



EVANS CAGLAGE/Staff Photographer

A menu to pamper your sweetheart

TAKE-HOME MIRACLES



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If you believe meat and potatoes are the way to a man's heart, try this simple meal for Valentine's Day. The dessert, potatoes and red wine sauce are take-home miracles needing only a few enhancements. The veal chops are seared in a sauté pan and finished in the oven. In the photo, I added quick spinach sauté to the plate. However, you could skip the vegetable and start the meal with an iceberg wedge with ranch dressing and crumbled blue cheese.

I made the meal with Tulip Street Bakery cream puffs from Wal-Mart, and Signature Café scalloped potatoes from Tom Thumb. If not in stock, use their prepared mashed potatoes instead, and top them the same way.

Whole Foods Market usually has veal chops in the meat case, or you can order them before shopping. While not inexpensive, the cost is significantly less than restaurant menus. Serve a chilled sparkling wine or pinot noir with the veal.

Anne Greer McCann is a Dallas restaurant consultant.

For the dessert: Remove 6 to 8 cream puffs from the package. Thaw in the refrigerator for 15 to 20 minutes. Place $\frac{1}{4}$ cup caramel sauce in the microwave for 10 to 15 seconds on High (100 percent power) so it is easier to pour. Coat 2 dessert plates with the sauces and set aside until you are ready to serve the dessert.

For the potatoes: An hour ahead of serving time, top 1 (12-ounce) container Signature Café Scalloped potatoes with 2 tablespoons of pre-cooked bacon bits, 3 tablespoons of grated, smoked Gouda cheese and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sliced scallion tops. Sprinkle 8 crushed, ranch-flavored potato chips on top. Set aside.

Place potatoes in the oven during the last 15 to 20 minutes of cooking time for veal.

For the veal chops: Preheat the oven to 375 F. Combine 1 envelope McCormick's brown gravy mix with 1 cup water in a 2-cup measure and set aside. Put 2 tablespoons of olive oil and 1 tablespoon of butter in a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Trim excess fat from 2 (1- to 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch) rib veal chops and season with salt and pepper. When the oil is hot, sear the chops on both sides until browned, about 5 to 6 minutes. Transfer meat to a baking dish and place in the oven to finish cooking. Allow 20 minutes for 1-inch chops, 25 to 30 minutes for 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch chops. Cover and let rest 5 minutes.

Pour $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of red wine into the sauté pan over medium-high heat to deglaze. Using a wooden spoon, scrape up all the browned bits and simmer a few minutes. Add the brown-gravy mixture and stir until smooth and thickened. Reduce heat to low and keep warm until ready to serve.

To serve: If serving a salad, do so while the meat finishes in the oven.

Put potatoes and veal chops on warm plates and drizzle with the sauce. If serving a vegetable, put it on the plate.

After dinner, put cream puffs on coated plates and serve.