

Blue Cheese & Walnut Salad **Spaghetti a la Carbonara** **Dark Chocolate Ganache Mousse**



It's the time of year to celebrate romance! Valentine's Day brings romance in so many forms. From cards adorned with hearts and flowers, to boxes of chocolates and dozens of roses, the celebration brings out the romantic in all of us. In 496 A.D. Pope Gelasius set aside February 14 to honor Saint Valentine, the patron saint of love and lovers. Legend has it that Saint Valentine had defied Emperor Claudius II by secretly marrying countless couples, a practice the emperor had banned believing that marriage weakened his army. Eventually Claudius caught on and the good saint was condemned and martyred in 269 A.D. — on February 14. Over the years February 14 has become a special day for exchanging gifts of love. This year give your true love a romantic dinner for Valentine's Day. Begin the meal with an elegant salad of mixed greens topped with blue cheese. Serve a classic pasta for the entree and end the meal with a decadent dark chocolate dessert. A bottle of champagne will make the meal complete. Happy Valentine's Day!

Blue Cheese and Walnut Salad

2 cups mesclun or mixed salad greens
1-1/2 teaspoons lemon juice
1/8 cup white wine vinegar
1/8 cup olive oil
1 small garlic clove, finely minced
Salt and pepper to taste
2 drops of hot sauce
1/4 cup chopped walnuts, toasted
2 tablespoons blue cheese, crumbled

Whisk lemon juice, vinegar, olive oil, garlic, salt, pepper and hot sauce together. Toss with salad greens. Top with blue cheese and walnuts. Serves 2.

Spaghetti a' la Carbonara

6 ounces pancetta or bacon, diced
4 eggs, beaten
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
1/2 cup heavy cream
Salt and pepper to taste
8 ounces linguine

Sauté the pancetta until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Combine the eggs, 3/4 cup Parmesan cheese, cream, salt and pepper in a large serving bowl. Mix together thoroughly. Cook the pasta according to package directions until al dente. Drain and immediately add to the serving bowl, tossing to coat the pasta with the sauce. The hot pasta will cook the eggs and make the sauce thicken. If necessary, return the pasta with the sauce to the cooking pot and toss over very low heat until the sauce thickens more. Top with the cooked pancetta and remaining Parmesan cheese. Serves 2.

Dark Chocolate Ganache Mousse

10 ounces dark chocolate

1-3/4 cups heavy whipping cream

1 ounce butter

Whipped cream

Fresh raspberries

In a heavy-bottomed pot, bring cream and butter to a boil. Take off heat immediately. Add the chocolate and stir until melted. Pour into a glass bowl and refrigerate for 24 hours. Remove from the refrigerator and whip with a hand mixer at moderate speed until peaks form. Spoon into wine glasses. Top with whipped cream and fresh raspberries. Serves 2.