

# VALENTINE DESSERTS

# bon appetit

EAT WELL / SAVOR LIFE

## BEST-EVER BROWNIES

WARNING: YOU WILL EAT THE ENTIRE TRAY

SLOW & LOW

## THE ULTIMATE WINTER COOKING TECHNIQUE

BRAISED LAMB SHANKS, SPICY THAI SPARERIBS & MORE  
P. 70

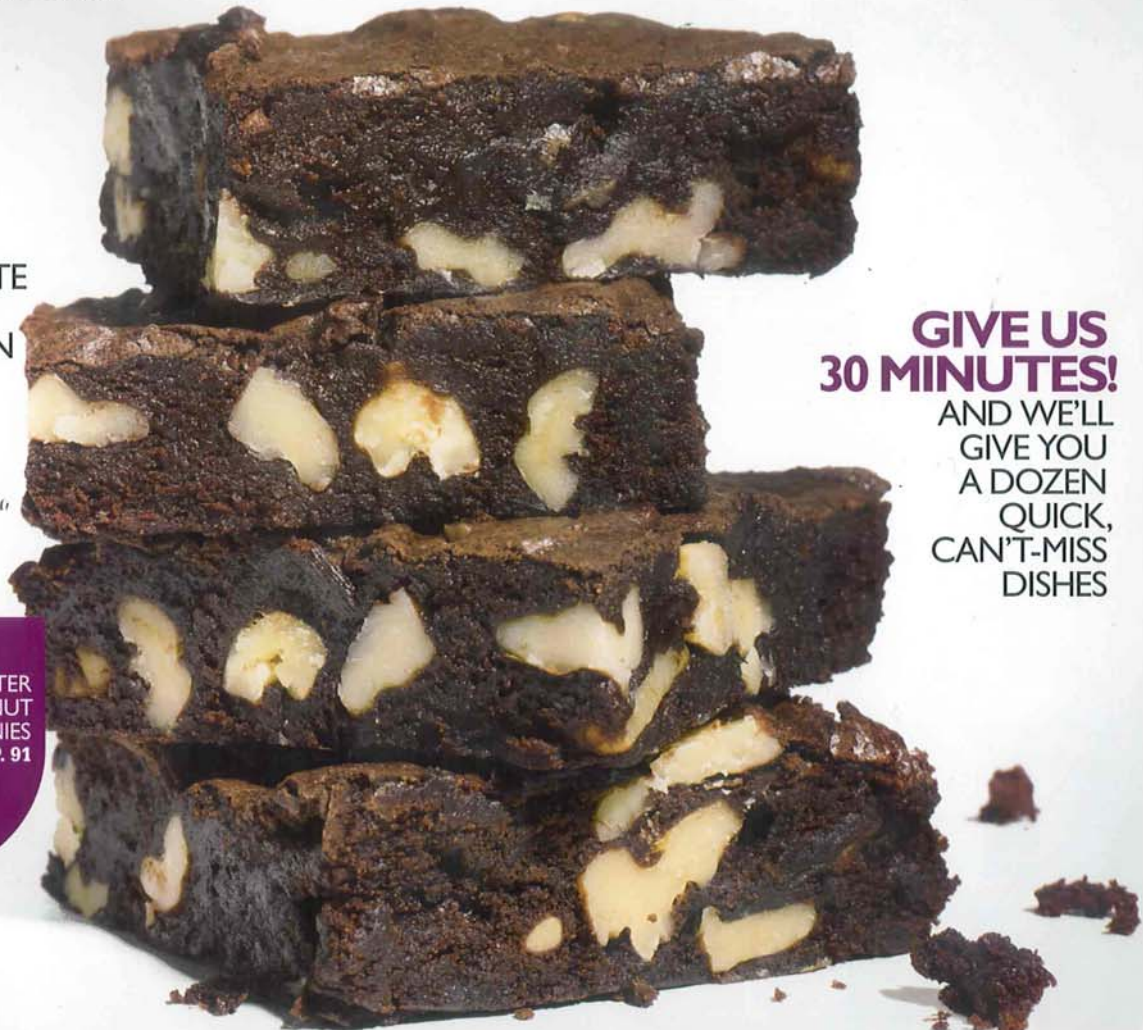
## SUPER BOWLS

OUR STATE-BY-STATE CHILI SMACKDOWN  
P. 60

## GIVE US 30 MINUTES!

AND WE'LL GIVE YOU A DOZEN QUICK, CAN'T-MISS DISHES

BROWN-BUTTER COCOA WALNUT BROWNIES  
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CRUNCH TIME

## FRESH IDEAS FOR CRISP, VIBRANT SALADS

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[editorial]



