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Now we're cookin' ... for romance!

Duo of Bruschettas

(Serves 4 as appetizers)

Bruschetta

- 1 large loaf French bread
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup olive oil

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Slice bread into small slices — no more than a half-inch thick. Place on two baking sheets.

In small bowl, combine garlic and olive oil. Place in microwave 30 seconds to meld flavors.

Brush garlic and olive oil mixture onto top of each bread slice. Heat in oven 6 to 8 minutes, or until bread begins to brown and toast. Meanwhile make toppings.

Toasty Tomato, Mozzarella and Olive Topping

- 15 cherry tomatoes, quartered
- 3/4 cup fresh mozzarella, cut into small cubes
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 3/4 cup diced pitted black or pitted kalamata olives
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Combine and mix all ingredients in bowl and set aside. Top half of bread slices (one sheet pan) with mixture and return to 450-



degree F oven about four minutes or until cheese begins to melt. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Spinach, Pine Nuts and Raisins Topping

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 tablespoons pine nuts
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1 6-ounce package baby spinach leaves, stems removed
- 1/3 cup grated provolone cheese

In large skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Toss in pine nuts and toast about three minutes. Add raisins and spinach leaves; cook until spinach leaves wilt, about four minutes. Top half of bread slices (one sheet pan) with spinach mixture. Sprinkle with cheese. Heat in 450-degree F oven about four minutes or until cheese begins to melt.

(Recipe, photo courtesy Family Features)

Change of Tart

(Makes one tart)

Ingredients

- 1 bag Dove Brand Dark Chocolate Miniatures
- 1 bag M&M's Milk Chocolate Candies for Valentine's Day
- 1 refrigerated pie crust (15-ounce), at room temp
- 1 stick unsalted butter
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 cup whipped cream

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Press pie crust into 9-inch tart pan and prick bottom

with fork. Place sheet of foil on top, and bake 15 minutes. Remove foil, and continue baking another five minutes, or until golden brown. While pie is baking, melt butter and 18 Dove Dark Chocolate Miniatures over a double boiler. Whisk together eggs, heavy cream and salt. Stir mixture into warm chocolate, and pour chocolate mixture into hot pie crust. Reduce heat to 350 degrees F, and bake 15 to 20 minutes, or until filling is just set. Remove from oven, and let cool to room temperature. Fill



resealable plastic bag with whipped cream, snip corner, attach star tip (optional) and pipe rosettes around outside of tart. Separate M&M's Milk Chocolate Candies for Valentine's Day by color, and arrange them into concentric hearts in center of tart.

(Recipe, photo courtesy Family Features)

Here are three essentials to a romantic meal

• Don't Stress to Impress:

To avoid food catastrophes while entertaining, stick to what you know and don't try to overdo it with unfamiliar recipes. If you want to try something new, have a "rehearsal dinner" the week before.

• Top-Notch Tools:

When cooking and entertaining, it's always nice to have tools that make the job easier. With the Frigidaire(r) Precision Set(tm) Surface Controls, which enable precise and accurate temperature control, and the Frigidaire(r) Favorite & Keep Warm Settings, which will digitally recall baking settings and hold the oven temperature at 170 degrees F so you can keep your food warm until your guest arrives, entertaining is a breeze.

• Planet-Friendly Pointer:

To save time and energy in the kitchen, take out all of your refrigerated ingredients at the same time. Spread them out in an organized fashion, which helps to make the cooking process more streamlined. Plus, it minimizes the number of times you open your refrigerator door. Every time the door opens, refrigerator energy consumption increases by 10 percent.

(Courtesy Family Features)

Now we're cookin' ... for romance!



Three-Tiered Chocolate Cake With Fresh Berries

(Serves 12)

Ingredients

- 2 cups sugar
- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups cake flour
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup cocoa powder
- 1 cup coffee, cooled to room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plain yogurt
- 4 egg whites
- 14 tablespoons butter, melted
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup strawberry preserves Ganache
- 8 ounces semi-sweet chocolate chips
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon liqueur (like Kirsch or Grand Marnier)

(Topping)

- $\frac{1}{2}$ pint raspberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pint blueberries or blackberries
- 1 pint strawberries, tops removed and quartered

Instructions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Cut three pieces parchment paper to fit bottom of three 8-inch cake pans. Grease each pan and add parchment rounds.

Combine sugar, cake flour, cornstarch, baking soda and salt in large bowl. In separate bowl, combine cocoa powder and coffee. Add yogurt and combine well.

In another bowl, with hand mixer, whip egg whites into soft peaks. With same hand mixer, mix melted butter into dry mixture and then add cocoa mixture until batter is smooth. Fold in egg whites.

Pour batter evenly into prepared 8-inch cake pans. Bake 25 to 35 minutes or until toothpick inserted in middle of each cake comes out clean. Remove cakes from oven and place on cooling rack 10 minutes. Remove cake from cake pans and place on cooling rack allowing them to continue cooling 15 minutes more.

