

COCOA AVOCADO PUDDING

recipe and photography by Laurenda Bennet



This recipe is gluten free, dairy free, vegetarian, and paleo. Visit laurendamarie.com for more recipes.

February can mean a time of indulging with your loved ones. You know; boxed chocolates, sugar laden cakes and pies, and colored candy hearts to name a few.

If you're searching for that perfect treat that's sweetly satisfying yet light on the guilt, this chocolate avocado pudding is a perfect pick. Imagine a rich, creamy, chocolaty dessert that's chock full of amazing health benefits. How is this possible? By adding a banana and avocado, of course! The avocado provides a creamy, smooth texture, and because it's extremely mild in flavor, the sweetness of the banana and chocolate become the prominent flavors. I ensure you no one will even notice there is avocado in this decadent treat.

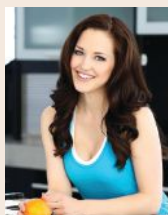
COCOA AVOCADO PUDDING

makes two servings

- 1 ripe avocado
- 1 ripe banana
- 1/4 cup cocoa powder
- 1/4 cup coconut palm sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons coconut milk
- Chocolate shavings, fresh fruit, and nuts for topping

Add all ingredients to a food processor and blend until smooth. For a thinner consistency, add more coconut milk. Chill in fridge an hour before serving. Enjoy plain, or top with fresh berries and chopped nuts for an extra nutritional punch.

*Laurenda resides in GR with her husband Daniel and their son Sawyer. She is a health food writer for LaurendaMarie.com, a *Younique* presenter, and a lifestyle and portrait photographer.*



The VALEN-PRIME MOVIES OF FEBRUARY

We asked our Facebook fans to give us the best lovey-dovey movie suggestions to place in this month's edition.

Exploding with film favorites covering all genres and love levels, our comment section concludes that, when it comes to romance, you can't go wrong with Nicolas Spark's *The Notebook*. Our readers have spoken and their replies aided in creating the Valen-prime movie list for the month of February. Use it for inspiration when figuring out what to watch as you curl up with your date (or your cat) for a cozy evening.

THE WINNER

THE NOTEBOOK (2004)

Who hasn't seen and cried to *The Notebook* other than our publisher, Victoria Upton who said, "What's that?"

The story of a poor and passionate man (Ryan Gosling) falling in love with a rich, young woman (Rachel McAdams) is no original screenplay, but the film has you attached to the characters and rooting for their love as social differences threaten to destroy it. Hold on to your heart as you're taken through the years of their love story and tragedies documented in a series of journal entries read by James Garner.



RUNNER-UPS

DIRTY DANCING (1987)

Take a seat to a classic romance as a young woman (Jennifer Grey) falls in love with a dance instructor (Patrick Swayze) whom she encounters during her family's summer vacation. If the storyline doesn't keep your attention, the choreography will.

YOU'VE GOT MAIL (1998)

Staring some of the best chemistry you'll ever see on screen, Meg Ryan and Tom Hanks remind audiences of the forgotten romance in early email communication and the sexy anonymity of the Internet. These two business rivals spend the day hating each other while, unknowingly, falling in love online.

CHOCOLAT (2000)

Whether you're drooling over the featured chocolate or Johnny Depp, how could you not want to see this movie during this month bursting with love and crushes? A woman and her daughter open a small chocolate shop just as the villagers are beginning the forty days of Lent.

Other delightful suggestions include comedies like *Pretty Woman*, *The Proposal*, *When Harry Met Sally* and *Hitch*; dramas like *The Time Traveler's Wife*, *P.S. I Love You*, and *Atonement*; novel to film romances like *Sense & Sensibility* and *Gone With the Wind*; And that-just-makes-me-feel-gleeful-inside movies like *Serendipity* and *Love Actually*.

We will be selecting one of the participants at random to receive a basket of chocolates for Valentine's Day! Thank you readers for your help. Be sure to "like" us on Facebook to join the conversation.

