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## Sexy cookbooks provide recipes for a hot meal

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By Gretchen McKay Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Sex and food have been intertwined ever since the first man got evicted from the Garden of Eden, just for accepting an afternoon snack from a naked woman.

Entire volumes have been written about the power of aphrodisiacs, those irresistible substances that many are convinced will make sex more pleasurable, not to mention easier to get. Lately, that includes a number of cookbooks offering recipes that incorporate the world's most sensual foods with the goal of . . . well, you know!

There are more such publications than you might think. I know this because I spent the last couple of weeks paging through more than a half-dozen e-books with steamy titles on my Kindle. One was so naughty, it included a parental advisory on the cover, along with a salmon recipe "guaranteed to get women in bed"; another paired recipes with racy poems and even racier pictures. Who knew a pair of apples photographed just so could be so sexy?

You might be intrigued, too. Especially today on Valentine's Day, when everybody's trying to figure out how to best express their love and desire.

Here's what I learned from the best of the lot, which include "The Better Sex Cookbook by Josephine De Lorme (Devaroux Media, \$8.95 Kindle edition)," "The Seduction Cookbook: Culinary Creations for Lovers" by Diane Brown (Innova, \$16.95), and the witty (but extremely dirty) "Lust-Have Recipes, A Cookbook: IN-Gredients for Stimulation" by C. Nzingha Smith (SNC2 INK Books, \$4.99 Kindle edition).

Chocolate and oysters are among the most famous of the so-called "love foods" said to get things cookin' in the kitchen and beyond -- the former because it causes the brain to release feel-good endorphins, and the latter because it's rich in zinc and iron (both of which have a positive affect on libido) and also because the bivalve mollusks resemble a certain body part. Men, after all, are visual creatures.

Other love-inducing arrows include asparagus, grapes, bananas, arugula, almonds, ginger and pumpkin, which supposedly is good for, ahem, blood flow.

I know -- this mother of five is blushing, too. (Mom, this is probably a good time for you to stop reading.)

Hot chile pepper, notes Amy Reiley in "Fork Me, Spoon Me: The Sensual Cookbook" (Life of Reiley, 2012, \$14.95 or \$8.35 Kindle edition), also is adored the world over for its unique ability to "make tongues tingle and lips plump." Ditto with saffron, used by the ancient Romans to scent the baths of aristocratic men and their female lovers and likewise favored by Cleopatra. The world's most expensive spice, it's still reputed to make men feel more frisky.

Actually, the list of sexy food varies, depending on the source and preferred form of stimulation. Are you looking to float your sweetheart's boat by offering food with an evocative color or shape? Try strawberries, avocados or figs. If you'd rather tantalize with scent, vanilla is said to drive men crazy.

Or perhaps the goal is stamina. Load up on wheat germ or pine nuts before your next hot date. (Dad, I hope you *also* stopped reading.)

Like the U.S. Food & Drug Administration, I'm not so sure about the science behind aphrodisiacs. But as a happily married woman, I do know a thing or two about the mood-setting power of a good home-cooked meal, and the love it expresses. So I was happy to add some new "sexy" recipes to my repertoire, if only to show I'm still kind of crazy about that guy I met at a Penn State frat party so many years ago.

Seduction is an equal opportunity pursuit, so several of the books, including the "Better Sex Recipe Book" by JCS Publishing (99 cents, Kindle edition) include naughty-named cocktails (in the mood for a Sex on the Beach, anyone?) and/or recipes for tension-relaxing body massage oils. There's also a tome for those who don't eat meat or dairy, and it's by a local: "Vegan Chocolate Seduction: 23 Orgasmic Recipes" by Pittsburgh life coach Dave Wheatner.