Meanwhile, heat strawberry preserves in microwave 30 seconds. Place first cake layer on small cooling rack on baking sheet lined with wax paper or foil to catch ganache drippings. Spread $\frac{1}{3}$ cup strawberry preserves over first layer of cake, and then top with another cake layer and spread remaining preserves over it. Top with remaining cake layer.

For ganache, place chocolate chips in bowl. Heat cream and pour over chocolate chips. Add liqueur and allow to melt, about two minutes. Stir until all chocolate has melted and mixture is smooth. Allow to sit about 10 minutes before liberally pouring over cake and allowing to run down sides.

Allow ganache-topped cake to sit several hours or at least a half-hour in refrigerator. Carefully transfer completed cake to serving plate using two spatulas.

Top with fruit when ready to serve.

(Recipe, photo courtesy Family Features)

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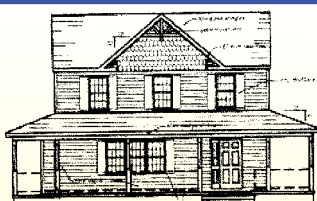
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Puzzle by Carol Kinsley; puzzle program by eclipsecrossword.com; Photo by Carol Kinsley

Love is a many splendor thing ...

Across

- 1. Extremely meticulous
- 4. Book of memories
- 9. Booker T., educator
- 11. Alter the structure of
- 15. Common herb
- 16. Decree
- 18. Famous group of African-American airmen
- 21. Alternative to skiing
- 22. Fisherman
- 26. Original name of New York City
- 28. Taking precedence
- 29. Fancy
- 32. Wail

- 33. Winter sport with brooms and stones
- 35. Usual contents of heart-shaped box
- 37. Winter sleep
- 38. Decorating term

Down

- 2. Snuggle
- 3. Profession
- 5. Severe snowstorm
- 6. Arrange things in order
- 7. Object of affection
- 8. Keeps out heat, cold or sound
- 10. Rich
- 11. Favorite Valentine flowers
- 12. Given Feb. 14

- 13. Love god
- 14. Elfish personification of winter
- 17. Name of two women in Lincoln's life
- 19. Pennsylvania's Phil
- 20. Cookery
- 23. Talbot County Seat
- 24. Lincoln's birthplace
- 25. Sales record-setting Chevy
- 27. Later last name of Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey
- 30. Wetlands
- 31. Energy produced by sun
- 34. Gait
- 36. Crazy

Events for February

CAROLINE COUNTY

2nd Story Live Concert

Date: Feb. 9 at 7:30 p.m.
Location: Denton Library
Admission is \$10, students \$5.
Caroline County Arts Council is sponsoring John Smith. For more information call 410-479-1009.

Analyzing Your Site

Date: Feb. 13 from 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Location: Adkins Arboretum, Ridgely
Learn more about naturalized gardens and your landscape's soils, sun exposure, and wet and dry sites. For more information call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.

Art Exhibit/Wine Reception

Date: Feb. 16 from 3 to 5 p.m.
Location: Denton Library
For more information call 410-479-1009.

Soup 'n Walk

Date: Feb. 16 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
Location: Adkins Arboretum, Ridgely
\$18 fee for members, \$20 fee for non-members. For more information call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.

Gardening With Native Plants

Date: Feb. 20 from 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Location: Adkins Arboretum, Ridgely
Learn how to attract more butterflies and birds and reduce the spread of invaders in their neighborhood. Fee of \$15/members, \$18/non-members. For more information call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.

Favorite Native Trees

Date: Feb. 27 from 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Location: Adkins Arboretum, Ridgely
Will discuss the qualities of a select group of trees and where to grow them. \$15/members, \$18/non-members. For more information call 410-634-2847, ext. 0.

DORCHESTER COUNTY

Square Dance

Date: Feb. 1
Location: Maple Elementary, Cambridge
Square dancing from 8 to 10:30 p.m. Refreshments served. \$5 at the door. For more information call 410-822-7535.

Second Saturday Event

Date: Dec. 9 starting at 5 p.m.
Location: downtown Cambridge
Local shops stay open later. For more information call 410-228-0020. Or visit www.cambridge-mainstreet.com.

"Home with a Heart" Valentine's

Day Weekend Getaway
Date: Feb. 14-16
Help Habitat for Humanity of Talbot & Dorchester counties build a home for a deserving family. Visit www.easternshorevacations.com or call 866-398-2722 or 410-820-6186.

E-mail your events to

events@shorehomeandgarden.com

The 63rd Annual National Outdoor Show

Date: Feb. 22-23
Location: Cambridge
An annual event celebrating trappers, watermen, sportsmen and wildlife. For more information call 410-228-3333.

KENT COUNTY

Photography Award Show

Date: Feb. 1 to March 1
Location: Chestertown
Annual event with Chestertown Arts League. For more information call 410-778-5789.

Chestertown's First Fridays

Date: Feb. 1
Location: downtown Chestertown
For a list of activities visit www.kentcounty.com/artsentertainment

Concert Series

Date: Feb. 2 at 8 p.m.
Location: Norman James Theatre, Washington College in Chestertown
Washington College presents "2". Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$5 for age 18 and younger. For more information call 410-778-7839.

