

### **Menu Planning for February 2016**

Valentine's Day is the second busiest restaurant day of the year and it's on a Sunday this year. The middle of the month provides an opportunity for lots of guest visits - Valentine's Day on Sunday Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> (also International Condom Day!) leading into the President's Day weekend with Monday, February 15<sup>th</sup> as a national holiday.

#### **Plan for February:**

Full Moon February 22<sup>nd</sup>: called the Snow Moon or the Hunger Moon

- February 2<sup>nd</sup> – Groundhog Day
- February 7<sup>th</sup> – Super Bowl Sunday
- February 8<sup>th</sup> – Chinese New Year commences, year of the Monkey
- February 9<sup>th</sup> – Mardi Gras
- February 10<sup>th</sup> – Ash Wednesday
- February 14<sup>th</sup> – St. Valentine's Day (a Sunday)
- February 15<sup>th</sup> – President's Day (Monday)
- National Grapefruit Month
- Black History Month

#### **Plan ahead for March:**

Full Moon on March 23<sup>rd</sup> is called the Worm Moon,  
 Full Crust Moon, Full Sap Moon and Lenten Moon.

- March 3<sup>rd</sup> – Peach Blossom Day
- March 11<sup>th</sup> – Johnny Appleseed Day
- March 13<sup>th</sup> – Daylight Savings time – Spring forward an hour for more evening sun!
- March 15<sup>th</sup> – Ides of March
- March 17<sup>th</sup> – St. Patrick's Day
- March 20<sup>th</sup> – First Day of Spring, Palm Sunday
- March 23 -24<sup>th</sup> – Purim
- March 25<sup>th</sup> – Good Friday
- March 27<sup>th</sup> - Easter
- National Nutrition Month

**February is a short month launched with Groundhog Day and then the Super Bowl and Chinese New Year.**

**All of this followed by a three day weekend that celebrates Valentine's Day and President's Day.** In the depths of winter for most parts of the nation, it's fun to think about celebrating the inevitable return of Spring, so two of the month's holidays are great for this theme: Groundhog day (if he doesn't see his shadow it's an early spring); and President's Day weekend are usually linked with spring themes. Valentine's Day is when lovers may chose to ignite or renew their passion - but that's addressed on page two.

Starting the month's celebrations are Groundhog Day on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and the Super Bowl on February 7<sup>th</sup>. Super Bowl gatherings are renowned for simple but delicious foods: guacamole, chips, chile and other comfort foods. Prepare your menu ahead of time so you can root for your favorite team without having to worry about your guests! How can you change up the menu to be creative and not get stuck with avocados....? If you're making guacamole for the big game, be sure to buy your avocados ahead of time so they can ripen in time for the Super Bowl gathering. Think about adding fingerlimes to this year's guacamole... or put them into Coronas!

At the Chinese New Year (starts February 8<sup>th</sup>), serving a whole chicken symbolizes family togetherness. Noodles represent a long life (an old superstition says that it's bad luck to cut them); clams and spring rolls symbolize wealth. Tangerines and oranges are freely shared during Chinese New Year as the words for tangerine and orange sound like the Chinese words for luck and wealth, respectively. And Pomelos signify abundance because the Chinese word for pomelo sounds like the word meaning "to have". On Chinese New Year's Eve it is customary to serve a fish at the end of the evening meal, symbolizing a wish for abundance in the coming year. For added symbolism, the fish is served whole, with head and tail attached, symbolizing a good beginning and ending for the coming year.

For Mardi Gras (February 9<sup>th</sup>), Rex, the King of Carnival, selected the Mardi Gras colors in 1892 and assigned meaning to the three of them: purple for justice, green for faith, and gold for power. Mardi Gras foods are a wonderful part of the culture and no Mardi Gras celebration is complete without a King Cake, also known as Twelfth Night Cake. This cake is actually sweetened yeast bread baked in a ring shape. The cake is frosted with gold, green, and purple icing. Although this cake is colorful and tasty, the real fun hides within the cake as the baker of each King Cake has hidden a special token inside. The token is a dried red bean or a figurine of a baby, representing the Christ child. When the cake is cut and shared, the finder of the hidden treasure is said to enjoy good luck for the coming year. The lucky recipient may also be expected to bake the King Cake or throw the Mardi Gras party for the following year!

