Here's how you can please your dates—
Share food and fun.

Celebrate, Plan a Buffet

by Dorothy Will
Technical Journalism Junior

Be Queen of Hearts, bake some tarts, and you and your friends will have found a special way to celebrate St. Valentine's Day. As queens, you can serve your dates an informal buffet supper and demonstrate your hostess and homemaking ability.

Sharing food and fun will make this "hearty" celebration especially popular with the boys, and sharing the work will mean that every hostess has a good time, too.

Your first problem in planning this party here at college will be to find a home in which to entertain. One way is to include as a hostess someone who lives nearby; then, if she's willing, you can plan to have your buffet in her home.

With this settled, your group is ready for a big planning session to discuss everything from your dates' arrival to the menu, games and entertainment. Give everyone a job. You'll need someone in charge of each of these—shopping, cooking, decorating and making the centerpiece, planning the games, serving and cleaning up.

Let your dates capture the Valentine spirit the minute they arrive. They will if they walk into the room and see many, many hearts—big hearts, little hearts, broken hearts and mended hearts. While the cooks are busy in the kitchen with last minute preparations, their dates can write Valentines.

Give each guest an envelope containing a sheet of paper which is blank except for the name of a famous lover written in the top right-hand corner. The players pretend that they are the famous lovers whose names they receive, and each one writes a Valentine letter to his mate. Samson writes Delilah in Biblical terms; John Alden to Priscilla in Puritanical style; Romeo to Juliet in warm, poetic language and Popeye to Olive Oyle in comic strip "lingo."

For best results, distribute the envelopes to the individual who can write each Valentine best. Then before dinner, while everyone relaxes with a cold tomato juice cocktail and nibbles from a snack tray, deliver the Valentines to the "lady loves" so they can read them aloud.

Now your guests will be ready to eat. It's best to set up card tables so that people won't have to juggle their plates and try to eat at the same time. Since you'll only be entertaining a small group, you might like to set each small table with linen, silver and glassware for additional convenience. A relish plate for each table would be nice, too.

Keep the serving table centerpiece simple, but use your imagination. Although your dates will appreciate the decoration, they'll be primarily looking for plenty of good food. In choosing your buffet menu, select foods easily eaten with a fork since a few of your guests may not be sitting at tables. A good hot main dish, a

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Translate
That Menu
by Joanne Ryals
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A N INVITATION TO DINNER—and not at someone's home this time, but at a plushy restaurant! And with a date! It is every woman's dream to be able to face the menu like a woman of the world. Here's how to banish bewilderment with savoir-faire.

Let's straighten out the two types of menus. You'll be presented with a table d'hote or a la carte menu, or both, or a variation of one or the other.

More than often is the case that the restaurant serves table d'hote menus as well as a la carte. Whatever the case choose table d'hote. Big exception is if you aren't hungry enough to eat a full meal and the bill would be smaller with an a la carte item or two.

Table d'hote
This translates from French to American as "table of the host" and means that a complete or almost complete meal is offered at a set price.

After you have chosen an appetizer (if included in the price of the entree) and the main dish, select the vegetables—which are often a choice of two or one cooked plus a salad. Sometimes the salad is a separate course and a choice is offered.

You may order a beverage with your main course, or, more commonly, with dessert. Again you order dessert separately at the end of the main course. Maybe by now the honey dew melon sounds better than the fluffy meringue pastry.

A La Carte
In simple words this means according to the card. Be careful when ordering a la carte, and don't get carried away with the separate items and their separate prices. Just remember that a la carte servings are much larger than on the table d'hote listings. On the other hand, don't order eclairs and coffee with an air of martyrdom when he's invited you out for dinner. So always play safe by deciding on just a few dishes—an entree, dessert and beverage; or soup, salad, dessert and beverage; or entree, salad and beverage.

If your host has had lots of experience in "dining out," he may mention some particular dish or food that happens to be famous at this particular restaurant. You may agree or sweetly veto his suggestion and order something else. To do this ordering correctly, you give your a la carte order to your host who relays the message to the waiter. Don't worry about the fact that the waiter probably heard you the first time!

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vegetable, salad or relishes, bread, dessert and beverage are the basis of your plans. Here's a menu to start you thinking:

Club Chicken Casserole
Cranberry-jelly Hearts
Buttered Peas and Mushrooms
Relish Tray Poppy-seed Rolls
Strawberry Shortcake
Coffee

Your choice of dessert depends upon your method of serving it. You may have it on the table with the rest of the food, serve the dessert individually after the main course or have everyone return to the serving table after the main course has been cleared. For after-dinner munching, serve nuts and candy hearts.

A few games will add to the fun. For the "Honeymoon Race" couples compete against the clock. The girls are given red crepe paper neckties and the men red and white aprons and two large cardboard hearts.

When the signal is given, the girl ties her necktie windsor fashion around his neck and he ties the apron around her waist. When both are dressed for their honeymoon, the gentleman escorts his bride to the other end of the room, but to save her dainty feet, he moves the heart ahead one at a time and the girl steps on them. At the finish line, the bride removes her husband's tie, and the groom the girl's apron.

Almost any game, from relays to charades, can be given a Valentine's twist. Probably you'll want to do some dancing, too.

Make careful plans and everyone, especially each hostess, will have a good time. For best results, why not keep the informal buffet a surprise from your dates? They'll be sure to be pleased with this special evening.

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