I was most intrigued by "The New Intercourses: An Aphrodisiac Cookbook" by Martha Hopkins and Randall Lockridge (Terrance, \$29.95). With more than 135 recipes organized around 19 sensual foods, many of them gourmet and tested by actual couples, it seemed like a book any aspiring chef would be happy to have on her shelf, even if she had to cover it with brown paper. I, of course, was too cheap to shell out 30 bucks for a hard copy when all the others cost as little as 99 cents as e-books. (It's not available on Kindle.) But I was able to "Look Inside!" and preview a few recipes on Amazon, and there's also a couple great-sounding recipes posted on the book's website, [intercourses.com](http://intercourses.com).

There was really only one disappointment in the bunch: The "Better Than Sex Cookbook" by Terra Lee and D.J. Jones (Hot Buttered Books, Kindle edition 99 cents), which despite its titillating name proved anything but. Trust me: Its 36 ho-hum recipes have absolutely, positively nothing to do with sex, unless your goal is to not have it.

Then again, love is a funny thing. Maybe dishes such as Cheesy Peas, Microwaved Corn on the Cob and Mac & Cheese made with Velveeta are exactly what the Love Doctor ordered.

### **Fantasy Island: Stuffed Strawberries**

*PG tested*

*"Strawberries are the perfect food for hand-feeding your lover," notes C. Nzingha Smith. They're also shaped like perfect little red hearts.*

- 1 pint fresh strawberries
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 graham cracker, crumbled
- Parsley, for garnish

**Slice** the stem off each strawberry and stand upright on platter. Criss-cross cut berries deep enough to fill but not enough to break.

**Slightly** squeeze the strawberry to create opening for filling.

**In** small bowl, combine cream cheese, powdered sugar and extract and mix until smooth. Place filling in a piping bag with a round tip. Fill strawberries completely to the top with mixture. Sprinkle with crumbled graham cracker.

**Cover** and refrigerate until ready to serve, using parsley as a garnish for an island feel.

**Serves** 2 to 4.

-- *"Lust-Have Recipes, A Cookbook: IN-Gredients for Stimulation"* by C. Nzingha Smith (SNC2 INK Books, 2011, \$4.99 Kindle version)

## **Broccoli in orange chili oil**

*PG tested*

*Zesty and provocative.*

- 1 tablespoon orange juice
- 1/2 teaspoon sesame oil
- 1/2 teaspoon orange zest
- 1 clove garlic, thinly sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- Pinch Chinese five powder spice
- Pinch crushed red pepper

1/2 pound fresh broccoli, cleaned, stems removed

**Mix** together all ingredients except broccoli in a saute pan. Over medium heat, simmer until reduced and slightly syrupy, about 3 minutes.

**Steam** broccoli for 5 minutes. Place in serving dish and spoon orange chili oil over it, and serve.

**Serves** 2.

-- *"The Seduction Cookbook: Culinary Creations for Lovers"* by Diane Brown (Innova, \$16.95)

## Vanilla-Scented Sea Bass with a Red Hot Rub

*"The sensual experience of this aromatic dish begins in the kitchen," writes Amy Reiley in "Fork Me, Spoon Me." "Keep your lover close at hand as you simmer the vanilla-scented sauce, for the aroma alone of a fine vanilla bean is a known sexual stimulant."*

*Our fillets from Whole Foods were super-thick, so I ended up cooking them a bit longer. You can find ancho chile powder at Reyna Foods in the Strip District.*

- 2 4-ounce sea bass fillets, skin on
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon ancho chile powder
- 3 cups fish stock
- 1 whole vanilla bean, split
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 1/2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 3 tablespoons salted butter
- Fresh tarragon, for garnish

**Season** fish with salt and pepper. Turn skin side up, and using a sharp knife, score fish lengthwise about 5 times per piece. With firm pressure, massage chile powder into the scores. Reserve covered in refrigerator.

**In** a sauce pot, bring fish stock to a simmer then reduce heat. Scrape vanilla from split pod into the stock; add vanilla extract and two halves of your vanilla pod. Simmer until liquid is reduced by half. Allow sauce to cool, then remove pods and strain sauce through fine strainer.

