

# Dinner for dummies

No matter what kind of Valentine's Day you have planned, we know what to serve

OUR EXPERTS	FIRST DATE Simple and straightforward	GETTING SERIOUS Expensive and impressive	REKINDLING THE FLAME A twist for the long-haulers
<b>CHEESE:</b> Max McCalman, Dean of Curriculum for <a href="http://artisanalcheese.com">artisanalcheese.com</a> and author of "The Cheese Plate"	<b>Cheese:</b> Comte. "You don't know your date, her or his tastes, and it's tremendously satisfying. It's hard to go wrong with it."	<b>Cheese:</b> Carles Roquefort. "I have sometimes said about a good Roquefort — particularly Carles — the only thing left is sex. It's perhaps the end-all of <u>cheese</u> ."	<b>Cheese:</b> Eplisses. "Cow's milk, from France. It's tangy, aromatic, a tiny bit salty. ... A lot of umami."
<b>DINNER:</b> Paul Sale, chef of Blue Fin restaurant	<b>Dinner:</b> Sale recommends a homemade lasagna. "You can do all the preparation ahead of time. It's easy and gives you plenty of time to get to know each other."	<b>Dinner:</b> Serious = steak. "A nice big one from a well-known butcher, cooked by yourself. Make it medium-rare with a béarnaise sauce and a twice-baked potato with truffle."	<b>Dinner:</b> Get interactive. "Shellfish or lobster — it is very impressive and can be fun when dipping the lobster in drawn butter with each other."
<b>WINE:</b> Tom Geniesse, owner of Bottlerocket Wine and Spirits in Manhattan	<b>Wine:</b> Georges Gardet, Brut NV Champagne, \$29. "A Champagne that doesn't break the bank. Who cares if bubbly is a cliché? It's fun and sexy."	<b>Wine:</b> Bodegas El Nido, El Nido 2005 (\$155). "Full-throttle, powerful, intense and delicious. You may forget your date's name, but you'll never forget El Nido."	<b>Wine:</b> Dobogo, Tokaji Aszu "6 Puttonyos" 2000 (\$89). "A heavenly, honeyed nectar of a dessert wine. Perfect for curling up together by a fire."
<b>CHOCOLATE:</b> Shimme, Bakery Director for Northeast Region of Whole Foods Markets and Kara Rubin from Whole Foods Market	<b>Chocolate:</b> Shimme goes for chocolate-dipped strawberries (\$20 for 12 in a rose container). "You can never go wrong with this classic ... more satisfying alternative to the old dozen roses."	<b>Chocolate:</b> Rubin recommends the Nirvana Chocolate Tasting Flight (\$20). "[It's] for the couple that is perhaps ready to take it to the next level ... this is a selection of chocolates that will help make a memory."	<b>Chocolate:</b> Rubin likes Ficoco, a dessert sauce (\$6). "Figs and cocoa are two indulgences that have been around for centuries, combined in this sensuous sauce."

