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f the way to your loved one's heart is through the stomach, there's no better way to start off this Valentine's Day than with a homemade breakfast prepared with love.

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enlightened

Whether you're whipping up a breakfast for a spouse with a sophisticated palate or trying to tempt the taste buds of your littlest loves, explore these ideas to get inspired.

• Red is the color of love, so build your menu around fresh strawberries or raspberries, which pair perfectly with French toast or crepes, and can even dress up a simple cereal.

• For a more sensible menu, opt for a fruity berry smoothie or a parfait layered with fresh fruit, low-fat yogurt and granola. Add a hint of loving indulgence by sprinkling dark chocolate shavings on top.

 Show your affection with a plate of these colorful Cocoa-Kissed Red Velvet Pancakes featuring rich 100 percent cocoa, buttermilk and fresh berries. Heart-shaped cookie cutters lend a special touch to these fluffy, flavorful pancakes. Add sweet garnishes like powdered sugar and berries for a sensational way to say "I love you."

Find more recipes you'll love to share with your nearest and dearest this Valentine's Day at Culinary.net.

Cocoa-Kissed Red Velvet Pancakes

Recipe courtesy of Nestle Servings: 10 pancakes

1 cup all-purpose flour

- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons Nestle Toll House Baking Cocoa

1 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

- 1 large egg
- 1 cup reduced-fat buttermilk or low-fat milk
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1 teaspoon red food coloring heart-shaped pancake cutters or cookie cutters (optional)

butter, for garnish (optional)

powdered sugar, for garnish (optional)

- maple syrup, for garnish (optional)
- fresh berries, for garnish (optional)

In large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking cocoa, baking powder, baking soda and salt; stir well.

In separate large bowl, whisk together egg, buttermilk, unsalted butter, vanilla extract and food coloring. Add to flour mixture; stir to combine. Allow mixture to sit 5 minutes.

Heat nonstick skillet or griddle over medium heat. Brush with oil or butter. Add about 1/4 cup batter to skillet. Cook about 2 minutes, or until bubbles start to form on top. Flip and cook 1-2 minutes, or until bottom is lightly browned. Serve immediately with butter, powdered sugar, syrup and berries, if desired.

Tip: If using pancake or cookie cutters, be sure to coat with oil so pancakes don't stick. Place cutters in skillet and pour batter into cutters. Remove cutters before flipping.