**Preheat** oven to 400 degrees.

**In** a saute pan, heat oil, thoroughly coating bottom on pan. Over medium heat, add fish, skin side down, and cook for 4 or 5 minutes, until skin is a delicious caramel color. Flip the fillets and sear on flesh side to lock in juices, about 1 minute.

**Remove** from pan and transfer to oven to finish cooking, 4 to 5 minutes.

**To finish**, reheat the vanilla-scented stock and slowly add cream, making sure it does not boil. Using a hand-held mixer or whisk, add in the butter. Sauce will begin to foam. Serve sauce warm and foamy over baked fillets, garnished with fresh tarragon.

**Serves 2.**

-- *"Fork Me, Spoon Me"* by Amy Reiley (*Life of Reiley*, 2012, \$14.95/\$8.35 Kindle edition)

## **Honey Drop Shooter**

*PG tested*

*"This sinful shooter begins with a touch of spice on the lips, a bite of citrus on the tongue, and finishes with a sweet coating of honey," Amy Reiley writes in "Fork Me, Spoon Me." Unfortunately, she didn't include exact measurements so I had to guess.*

- 1 to 2 teaspoons crushed red pepper
- 1 to 2 teaspoons salt
- Honey
- 1 ounce vodka
- Fresh lime juice

**Mix** chile and salt in a shallow dish. Dip rim of shot glass in honey, then dip in chile-salt mixture.

**Pour** vodka and a dash of lime juice into shot glass. Top with a drop of honey.

**Makes** 1 shooter.

-- "*Fork Me, Spoon Me*" by Amy Reiley (*Life of Reiley*, 2012, \$14.95/\$8.35 Kindle edition)

## Hot Chocolate Waffles

*PG tested*

*Evil me: I didn't tell the kids these were vegan (or from this cookbook) because then they wouldn't have touched them. Let's just say there were a hit.*

*Warm and chocolaty, the waffles make just as good a dessert as a breakfast in bed.*

- 1 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup wheat flour
- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- 1 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne
- 2 1/4 cup soy or other non-dairy milk (I used almond milk)
- 3/4 cup canola oil
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup molasses

- 1 teaspoon vanilla

**Combine** flours, cocoa powder, baking powder, baking soda, salt, chili powder and cayenne in a large bowl. Stir with whisk to break up any clumps.

Thoroughly mix soy milk, oil, sugar, molasses and vanilla in a small bowl.

**Pour** into flour mixture and stir just until blended.

**Preheat** waffle iron for 3 to 5 minutes and spray both grids with oil. Pour or ladle batter into the center of the iron, covering no more than two-thirds of the iron surface for the first waffle. Adjust the amount as needed for subsequent waffles. Bake each waffle for 3 to 4 minutes, until it is still moist but can be easily removed.

**Makes** 5 to 6 7-inch waffles.

-- *"Vegan Chocolate Seduction: 23 Orgasmic Recipes" by Dave Wheatner (Divergent Drummer, 2011, \$1.99 Kindle edition)*

## Fresh Apple Slices with Homemade Caramel

*PG tested*

*Here's something I'll bet you probably didn't know: In medieval Germany, apples were thought to excite amorous advances if soaked in the perspiration of a loved woman. I'd rather pair my Granny Smiths with a warm, buttery caramel, and so would Diane Brown, who includes this recipe in "The Seduction Cookbook: Culinary Creations for Lovers."*

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3/4 cup heavy cream
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
- 2 green apples, cored and cut into slices

**Combine** sugar and 1/4 cup water in a small saucepan. Cook, without stirring, over medium heat until boiling. When sugar just begins to brown, swirl pan; cook until dark amber.

**Remove** from heat and slowly add cream, stirring with a wooden spoon. Add butter and lemon juice and stir to combine. Serve immediately with apples for dipping. You also can store caramel in the refrigerator; rewarm before serving.

**Makes** 1 cup caramel sauce.

-- *"The Seduction Cookbook: Culinary Creations for Lovers"* by Diane Brown (Innova, \$16.95)