

# Cafeteria Connection

February 2026

## Sweet Strawberries for Valentine's Day

Whether it's their color or heart shape, many adore strawberries, especially around Valentine's Day. Strawberries not only taste good but they come with many health benefits. Strawberries are low in sodium and are a good source of vitamins such as vitamin C and minerals, including potassium, which is important for a healthy heart, as well as nerve, kidney and muscle contraction. Strawberries are grown in every state and around the world. "In the United States consumption grew from 2 pounds per person in 1980 to 8 pounds in 2013, according to the USDA." So, why do people enjoy strawberries for Valentine's day? In a Cherokee creation story, a fight between the first man and woman is resolved by a heavenly gift of strawberries. In European art, strawberries have been associated with holiness. Fresh or frozen, strawberries can be enjoyed many different ways. Experts say you should look for red fruits with bright green caps, and if you're thinking about chocolate dipped strawberries this Valentine's Day try dark chocolate for dipping. Dark chocolate has a lot of cocoa which is high in healthy flavonoids that can keep us feeling our lovely best!



## Dietitian's Pick



Sweet potatoes are a root vegetable that come in different colors such as white, yellow, orange, red or even purple. Sweet potatoes are high in beta-carotene which is converted to vitamin A in our body. They are also high in potassium which balances the fluids in your body, is important for normal blood pressure, muscle growth and the functioning of the brain and nervous system. Baking sweet potatoes preserves their natural sweetness making them a delicious choice for a nutrient-dense side, snack or main course!

## Baked Sweet Potato

Yields 4



### INGREDIENTS:

- 4 Sweet Potatoes, scrubbed clean
- Olive Oil, optional
- 4 tbsp. Butter
- Kosher Salt
- Freshly Ground Black Pepper



### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 425°. On a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil, prick sweet potatoes all over with a fork. Rub the outsides with a small amount of olive oil if you intend to eat the skins.
2. Bake until tender, 45 to 50 minutes.
3. Let cool, then split the tops open with a knife and top with a pat of butter.
4. Season with salt and pepper before serving.

Enjoy!

## February Holidays



Month of the Holy Family

Black History Month

National Heart Month

National Grapefruit Month

**Feb 2** Presentation of the Lord

**Feb 2** National Ground Hog Day

**Feb 2** National Tater Tot Day

**Feb 7** National Fettuccine Alfredo Day

**Feb 9** National Pizza Day

**Feb 11** Our Lady of Lourdes

**Feb 13** National Cheddar Day

**Feb 13** National Tortellini Day

**Feb 17** President's Day

**Feb 20** National Muffin Day

**Feb 24** National Tortilla Chip Day

**Feb 27** National Chili Day

**Feb 27** National Strawberry Day

**Feb 28** National Pancake Day

## Lunar New Year -

## Year of the Horse!

Lunar New Year begins on February 17th, it's the Year of the Horse. Similar to western culture's new year, some Asian families will stay up late on Lunar New Year's Eve and send good wishes to other family members and friends at midnight. Parents will give out small red envelopes that have money inside to children. Homes will be decorated with kumquat trees (symbolizing wealth & good luck), wearing lucky colors (yellow, red), and eating lucky food like rice dumplings (family togetherness), fried flour-coated peanuts (vitality), walnut cookies (happiness), etc. are popular ways to get lucky.

Our school cafeterias will enjoy Asian themed food stations & Chef Days! We look forward to celebrating soon!

**HAPPY  
Lunar  
NEW YEAR**