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If you're looking to spoil your loved one for Valentine's Day then why not treat them to a night out, rather than buying yet another box of chocolates?!

Whether you fancy soul music, a classic musical, or a fun tribute act, there's something for everyone – just check out page 6 to see what's happening in the local area. But if you prefer dogs to humans then head up to Crufts instead for a little bit of puppy love!

And if Valentine's Day will just pass you by, why not show your home some love instead? There's a wide range of local businesses and tradespeople in here who can help you improve your home, whether you need doors, driveways, or decorating...

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community events

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Soul & Motown Live Tribute

24 February, The Village Hotel Solihull

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Crufts

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Bootleg Bee Gees

25 March, Knowle British Legion

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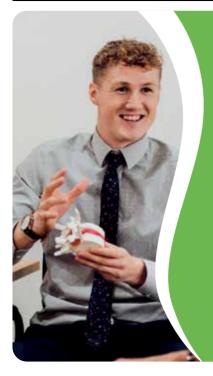






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The Food of Love

he way to a man's heart is through his stomach right? So I decided to cook up some culinary love magic for my boyfriend this Valentine's day, but what to choose?

He loves Japanese food so I consulted my Japanese food-loving friend Yui. She informed me that in Japan the puffer fish is considered to be a great delicacy and an aphrodisiac, but the kicker

is that it contains a poisonous gland so deadly it must be removed before eating! One mistake by the carefully trained chef and the food of love can become quite literally, a matter of life or death!

I thought a safer seafood option might be

the oyster. A favourite with the Romans some oysters are able to change sex repeatedly and so are said to give you the ability to experience the male and female sides of love. Yui cheerfully imparted the `fun fact'

that at least 12000 people a year in the UK develop food poisoning after consuming oysters, which kind of put me off a bit.

In the end I settled on making chocolate mousse. Dark chocolate contains both a relaxing sedative that

lowers inhibitions plus a stimulant to perk you up. My boyfriend is a chocoholic so I'm backing a winner and better still Yui didn't point out any pitfalls...because I didn't tell her what I was making! Happy Valentine's Day.



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Myths about next of kin

If a friend or family member has lost capacity due to illness or an accident, you'd expect their next of kin to automatically be able to help them with their finances and make decisions about their care – however, next of kin is not a legal term and this is not as easy as it sounds. Hannah Tait, partner at Shakespeare Martineau in Solihull explains the common misconceptions of managing the medical and financial needs of loved ones.

Can I make decisions on behalf of a family member?

Apart from in the special case of children, no individual has the ability to make decisions on behalf of another without first being legally appointed as their Attorney under a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) or as a court-appointed Deputy. Even married couples or those in civil partnerships are unable to make decisions for their spouse or partner without these authorities in place.

What is a Lasting Power of Attorney?

Your Attorneys are nominated individuals - such as a professional, family member or friend you appoint to make decisions relating to your financial affairs as well as your personal health and welfare on your behalf, if you become unable to make those decisions yourself due to mental incapacity. Your Attorneys can step in when needed to ensure your affairs remain in good order, money can be easily accessed and to protect your assets together with articulating your personal wishes when it comes to the type of medical treatment you receive.

What is a court-appointed Deputy?

A Deputy is appointed by the Court of Protection to make decisions for someone who is unable to do so on their own. This can be a long process and is a decision made by the court, not the individual who has lost capacity. Therefore it is best to be prepared and put in place and register LPAs before mental capacity becomes a problem and the long winded Deputy route is your only option.

I have a Will - do I still need a Lasting Power of Attorney?

Yes. The Executors you identify in your Will can only make decisions concerning your Estate after you die – not while you are alive. LPAs are in effect an insurance policy against mental incapacity and ensure those who are close to you can assist you with ease and without delay.

Who should I choose to be my Attorneys?

This is ultimately up to you – but it should be someone you can trust implicitly to make decisions in your best interests; whether that be a family member, close friend or a legal professional.

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Raspberry Tartlets



Ingredients

Pastry

175g plain flour, plus extra for dusting 2 tbsp icing sugar 100g butter, chilled, cut into small pieces 1 egg, beaten

Crème Pâtissière

150ml whole milk 1 tsp vanilla extract 25g caster sugar 25g plain flour 1 free-range egg 75ml double cream Raspberry Topping 4 tbsp raspberry jam 450g raspberries

You will need 8 small 10cm loose-bottomed metal tart tins and some baking beans.