Chamber Music Concert

Date: Feb. 16 at 8 p.m.
Location: St. Paul's Church Parish



Hall, Fairlee
\$15 admission. For more information call 410-778-2876.

Horticulture Lecture Series

Date: Feb. 22 at 10 a.m.
Location: Kent County Public Works Building, Chestertown
Must pre-register. For more information call 410-778-1661.

Rock Hall EXPO

Date: Feb. 23 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Location: Rock Hall Fire House, Rock Hall
Seminars and displays from marine, outdoor, arts, entertainment, lodging, dining and shops. \$1 admission for adults. For more information call 410-639-7483.

Horticulture Lecture Series

Date: Feb. 29 at 10 a.m.
Location: Kent County Public Works Building, Chestertown
Must pre-register. For more information call 410-778-1661..

QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY

Kent Manor Inn & Restaurant Valentine's Day Dinner

Date: Feb. 14 from 5 to 9 p.m.
Location: Kent Manor Inn, Stevensville
Prices start at \$55 per person. For more information call 410-643-7716.

"Guess Who's Braving the Winter?" Bird Walk

Date: Feb. 16 at 8 a.m.
Location: Grasonville
\$7/members and \$10/non-members. For more information call 410-827-6694.

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra Concert

Date: Feb. 22 at 8 p.m.
Location: Todd Performing Arts Center, Chesapeake College in Wye Mills
For more information call 410-827-5867.



(FROM PAGE 50)

mind), here is one aspect of the real estate process where the face time with a local, licensed professional is invaluable.

Using the Web to calculate your potential mortgage payment, look at the types of loans available and look at the latest mortgage rates is fine, but I recommend calling a local agent who can analyze your financial picture and give you a customized (not computer generated) opinion about what option works best for your family and situation!

Local lenders like agents here on the Mid-Shore who are members of the local community can provide that one-on-one attention and customer service while providing access to competitive rates. ➡

Events for February (cont.)

**Cooking Class
Get-A-Way Weekend**
Date: Feb. 22-24
Location: Kent Manor Inn & Restaurant, Stevensville
Includes overnight accommodations. For more information call 410-643-7716, ext. 326 or visit www.kentmanor.com.

Wine Outside Its Box
Date: Feb. 10 from 2 to 5 p.m.
Location: St. Michaels
Cost is \$65 a ticket. For more information call 410-819-5883. All proceeds benefit the Easton Rotary club's youth and community fund.

Valentine's Dinner at St. Michaels Winery
Date: Feb. 15
Location: St. Michaels Winery, St. Michaels
For tickets and/or menu options call 410-745-0808. Space is limited.

TALBOT COUNTY

**First Friday
Gallery Walk**
Date: Feb. 1 from 5 to 9 p.m.
Location: downtown Easton
Stroll the brick paved walks to browse an abundance of art galleries, antiques and specialty shops and award-winning restaurants. For more information call 410-822-8822.

"World Wetlands Day"
Date: Feb. 2 from 4 to 5 p.m.
Location: Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, St. Michaels
Cost is free to CBMM members and \$15 for non-members.

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Answer key to crossword puzzle on page 56

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>Down</p> <p>2. CUDDLE</p> <p>3. CAREER</p> <p>5. BLIZZARD</p> <p>6. ORGANIZE</p> <p>7. SWEETHEART</p> <p>8. INSULATION</p> <p>10. AFFLUENT</p> <p>11. ROSES</p> <p>12. VALENTINE</p> <p>13. CUPID</p> <p>14. JACKFROST</p> <p>17. SARAH</p> <p>19. GROUNDHOG</p> <p>20. CULINARY</p> <p>23. EASTON</p> <p>24. KENTUCKY</p> <p>25. IMPALA</p> <p>27. DOUGLASS</p> <p>30. MARSH</p> <p>31. SOLAR</p> <p>34. PAGE</p> <p>36. DAFT</p> | <p>Across</p> <p>1. FINICKY</p> <p>4. SCRAPBOOK</p> <p>9. WASHINGTON</p> <p>11. REMODEL</p> <p>15. PARSLEY</p> <p>16. EDICT</p> <p>18. TUSKEGEE</p> <p>21. SNOWBOARDING</p> <p>22. ANGLER</p> <p>26. NEWAMSTERDAM</p> <p>28. PRIORITY</p> <p>29. WHIM</p> <p>32. HOWL</p> <p>33. CURLING</p> <p>35. CANDY</p> <p>37. HIBERNATION</p> <p>38. REDESIGN</p> <p>37. HAIL</p> |
|--|---|

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Do you think you know what is pictured to the right?

If you can identify the photo, you could win a Shore Home & Garden canvas tote bag! One lucky winner will be drawn at random from all correct answers submitted. Entries must be in by

noon on Feb. 15, 2008.

Last month's answer: tea bag

Winner: Sharon Hildebrand, Cordova

