

A Heart-Healthy Valentine's Day

By Melanie Peters | December 22, 2016

The holidays are over, New Year's resolutions are in full swing and, hopefully, those promises made on December 31st to eat better and get more exercise are holding fast. However, despite this renewed dedication to eating right and eschewing all things decadent, another opportunity for indulgence is fast approaching: Valentine's Day. For some people, this February holiday has become more about celebrating chocolate than that "special someone" and many a resolution begins to crumble in the face of all those chocolate candies, kisses, and "death by" desserts. So we wanted to know: Is there a way to celebrate choc, er, your loved ones and stick to your health-conscious-guns? The answer is a resounding, heart-healthy yes!



We asked Rodney Fry, executive chef for UC San Diego Health, for two delicious, heart-healthy recipes (one with a touch of decadence) to help you celebrate that special someone and indulge your chocolate craving with less guilt. As UC San Diego Health is part of the Nutrition in Healthcare Leadership Team (NHLT), a collaborative of San Diego County health care systems [dedicated to advancing](#)

[healthful, sustainable food practices](#), we knew he'd have the perfect solution to this Valentine's Day dilemma.

For the main course, Fry offers up his award winning "Fish *en Papillote*," which is available on the menu for patients at the newly opened Jacob Medical Center at UC San Diego Health. At a recent event hosted by San Diego Magazine honoring local doctors, Fry won the accolade of Top Chef for this dish, which features locally and sustainably sourced ingredients, such as Pacific rockfish. Fish is an excellent source of heart-healthy [omega-3 fatty acids](#) and, according to the American Heart Association, you should be eating fish at least twice a week. This recipe amps up the flavor by

cooking the fish in an envelope of parchment paper — *en papillote* is French for “in parchment” — which allows the flavors to meld despite a quick cooking time and the fish to cook evenly without losing moisture. Also, you can prepare the papillotes a few hours ahead of time — just refrigerate until you’re ready to pop them in the oven.

Fish en Papillote

- → 4 5 oz. Pacific rockfish fillets
- → 2 tbsps. unsalted butter
- → 1.2 oz carrots, julienned
- → 1.2 oz celery, julienned
- → 1.2 oz. shallot, thinly sliced
- → 4 lime slices
- → 4 springs of fresh thyme
- → 1 and 1/2 tbsps. white wine
- → Kosher salt
- → white pepper
- → parchment paper
- → Preheat oven to 375 degrees
- → Place each fish fillet on top of a large square of parchment paper, leaving room to fold edges over fish.
- → Season each fillet with salt and pepper
- → Top each fillet with carrots, celery, shallots, a slice of lime, sprigs of thyme, butter and white wine.
- → Fold parchment tightly over fish, creating an envelope.
- → Place fish packets on a baking sheet and bake for 8 to 12 minutes, depending on thickness of fish.

What’s Valentine’s Day without chocolate? Chocolate is rich in flavanols, which are thought to benefit cardiovascular health by lowering blood pressure, improving blood flow to the brain and heart and making blood less sticky, which reduces the risk of heart attack and stroke. Below, Fry shares his recipe for Lava Cake, which is available to order as part of the celebratory meal for new moms who deliver their babies at UC San Diego Health. To get the most health benefit from the chocolate in this dessert, look for chips that have 35 percent cocoa solids or higher as the more cocoa solids in the chocolate, the [higher the flavanols](#) ↗.

Lava Cake

- → 7 4 oz. ramekins or foil cups, buttered and coated with cocoa powder
- → 5.5 oz. chocolate chips
- → 5 oz. unsalted butter, cut into 1 inch pieces
- → Combine butter and chocolate in a mixing bowl on top of a pot of simmering water being careful not to let bottom of bowl touch the water — never

- → 3 egg yolks
- → 3 whole eggs
- → 1 and 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- → 1/2 cup flour
- → Preheat oven to 350 degrees

melt chocolate directly over the cooking element.

- → Heat chocolate mixture until melted and set aside to cool slightly.
 - → Using a whisk or electric mixer, beat the eggs, egg yolks, and sugar until mixture is thick and a light yellow color — about 5 minutes.
 - → On a lower speed, mix in the flour until just combined.
 - → Slowly add the melted chocolate to the egg, sugar, flour mixture. Do not add all at once as this will cause the eggs to scramble.
 - → Tap excess cocoa out of ramekins then fill the ramekins 3/4 full with chocolate mixture.
 - → Place filled ramekins on a sheet pan and bake in middle of oven for 15 minutes.
 - → Turn lava cakes out onto a serving plate, garnish and serve immediately.
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