

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



Did you know that mushrooms grow in the dark? There are more than 38,000 varieties of mushrooms with different shapes, sizes, and colors, and roasting them is a great way to enjoy them! Depending on the variety, mushrooms can have different nutritional values. For example, the cremini mushroom is an excellent source of copper and selenium. Some other mushrooms such as oyster mushrooms are rich in vitamin B. The most common type of mushroom is white or button mushroom which can be found in supermarkets, so make sure to give this roasted mushrooms recipe a try and enjoy the umami flavor mushrooms have!

Roasted Mushrooms 5 Servings (1/2 Cup)

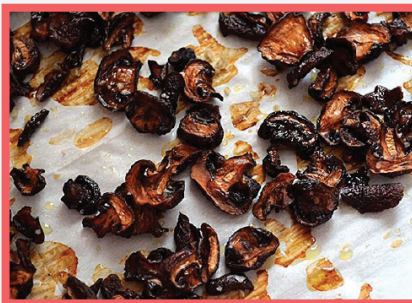


INGREDIENTS:

- (1 pound 2 ounces) Fresh Mushrooms
- 1/4 teaspoon Ground Black Pepper
- 1/4 tablespoon Kosher Salt
- 1/4 cup Olive Oil

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375°.
2. Rinse, wipe off any dirt with a wet cloth. Try not to soak the mushrooms in water.
3. Cut any very large mushrooms in half or in quarters.
4. Toss mushrooms with olive oil, salt and pepper. Other seasoning such as granulated garlic may be added.
5. Place mushrooms in a single layer on a parchment lined sheet pan. Do not crowd the mushrooms as this will cause them to steam.
6. Bake until mushrooms are lightly browned and tender, approx. 15 min. Hold for hot service at 140° or higher.



Enjoy!

February Holidays

Black History Month
National Heart Month
National Grapefruit Month

- Feb 2** National Ground Hog Day
- Feb 2** National Tater Tot Day
- Feb 7** National Fettuccine Alfredo Day
- Feb 9** National Pizza Day
- 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**