[The Reynolds Group Inc.] [www.thereynoldsgroupinc.com]



At Locanda Verde in New York: vanilla gelato, chocolate doughnuts, apple cider doughnuts, oatmeal cookie sandwiches, and Nero cookies.

**michael's genuine food & drink** MIAMI

Hedy Goldsmith's whimsical creations have made her a pastry star. Must order: chocolate-peanut butter candy bar with buttered popcorn ice cream. 130 NE 40th Street; 305-573-5550; michaelsgenuine.com

**miller union** ATLANTA

Lauren Raymond excels at creating unfussy southern-inspired desserts. Must order: "Almond Joy" ice cream sandwich. 999 Brady Avenue; 678-733-8550; millerunion.com

**aureole** LAS VEGAS

Some come to see the wine tower; we come for chef Megan Romano's towering desserts. Must order: brownie tart with salted caramel ice cream. Mandalay Bay Resort & Casino, 3950 Las Vegas Boulevard South; 702-632-7401; charliepalmer.com

**locanda verde** NEW YORK

Apple-cider doughnut, Nero cookie, fig bar—just a few of Karen DeMasco's treats. Must order: oatmeal cookie sandwich. 377 Greenwich Street; 212-925-3797; locandaverdenyc.com

**uchiko** AUSTIN, TEXAS

This Asian restaurant's offerings buck the green-tea-ice-cream trend. Must order: sweet corn sorbet with polenta custard. 4200 North Lamar Boulevard; 512-916-4808; uchiaustin.com

**mistralkitchen** SEATTLE

Neil Robertson's résumé—Joël Robuchon and Guy Savoy in Las Vegas—speaks for itself; but his true talents are better tasted. Must order: Ultra Brownie with peanut butter ice cream. 2020 Westlake Avenue; 206-623-1922; mistral-kitchen.com

**aziza** SAN FRANCISCO

Pastry chef Melissa Chou skillfully balances three diverse culinary traditions in her desserts—American, Chinese, and Moroccan. Must order: burnt vanilla ice cream with huckleberry, brioche French toast, and almond. 5800 Geary Boulevard; 415-752-2222; aziza-sf.com

**cyrus** HEALDSBURG, CALIFORNIA

The food at this wine-country favorite is seasonal, and so too are the desserts, courtesy of Nicole Plue. Must order: butterscotch sundae. 29 North Street; 707-433-3311; cyrusrestaurant.com

**birch & barley** WASHINGTON, D.C.

At this beer-themed restaurant, Tiffany MacIssac's menu of sweet treats reads like the 7-Eleven snack aisle of our dreams—"Hostess" cupcake, oatmeal cream pie, pudding pop. Must order: cashew "Snickers" bar. 1337 14th Street NW; 202-567-2576; birchandbarley.com

THE HOT 10

**waiter, there's an almond joy in my dessert**

At America's best restaurants, pastry chefs are reimagining dessert—with a mix of childhood nostalgia, whimsical creativity, and homey flavors. If Grandma went to cooking school, this is what she would make.

ANDREW KNOWLTON

I was never a dessert person. Instead of the sweet stuff, I opted for a cheese plate. Or bourbon. But lately I've been eyeing fellow diners' desserts. On the decline are silly molecular-gastronomy-inspired desserts. In their foam-filled places are the comfortingly familiar—hot sugar-dusted doughnuts, devil's food cake, and riffs on Snickers, Twix, and Reese's Peanut Butter Cups.

In short, the sweets of my youth are back as pastry chefs reinvent classic American treats. Why the shift away from froufrou stuff? The recession? Consumer demand for the familiar? American cuisine finally coming into its own? A financial analyst would say these seem thrifty. The sociologist would say nostalgic. The historian would credit the inventiveness of the chefs. The food lover wouldn't say anything—his mouth would be filled with dessert.

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