



MADE TO ORDER II

After the highly successful first season, *Made to Order II* proves to be the show for true foodies. Guy and Michael Rubino of the acclaimed restaurant, Rain, in Canada, take you on a gastro-

nomical journey. This season will educate viewers on the elements involved in authentic haute couture dining. Peppered with healthy doses of black humour, the Rubinos' honest passion makes this an original take on food and life. Watch for episodes like "The Apprentice" and "Cooking Class", for a real look at what goes on behind Rain's stylish restaurant doors. *Every Thursday, 8.30pm, Discovery Travel & Living (Starhub Cable Channel 16)*



KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL

You don't have to resort to takeaway and a bottle of vino when entertaining her in your pad. Charlene Fang clues you in on just how to entertain like a pro

Any guy worth his Lay-Z Boy knows that inviting a woman over for a home-cooked meal is one sure way of earning brownie points—if you pull it off right. The good news is, culinary skills are attainable in 24 hours. Set your personal expectations on low and keep it simple.

GETTING STARTED

First, observe protocol. You don't want her to think you're trying to seduce her—which you probably are, but that's another story altogether. Second, make sure your plan of action is one she'll be comfortable with. So, everything from the menu, to the choice of music, the lighting, the decor, needs to be carefully thought out in detail. Finally, the overall presentation has to be aesthetically pleasing, impressive, comfortable and not intimidating.

THE BARE MINIMUM

Should your invitation be a spontaneous one, post-partying at Zouk, for instance, you'll do well to always have a few staple items lying around the house. Author P.J. O'Rourke, in his book *The Bachelor Home Companion* (Picador), has the perfect clueless bachelor solution: "Add the contents of your refrigerator to two eggs and cook until everything stops wiggling." Bear in mind that beer, whisky and mixed nuts don't make an omelette.

INDIAN MASALA OMELETTE

A terrific-tasting omelette that takes little time, effort or skill.

Serves two

INGREDIENTS

- 4 large eggs
- 2 tsp onion, finely chopped
- 2 tsp tomato, finely chopped
- 2 tsp green chilli, finely chopped
- 2 tsp coriander leaves, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Vegetable oil, to glaze the pan

METHOD

1. Break eggs in a bowl and whisk thoroughly with salt and pepper.
2. Heat a little oil in a pan and fry the onion, tomato, chilli and coriander.
3. Beat eggs and cook till the omelette has set.
4. Fold in half and serve.

SETTING THE SCENE

In dating, ambience is of utmost importance. Michael Rubino, host of *Made to Order*, a food programme on Discovery Travel & Living and co-owner of Rain Restaurant in Toronto, Canada, advises: "When entertaining and trying to impress someone, attention to detail is the most important. Demonstrate that you have gone the extra mile to make the experience a memorable occasion. Having a fun and playful attitude can go a long way to impress someone. Try not to spend a lot of money. Instead, be more creative. That will impress anyone."

The little details will show how you've made an effort just for her. For instance, matching cutlery, plates with a unique design motif, tea lights strategically placed around the room or even burning incense to scent the room. And of course, don't forget the music. Throw on some Maxwell, Alicia Keys or Miles Davis ballads for a chilled out vibe.

SOLUTIONS FOR ALL OCCASIONS

For the adventurous male daring to venture into a full-blown dinner comprising of several dishes, the key to an unforgettable dining experience lies in building up a symphony of flavours. "When creating dishes, think about polarities—something soft with something crunchy. Something sweet with something sour. It's all about finding the perfect balance," says Guy Rubino, co-host of *Made to Order*, executive chef and co-owner of Rain Restaurant. After all, a meal is a sensuous experience involving sight, smell, taste and touch, so use it to entice, excite and enrapture. Women get it. You should, too.

GOURMET INGREDIENTS

While it's tempting to use expensive ingredients to impress your date, restrain yourself and think ahead: what do you plan to do with them? Guy Rubino suggests a less-is-more approach, if anything, this ensures you won't blow your budget. "Let the ingredient's delicate flavour do all of the work. With truffles, shave a small portion on a pasta dish or risotto just before serving. With caviar, serve with champagne or a Bellini. Porcini mushrooms are delicious when braised slowly. Just keep it simple!"

PASTA WITH WHITE TRUFFLES

For the gourmet, truffles are akin to a religious experience. The mere whiff of a truffle's musky aroma has been known to drive both men and women wild. Keep in mind, white truffle season is from end September to December.

Serves six

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 packet angel hair pasta
- 2 tsp fresh basil, julienned
- Salt and white pepper to taste
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated
- 28g fresh white truffles

METHOD

1. In a large pot, fill it 3/4 full with lightly salted water and bring to a boil. Add three tablespoons olive oil and bring pasta to a boil for no more than two minutes. Drain well.
2. Toss the pasta with the cup of olive oil, half the basil, and salt and pepper to taste.
3. Serve pasta with a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese.
4. Shave the truffle over each serving.
5. Garnish with remaining basil.
6. Adjust ingredient measurements to taste.

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LIQUID TEMPTATIONS

If she has agreed to come back to your place for a nightcap, you'll do well not to jinx the final leg of the journey. Rather, step up to the plate and go all out—not too obviously, of course—and continue to charm her. Take your cue from the current bar trend of designer martinis and offer your date a little concoction, all your own.

RAINFALL MARTINI

Cocktails are always popular with women, and this one will surely help sweeten the deal.

Serves one

INGREDIENTS

- 30ml raspberry vodka
- 30ml vodka
- 7.5ml triple sec
- 90ml fresh raspberry juice
- 90ml fresh pineapple juice
- 30ml prosecco (Italian sparkling wine) or champagne
- 30ml fresh lime juice
- Fresh cranberries to garnish

METHOD

1. Build the cocktail by adding all ingredients over ice in a cocktail shaker.
2. Shake for 20 seconds and pour into a martini glass.
3. Garnish with fresh cranberries.

THE MORNING AFTER

If your date has stretched beyond sunrise, congratulations are in order. But before you get carried away, it's time to feed her. There's nothing more impressive than a man serving breakfast in bed. It shows thought and sensitivity at your end and proves that you're a gentleman who has her well-being in mind.

GRANDMOTHER'S EGGS

Said to ensure the virility of a male and the fertility of a female, you might find her hunger fulfilled ... but not her lust.

Serves two

INGREDIENTS

- 4 egg yolks
- 4 tbsp caster sugar
- 4 tbsp marsala wine

METHOD

1. Whisk egg yolks and sugar together till you have a gold, creamy froth.
2. Add in the marsala.
3. Put it in a huge bowl with one spoon and share it.

RECIPE COURTESY OF RAIN RESTAURANT, 19 MICKER STREET, TORONTO.

RECIPE COURTESY OF EAT ME (HAWKER CUISINE)