

# Sweet Valentine treats that won't bust your diet

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(HealthDay)—You don't have to give up tropical drinks and chocolatey

desserts for Valentine's Day and other celebrations. Just streamline them and boost their health profile.

Sweet and fiber-rich pears can be whipped into great cocktails. Most pears at the [grocery store](#) or even at the farmer's market are picked early, since they can get easily damaged once ripe. To ripen at home, let pears rest in a basket on the countertop for two to three days.

### **Pear Bellini**

- 1 ripe [pear](#)
- 1 ounce pear-flavored liqueur
- 12 ounces champagne or prosecco

Gently peel and core the pear. Cut into slices, reserving two for the garnish. Place the rest in a blender with the liqueur and two tablespoons of cold water. Process until smooth.

Divide between two champagne glasses and top off with champagne or prosecco. Garnish with a slice of pear. Serve immediately.

Yield: 2 servings

### **Lighter Lava Cake**

This restaurant favorite uses chocolate with a high cacao content for its antioxidants as well as cocoa powder to cut the calories.

- Cooking spray
- 1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa
- 3 ounces of 70 percent dark chocolate, chopped

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2/3 cup whole-wheat pastry flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons safflower, coconut or light [olive oil](#)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Coat six ramekins with cooking spray and dust with tablespoon of cocoa.

Melt chopped chocolate and butter in a small saucepan over low heat, two to three minutes, stirring often.

Combine flour, 1/2 cup cocoa, baking powder and salt in a bowl and stir well.

Place sugar, vanilla and eggs in another bowl and beat with a mixer at medium speed until light and fluffy. Beat in oil and then the melted chocolate mixture. Using a spatula, gently fold in the flour mixture until just combined. Divide batter evenly among the ramekins.

Bake 13 minutes or until cakes are puffy and slightly crusty on top. Place a dessert plate on top of each ramekin and gently flip to release the cakes, using a kitchen towel to protect your hands. Serve immediately.

Yield: 6 servings

Note: Refrigerate and enjoy any leftovers cold or brought up to room temperature.

**More information:** USA Pears has more on how to handle and [ripen](#)

[pears](#) plus many tasty recipes.

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