

Your Family Food Stories to Share

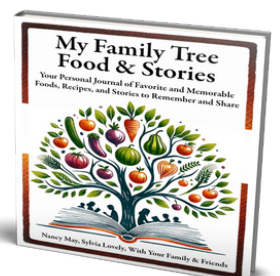
A Romantic Valentine's Menu to Make and Love!



Family Tree, Food & Stories



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A Romantic Dinner Menu for Two

Any home-cooked meal made for someone comes from the heart. However, Valentine's Day offers the opportunity to make something just a bit more romantic. Here's our [Family Tree Food & Stories](#) suggestion for a sexy, romantic dinner menu (with recipes) with suggested wine pairings. It's easy to make.

Appetizer: Let the sparks fly!

Snuggle up, Oysters:

Oysters on the half shell with Apple-Horseradish Dressing

Oysters are the original "lean-in" food – cool, briny, luxurious, and you have to eat them with your hands. It's a very tactile thing. The apple adds freshness, and the horseradish a gentle heat that wakes everything up, including you and your partner!

Ingredients:

- 3 tbsp white wine vinegar,
- 2 tbsp very finely diced or grated Granny Smith apple
- 1.5 tbsp freshly grated horseradish,
- 2 tbsp finely chopped shallots,
- 1 tsp honey (a bit more if you want a sweeter sauce)
- 1 tsp crushed white peppercorns,
- 4 tbsp olive oil.

Preparation:

Whisk or quickly blend all ingredients until emulsified. Add a teaspoon (or more) on top of each shucked raw oyster in the shell. Place on a plate (or shallow bowl) of shaved ice. Top with a little fresh parsley or an edible flower for contrast, eat and enjoy.

Wine Pairing:

A brut sparkling wine like Louis Bouillot Perle de Vigne Crémant de Bourgogne Brut. This selection is relatively easy to find or order and have shipped from [Total Wine & More](#).



Continued on the next page

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Main Course: Your dreams come true!



Marry Me Chicken:

When you want someone to pop the question, or fall in love with you again.

This uses only one pan. Make sure you brown the chicken so it's nice and crisp, then focus on creating a rich, creamy sauce with the pan drippings and all those delicious crunchies.

Ingredients:

- **Chicken:** 3 large boneless, skinless chicken breasts (about 2 lbs total), sliced horizontally into 6 even cutlets.
- If you want extra-crispy flavor, use chicken breasts with the skin on and the bones in. Seriously, this makes this dish even more flavorful. And, you'll learn if your prospective partner knows how to cut a bone-in chicken breast with flair.
- **Seasoning:** 1 tsp kosher salt,
• $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp black pepper
- **Coating:** $\frac{1}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour (it's easier to put the raw chicken in a plastic bag with flour, then shake it up to coat it well. Make sure your extra flavoring is in the flour – salt and pepper, before shaking and coating the chicken.
- **Fats:** 3 tbsp olive oil, 3 tbsp unsalted butter
- cloves garlic, minced (or 1 large shallot), to taste
- **Flavor Base Mixture:** 1 tbsp tomato paste, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp dried oregano, a pinch of red pepper flakes (to taste)
- **Liquids & Cheese for richness:** 1 cup low-sodium chicken stock, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy cream, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- **Optional Add-ins for extra yum!:** $\frac{1}{3}$ cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and chopped; fresh basil for garnish

Preparation instructions: Easier than you think.

1. **Prep the Chicken:** Slice large breasts in half horizontally to create thinner cutlets, or pound them to an even 1/2-inch thickness. This ensures they cook quickly and evenly without drying out.
2. **Dredge & Sear:** Pat the chicken dry, then season with salt and pepper. Lightly coat each piece in all-purpose flour, shaking off the excess. Sear in a hot skillet with oil and butter for 4–5 minutes per side (or longer, depending on the plumpness of the chicken breast), until deep golden brown, then remove to a plate.
3. **Build the Flavor:** In the same pan, sauté minced garlic for about 30 seconds. Deglaze the pan with chicken broth or dry white wine, using a wooden spoon to scrape up the "fond" (browned bits) for maximum flavor.
4. **Creamy Sauce:** Reduce the heat to low before stirring in heavy cream and grated Parmesan cheese. Add chopped sun-dried tomatoes, dried oregano, thyme, and red pepper flakes.