St. Valentine's Day (Saturday February 14<sup>th</sup>) has its own array of special foods and aphrodisiacs, you choose your favorite:

**Asparagus**: three courses of asparagus were served to 19th century bridegrooms because of the reputed aphrodisiac powers of the vegetable.

**Banana**: Lauded not only for the fruit's shape, but also for its creamy, lush texture; some studies allege that its enzyme bromelain enhances male performance.

**Caviar**: is high in zinc, which stimulates the formation of testosterone, maintaining male functionality.

**Champagne**: viewed as the "drink of love," moderate quantities are said to lower inhibitions and cause a warm glow in the body.

**Chocolate**: contains a sedative which relaxes and lowers inhibitions and a stimulant to increase activity and the desire for physical contact. It was actually banned from some monasteries centuries ago.

**Figs**: seasonal crops were celebrated by ancient Greeks in a frenzied copulation ritual.

**Ginseng**: increases desire for physical contact.

**Oysters**: Some oysters repeatedly change their sex from male to female and back, giving rise to claims that the oyster lets one experience both the masculine and feminine sides of love.

**Radish**: considered a divine aphrodisiac by Egyptian pharaohs, most likely because its spicy taste stimulated the palate.

**Truffles**: probably due to their rarity and musky aroma, long considered to arouse the palate and the body. To sustain his masculinity, an ancient lover in lore was said to have gorged himself to death on Alba truffles during his wedding feast.

\*\*\* Coosemans Shipping can also provide fresh edible flowers, orchids, truffles, microgreens and garnishes for Valentine's Day. Coosemans Shipping can source fresh truffles – a pre-order is required. Traditional citrus varieties for Chinese New Year is in season and available.

Remember that the items in **BOLD** will prove to usually be better values as they are in their peak harvest or storage period.

**Apples**

**Artichokes**

**Asparagus**

**Avocados – Calif. new**

**Avocados - Chile**

Bananas

Beans – Chinese Long

Beans - Dragon

Beans - Fava

Beans - French

Beans - Green

Beans – Purple Wax

Beans – Yellow Wax

Beets

Bok Choy, Baby

Broccoli

Broccoli Rabe

Broccolini

**Brussels Sprouts**

Cabbage, green

Cabbage, red

Cactus Leaves

**Cantaloupe - Offshore**

**Cape Gooseberry**

**Cardoon**

**Carrots, Baby w/ Tops**

Cauliflower

Celery

Celery Root

**Chayote Squash**

Cherimoya

Chicories

**Citrus – Blood Oranges**

**Citrus – Cara Cara**

**Citrus - Grapefruit**

**Citrus – Kumquats**

**Citrus – Meyer Lemon**

**Citrus - Navel orange**

**Citrus – Oroblanco**

**Citrus - Pomelo**

Corn

Dragonfruit, white

Endive, Belgian, red

English Peas

**Fennel**

**Garlic Greens**

**Ginger**

**Grapes - Chile**

**Greens, winter**

Hearts of Palm

**Honeydew - Offshore**

Horseradish

Jicama

**Kale**

**Kiwifruit**

**Kohl Rabi (Green & Purple)**

Leeks

Lettuce – Leaf

Lettuce - Spring Mix

Lettuce –Iceberg

Lettuce-Baby (all)

**Mangoes - Brazil**

**Melon, Kiwano**

Mushrooms - Chanterelle

Mushrooms - Hedgehog

Mushrooms – Porcini

Mushrooms – Truffles

Mushrooms - Woodear

Napa Cabbage

**Nectarines - Chile**

**Onions – Spring Sweet**

Papaya

**Parsnips**

**Passionfruit**

**Peaches - Chile**

Pearl Onions

Pears - Winter

Peas

Peppers - Chile

**Peppers, Bell – Green**

**Peppers, Bell – Red and Gold**

Pineapple

Plums - Chile

**Potatoes – Fingerling**

**Potatoes – Purple**

**Potatoes – Red**

**Potatoes - Russet**

**Potatoes – Yukon Gold**

**Potatoes-White**

Radicchio

Radishes

**Rhubarb**

**Root Vegetables, Baby**

**Rutabagas**

Shallots

Sno Peas

Spinach

Spinach - Baby

Squash – Hard Winter

Squash – Yellow Crookneck

Squash – Zucchini

Squash, summer, baby

**Star Fruit**

**Strawberries**

Sugar Snap Peas

**Sunchokes**

Sweet Potatoes

**Tangelos**

**Tangerines**

Tomatoes

**Turnips**