Method

Preheat the oven to 200C/180C Fan/Gas 6. To make the pastry, rub the flour, icing sugar and butter together until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Or place the flour, icing sugar and butter in a food processor and pulse. Then add the eaa and combine until the mixture forms a ball. Place the dough on to a floured surface. Roll it out with a rolling pin. Cut eight rounds big enough to line the base and sides of the tins. Chill in the fridge for 20 minutes. To bake blind, prick the pastry bases, line the tins with baking parchment, fill with baking beans and bake in the oven for 10

minutes. Carefully remove the beans and paper and return the bases to the oven for 5 minutes, until cooked and a pale goldenbrown. Leave to cool. To make the crème pâtissière, place the milk and vanilla in a saucepan. Heat until the milk it is just scalded (just on the point of boiling). Place the sugar, flour and egg in a mixing bowl and whisk. Pour in half the hot milk and whisk until smooth. Pour in the remaining hot milk. Pour the mixture back into the saucepan and cook over a low heat, stirring all the time, until the custard becomes very thick. Pour into a bowl, allow to cool then cover with cling film and chill in the fridae until cold. Once cold. pour in the double cream. whisking constantly. Spoon this crème pâtissière into the tart cases and return to the fridge to chill. To make the glaze, heat the jam in a saucepan with a tablespoon of water and whisk to combine. Strain the liquid through a sieve into a small bowl. Arrange the raspberries to stand upright on the crème pâtissière then brush the warm glaze over the top.

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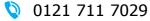
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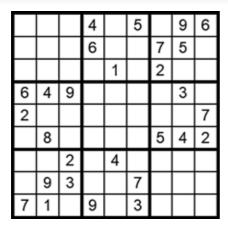
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answer on page 34

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Happily Ever After

Make long term relationships work

Who doesn't know that it's Valentine's Day this month? Valentine's is marketed as being all about attracting and impressing the partner of our dreams right? But what happens afterwards...how do we preserve the magic (or at least some of it) long term? Well, researchers and counsellors have some good (and sometimes surprising) research-backed tips and tricks.

Double-dating - Friendship with other couples is good for your relationship. A study conducted at the University of Maryland found that couples who have couple friends, rated their marriages as more exciting and fulfilling. Researchers theorised that it gave each couple the chance to observe the way other couples interact and negotiate differences within the relationship.

Assume the best - According to psychologists, couples who rate their marriages as happy tend to assume their partners intentions are good, even when they are disagreeing. By giving their partner this benefit of the doubt they are able to seek clarification, learn about their real motives, and move forward.

Argue in a healthy way - Counsellors at Northwestern University and Adler University in Chicago found that an important marker of a healthy relationship is the ability to argue well and resolve conflicts. Being able to work through life challenges is an important skill and one which strengthens a relationship bond. In order to 'fight fair' keep any dispute focused on the topic at hand and don't descend into personal attacks. Topic-related fights fade quickly and pass, whereas people remember personal attacks and insults, and the hurt can remain for a long time



Text your way to happiness – An affectionate text is a way to stay connected while apart and can provide a little boost of the happy hormone dopamine to your partner. But, remember never apologise in a text message...always do that in person.

Don't prioritize material things - A study carried out at Brigham Young University in Utah found that higher levels of materialism are associated with less relationship satisfaction. The researchers' discovered that materialistic partners may be seeking happiness in possessions, rather than people, meaning they end up investing less time and energy into making their relationships successful.

Make your relationship the priority -

There are so many things in the modern world competing for our attention that it's important to set aside time for our closest relationship, and to guard that time well. Schedule dates, even if it's just time for a glass of wine and a chat after the kids are in bed. Discuss an activity you'd both like to try, whether it's learning how to play chess, or salsa dancing, and then turn that into a date event. Doing new things together will give you more to talk about. 'All You Need is Love,' proclaims the Beatles song, though it would be more accurate if they'd added, 'Plus communication, respect and kindness, from both parties too!' though that would probably be a bit of a mouthful to sing!

COMPETITIONS

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Win 2 tickets to see Romeo & Juliet by Ballet Theatre UK

Join Ballet Theatre UK with their passionate portrayal of one of the world's greatest love stories. Returning by popular demand, this theatrical production tells the tragic tale of star-crossed lovers with astonishing grace and heart-breaking intimacy. These tickets are for Saturday 15th April at 7.30pm at The Core Theatre Solihull.



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For your chance to win, email zoe@dorridgedirectory.com with the subject line Facial or Romeo & Juliet or 80 Sounds (or all!) and you will be added to our database to receive our monthly e-newsletter about offers and events in Solihull. The winners will be notified by email after the closing date of 1 March 2023. There is no cash value nor exchange for these prizes. *This complimentary facial will be valid for use until 30th June 2023.

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Suduko Solution

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