Continued on the next page

Marry Me Chicken Continued:

5. Final Simmer: Return the chicken and any juices from the plate to the skillet. Simmer gently for 3–5 minutes until the sauce thickens and the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C).

Extra tips:

- For more richness and flavor, use a little bit of the oil from the sundried tomato jar when browning/searing the chicken.
- Use bone-in chicken with the skin for more flavor
- Use fresh Parmesan. Shred it, put it in a plastic bag with about a teaspoon of flour, and shake the bag to mix it all together. The flour will help make the sauce creamier, prevent graininess, and make it smoother and more velvety.
- Make sure you do NOT let your sauce boil. This will likely cause the cheese's oils to separate. Instead, keep the heat on a medium-low and enjoy an extra glass of wine with your lover.
- Once plated, sprinkle some freshly torn basil leaves on top (for flavor and color), and squeeze a little lemon juice over the top to add a little zing.
- Serve over wild rice or rich mashed potatoes.

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Wine pairing:

A rich buttery Chardonnay, Pouilly Fuisse, or a Pinot Grigio for a lighter taste.

Édouard Delaunay Septembre Bourgogne Chardonnay, 2022 (around \$30)

Butter Chardonnay: more budget-friendly

Domaine Trouillet Pouilly Fuisse, 2023: around \$35

Pinot Grigio: Pighin Pinot Grigio, 2018 (under \$20)

King Estate Pinot Gris Willamette Valley, 2019 (under \$20)



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Dessert: delicious and seductive

Dark chocolate mousse for two: 3-Ingredient No-Bake Dark Chocolate Mousse

No baking necessary, but whipped cream is involved!

Make this the day before so there's no rush, and all you have to do is plop the whipped cream on top, with a little chocolate shavings, of course.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream (divided)
- 6 oz dark chocolate (chopped), and
- 2 tbsp powdered sugar



Preparation:

- **Melt:** Heat 1/3 cup of the cream with the chocolate in the microwave in 20-second bursts until smooth. Let it cool to room temperature.
- In a separate bowl, with an electric mixer (or you can do this by hand, but it takes longer) whip the remaining 2/3 cup of cream with the powdered sugar until stiff peaks form.
- Gently fold the whipped cream into the cooled chocolate mixture until no white streaks remain.
- Spoon the mixture into romantically pretty glasses and chill in the fridge overnight to allow the texture to firm up.

Serving Tip: To make it extra special for Valentine's Day, garnish with fresh raspberries and a light dusting of sea salt to contrast the dark chocolate's sweetness.

Aperitif pairing:

- **Taylor Fladgate 10 Year Old Tawny Port:** This is the gold standard pairing for chocolate. Its notes of butterscotch, dried fruits, and roasted nuts harmonize perfectly with dark chocolate's bitterness.
Price: ~\$25-\$30. You can find it easily at Total Wine
- **Banfi Rosa Regale Brachetto d'Acqui:** If you want something lighter and romantic, this is a sparkling, sweet red wine from Italy with strong notes of fresh raspberries and rose petals. It's basically "Valentine's Day in a bottle."
Price: ~\$18-\$22. Widely available at Target and major grocery chains.

Tip: Dark chocolate has tannins just like wine; pairing it with a low-acid or "thin" wine will make the wine taste sour. These selections have the residual sugar and body to match the weight of your romantic chocolate mousse.

Add candlelight everywhere to make this meal even more delicious and sensual.



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For updates, follow us on social media and visit our website. Let's celebrate and preserve our food memories together!

Happy Valentine's Day!



Nancy R. May

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