

Yummy Date Ideas

So, watching the ten funniest videos of the week on *Youtube* and ordering a pizza with your bf, gf or bff is fun, but maybe you're starting to wonder about some other things you can do as a date or just for the hell of it with your friends? Well never underestimate the power of food my friends, and I don't mean the kind that's so easy all you need is your parent's credit card, I mean a meal you actually make yourself. The first thing you might be thinking is wow, cook for my boyfriend or girlfriend, why don't I just buy myself a poodle skirt and a white apron and introduce myself as Mr. or Mrs. Stepford? Of course, now you may be asking yourself who's Mr. And Mrs. Stepford, but that's not the point. Making you into an outdated 50's man/woman is not entirely what I had in mind, so bear with me for a moment. Food and dating and food and friendship may be as clichéd as the science nerd who loves *World of Warcraft*, but if you think about it you may just realize that the act of making food has great potential for the makings of a romantic, or at least interesting afternoon. Not much of a cook? Even better. Hey, Bridget Jones made blue soup and marmalade paste and she still got Colin Firth by the end of the movie.

Think about it, you call up your significant other, invite him/her to dinner and say, oh, by the way, you're helping me make it, so be here by 3:30. You gather the ingredients and put together your most adorable chef outfit, a la Rachel Ray or Jamie Oliver, (adding the white hat will definitely get you a few

brownie points for cuteness) and prepare for what is bound to be a successful date or memorable afternoon. There are many recipes that you can experiment with that aren't overly complicated.

For example, here's a "Chinese Won Ton" recipe that was posted on the website www.globalgourmet.com, which was created by a teenage girl named Beth Platt from San Jose, CA. that even won an award:

Chinese Won Tons

- 1 pound ground pork
- 1/2 cup chopped water chestnuts
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 egg
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1 package Won Ton Wraps

Mix together first six ingredients. Wrap one teaspoon meat mixture in each won ton wrap (following package directions to seal wraps securely). Fry in small amount of oil, turning until golden brown. Serve hot with sweet and sour sauce. Makes approximately 54 won tons.

Sweet & Sour Sauce

- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup pineapple juice
- 1/4 cup catsup
- 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons cold water

Mix together first six ingredients. In separate bowl, combine cornstarch and water, mixing until smooth. Combine first mixture with cornstarch mixture; heat in microwave approximately 3 to 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Let mixture stand until thick.

Nutrition Facts per Won Ton:

- Calories: 52
- Sodium: 63 mg
- Protein: 3 g
- Fat: 1 g
- Cholesterol: 10 mg

This recipe would be great to make with someone else, especially because one of you could take on the won tons and the other the sweet and sour sauce. If it doesn't work out, just make sure to have your digital camera handy and you'll at least have fun snapping pics of each other covered in soy sauce with won ton wraps stuck to your clothing. Don't eat meat? Why not try this recipe for "Veggie Burgers" from the *BDA Teen Weight Wise Website*, www.teenweightwise.com:

Veggie Burgers

What You Need (serves 4)

130g (5oz) split red lentils
1 medium onion (chopped)
1 bay leaf
¾ tsp ground cumin
2 tomatoes (chopped)
100g (4oz) unsalted peanuts (chopped)
100g (4oz) wholemeal breadcrumbs
black pepper
2 tablespoons parsley (chopped)
1 egg (beaten)

How To Make It

1. Put the lentils in a pan with plenty of water, onions, and bay leaf, cumin and tomatoes.
2. Bring to the boil and simmer until the lentils are soft.
3. Drain, remove the bay leaf, and beat the lentils until smooth.
4. Mix the peanuts and breadcrumbs together. Beat half this mixture into the lentil puree.
5. Add the pepper and parsley and stir in the beaten eggs.
6. Divide into 4 flat cakes. Coat with the remaining peanut and breadcrumb mixture.
7. Grill or bake until heated through and crisp on the top.
8. Serve in a toasted bun with salad, spicy potato wedges and salsa.

Veggie Burgers are also a very healthy and/or nutritious recipe to make so that's a plus. Of course there are many other simplistic recipes that you can find just by searching the net, and your library will undoubtedly have an interesting selection of recipe books. Just, remember, if all else fails, you still have the number of that pizza place to fall back on.

Sources:

Grampian Dieticians. "Veggie Burgers." *BDA Teen Weight Wise Website*.
www.teenweightwise.com/recipes/vegetarian/veggie_burgers.aspx.

Platt, Beth. "Chinese Won Tons." *The Global Gourmet*.
<http://www.globalgourmet.com/food/egg/egg0997/wontons.html>.