



Don't suffer alone, throw a party for other singles

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It's Valentine's Day and you're single. What to do? The idea of spending the night eating ice cream in your bathrobe while sobbing over "An Affair to Remember" might be tempting, although it's hardly healthy. Why not throw a dinner party for other friends who happen to be flying solo on the dreaded day?

According to **Nina Atwood**, a soul partner coach based in Dallas, Texas, a party can reaffirm friendships and help everyone keep a positive outlook on Valentine's Day, even if they don't have a sweetie with whom to share it.

"The tendency is to go in your little hole and to feel sorry for yourself and be upset," she says. "I think it's just a different twist on it to say, 'you know what? I'm not going to feel bad about myself on Valentine's Day.'"

Atwood recommends asking friends to bring items for sharing and discussion - their favorite wines or a self-help or inspirational book. She suggests sharing their funniest date stories, but to avoid lapsing into "man-bashing," an ever-popular activity when a group of single women is assembled.

Elise Lin, a personal coach who had a practice in Wayne before moving to Florida last year, suggested that single women spoil themselves on Valentine's Day. "The best thing is to be your own best valentine," she said. "Pretend that if you did have somebody, how would you like them to treat you on Valentine's Day?"

What better way to spoil yourself and your friends than with girly drinks, fruit and chocolate fudge?

As for the boys, **Atwood** said not to worry too much about them.

"If they're single, they hardly notice it," she said. "It's just another day on the calendar. The only time they focus on it is if they are in a relationship and have the expectation from the woman. Other than that, I think men have far less focus on it."

- This drink was created for Sarah Jessica Parker at the premiere of "Sex and the City." Recipe courtesy of Gaustavino's restaurant in New York.

FLIRTINI

1 ounce Stolli Raspberry vodka
1/2 ounce Triple Sec
Splash of fresh lime juice
1/2 ounce pineapple juice
4 raspberries muddled at bottom of glass
A float of sparkling wine

Mix all liquors (except for the sparkling wine) and juices together. Gently pour into glass over muddled raspberries. Top off with sparkling wine. The color should be a golden yellow, with the raspberries on the bottom and a frothy top.

APRICOT AND CURRANT CHICKEN

From "Fete Accompli! The Ultimate Guide to Creative Entertaining" by Lara Shriftman, Elizabeth Harrison and Karen Robinovitz (Clarkson Potter, 2004).

2 chickens (2-1/2 to 3 pounds each), quartered

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1-1/2 cups bitter orange marmalade

1/3 cup apple juice

1/3 cup fresh orange juice

8 ounces dried apricots

8 ounces dried currants

1/4 cup brown sugar

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Place the chicken pieces, skin side up, in a shallow roasting pan and sprinkle generously with salt and pepper and then ginger. Spread the marmalade over the chicken and pour the apple and orange juices into the pan.

Bake uncovered for 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and add the apricots and currants to the pan, mixing the fruit evenly. Sprinkle the fruit with the brown sugar and return to the oven.

Bake, basting the chicken frequently, until the chicken is golden brown and shiny on top, 40 to 45 minutes. Remove the chicken, apricots and currants to a warmed serving platter. Pour some of the pan juices over the top and pour the remaining juices into a sauceboat. Serve immediately.

CHOCOLATE-WALNUT FUDGE

Makes 64 pieces. Reprinted from the Good Housekeeping Great American Classics Cookbook (Hearst Books, 2004).

1 pound bittersweet chocolate or 16 squares (16 ounces) semi-sweet chocolate, chopped

1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk

1 cup walnuts (4 ounces) coarsely chopped

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/8 teaspoon salt

Line 8-inch square baking pan with plastic wrap; smooth out wrinkles. In heavy 2-quart saucepan, melt chocolate with condensed milk over medium-low heat, stirring constantly, until smooth.

Remove from heat.

Stir in walnuts, vanilla and salt. Scrape chocolate mixture into prepared pan; spread evenly. Refrigerate until firm, about 3 hours.

Remove fudge from pan by lifting edges of plastic wrap. Invert fudge onto cutting board; discard plastic wrap. Cut fudge into 8 strips, then cut each strip crosswise into 8 pieces.

Layer between waxed paper in airtight container.

Store at room temperature up to one week, or refrigerate up to one month.