, with Valentine's Day in the middle, as National Heart Month to remind everyone that fat and cholesterol-inducing foods hurt the heart. Its message is that there are simple alternate choices to eat well and help the heart.

"Simple substitutes like frozen apple concentrate for sugar or honey enhance a food's flavor and nutrition," said Vilven. "Other heart-healthy tips include sauteing foods in defatted chicken broth rather than oil or butter, substituting egg whites for whole eggs, and replacing nuts with roasted chestnuts."

Vilven has developed a Sunday brunch and intimate candlelight dinner for two to keep romance alive on Valentine's Day.

Flickering table candles help set the mood. A sweetheart's tastes may be catered to with a heart-healthy meal.



Cheese blintzes and fresh berry sauce may be The dish was developed by the Pitkin served for a healthy heart candlelight dinner. Longevity Center.

- 1 cup non-fat milk
- 1 teaspoon apple juice concentrate
- 2 egg whites
- Measure 1/4 cup crepe batter and pour into a 7-inch non-stick crepe pan or skillet, tilting the pan so that the batter covers the bottom. Cook over low heat until the crepe is set. Turn crepe; cook until golden brown.
- Slide the crepe onto a plate. Crepes may be frozen in a stack. Layer wax paper between each crepe. Wrap stack tightly with plastic wrap; freeze. Makes 6 crepes.

CHEESE BLINTZES

Filling:

- 2 cups hoop cheese
- 1/2 cup non-fat buttermilk or 1/2 cup non-fat milk with 1 1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons apple juice concentrate
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 medium banana
- 6 crepes (see crepe recipe)

Heat oven to 350 F.

Put hoop cheese in food processor fitted with the steel chopping blade; process until it clumps together (approximately 30 seconds). Add remaining ingredients, except the crepes, and blend until smooth.

Spoon 1/4 cup of the mixture into center of each crepe. Fold up bottom of the crepe, fold in sides and fold down top of the crepe, as though closing an envelope to enclose the filling. Place each crepe, seam side down, in flat baking dish. Heat 10 minutes in preheated oven or until crepe is heated through.

Makes 6 blintzes. Each blintz contains approximately 180 calories.

FRESH BERRY SAUCE

- 2 cups fresh raspberries or strawberries
- 1 to 2 tablespoons apple juice concentrate

Place berries and apple juice concentrate into a food processor fitted with the steel blade, or into a blender, and puree until smooth.

Makes 2 cups.

CREPES

- 1/2 cup whole wheat flour

'Other heart-healthy tips include sauteing foods in defatted chicken broth rather than oil or butter, substituting egg whites for whole eggs, and replacing nuts with roasted chestnuts.'

— Denise Vilven
Pitkin consultant

Portrait of a Great American

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Which cheese is best?

AP — The calories in fat count up fast because there are twice as many in a gram of fat as in a gram of protein or carbohydrate. In addition to its effect on weight control, high fat consumption also increases the risk of heart disease.

In each of these food pairs, see if you can pick the light, low-fat choice.

1. Turkey sandwich or chef's salad?
2. Lasagna or spaghetti with meat sauce?
3. Single burger or fish sandwich?
4. Blueberry muffin or bagel with jelly?
5. Oatmeal cookie or granola bar?
6. Broccoli with cheese sauce or vegetable medley containing broccoli?

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