

# Savoring Valentine's Day

10 places to take your beloved for some posh noshing

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Special to Metromix

Whether you're celebrating your first Valentine's Day as a couple or you've been together for years, dining out never gets old. Sure, making a gourmet meal together at home can be a great date, but if you'd rather avoid a sink full of dirty dishes, check out one of these romantic spots.

## CAFÉ CIBON, 688 PARK AVE.

Diners looking for a relaxed — but eclectic — setting for an evening out may find what they're looking for at CiBon. "There's a couple of palm trees. There are chandeliers and a lot of artwork by local people. It's very Bohemian," says owner Robin Banister.

With its red walls, lit candles and smooth music selections — jazz and European lounge — CiBon creates a romantic ambience. Banister is planning a tasting menu for Valentine's Day that will include complimentary Prosecco, a sparkling Italian wine.

Chef Ashley Swan's most popular dishes are her pastas, Banister says. "For Valentine's Day, the vodka pasta is very popular — because it's pink."

For more: 461-2960 or [www.cafecibon.com](http://www.cafecibon.com)

## CHOCOLATE & VINES, 757 UNIVERSITY AVE.

Good for a light lunch or sweet treat after dinner, Chocolate & Vines offers gourmet chocolate, cheeses and desserts, ranging from cheesecake to tiramisu to gelato. Wines are available by the bottle or glass, in addition to beer, tea and coffee.

Owners Michael Goldberg and Danielle Lewis plan to create specials appropriate for the holiday — for example, a strawberry chocolate matched with a Brachetto, a red Italian wine. Such pairings make the new restaurant perfect for couples, says Lewis. "It's almost like a mix-and-match menu," she says. "You can't go wrong. That just makes it fun and great for a date — it gives people something to discuss."

For more: 340-6362 or [www.chocolateandvines.com](http://www.chocolateandvines.com)

## EDIBLES, 704 UNIVERSITY AVE.

With its stylish, upscale interior, extensive list of cocktails and wine selections, and unique setting in University Avenue's historic Flatiron building, Edibles makes a great spot for dinner with your date.

The rich woods, exposed brick and white tablecloths also help to set a romantic mood.

The restaurant is typically only open for private parties on Sundays, but will offer two set menus (still in the works) on Valentine's Day from 5 to 10 p.m.

And as you're dining on that cold night in February, you can gaze through one of the restaurant's many windows and look forward to spring, when Edibles' outdoor dining area will reopen.

For more: 271-4910 or <http://ediblesrochester.com>

## LENTO, 274 N. GOODMAN ST.

This Village Gate restaurant has the right atmosphere for a romantic evening.

"We are a non-rushed, quiet, intimate, kind of cozy, feel-good restaurant," says Stephen Rees, general manager.

With its redwood beams, warm colors, flickering candles and white tablecloths, the dining area feels rustic but is still refined, he says. Normally closed on Sundays, Lento will open for the holiday and offer a couple of specials tailored to celebrating couples. Because the kitchen works closely with local farmers and the menu changes daily, these specials aren't yet decided. Rees also recommends Lento's new seafood bar, which features that famed aphrodisiac, raw oysters.

For more: 271-3470 or [www.lentorestaurant.com](http://www.lentorestaurant.com)

## MARIO'S ITALIAN STEAKHOUSE & CATERING, 2740 MONROE AVE., PITTSFORD

Mario's, well known for its Sunday brunch, ups the ante this Valentine's Day with an extensive Champagne brunch. From noon until 8 p.m., the restaurant will offer carving, pasta and omelet stations, in addition to the main buffet, antipasti selections, a seafood bar, chocolate fountain, waffles, crepes and desserts (for \$36.95 per person).

On Friday and Saturday, diners can choose items on the regular menu, as well as some Valentine's Day specials, such as "lighter fish dishes and homemade pastas with delicate sauces," says co-owner Anthony Daniele. The Daniele family recently renovated the dining room, keeping "that warm, old feel of a classic Italian restaurant," he says.

For more: 271-1111 or [www.mariosit.com](http://www.mariosit.com)

## MAX OF EASTMAN PLACE, 25 GIBBS ST.

Max of Eastman Place's unique location makes it a special spot for Valentine's Day.

"We have a beautiful setting overlooking Eastman Theatre," says owner and chef Tony Gullace. "You could picture yourself in any European city."

The atmosphere is enhanced, he says, by eclectic artwork provided by ArtisanWorks, brand new china and glass on the tables, and the "refined and elegant" dining room. Gullace is still planning the menu, but he expects to offer veal chops and seafood specials, including live Maine lobster, from Friday through Sunday. Each female diner will receive a flower from Arena's Florist.

For more: 697-0491

## **RISTORANTE LUCANO, 1815 EAST AVE.**

Looking at Ristorante Lucano from the outside — it's located in a nondescript strip mall on East Avenue — you wouldn't expect the warm, cozy interior you'll find when you walk inside — "like you're stepping into Italy," says JoAnn Formoso, who owns the restaurant with her husband, Chuck.

"We have three rooms, which makes it quaint and private, so you don't have to be in a large venue," she says. "We only hold 50 people. I think that makes it very romantic."

Formoso expects chef Kevin George to create several specials that night. (Usually closed on Sunday, Lucano will open for Valentine's Day dinner.) "His fish specials are unbelievable — out of this world," Formoso says.

For more: 244-3460 or <http://ristorantelucano.com>

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## **ROONEY'S, 90 HENRIETTA ST.**

Rooney's is still finalizing its four-course, prix fixe menu for Valentine's Day, but manager Joe Squalli says that entrée choices will include one of the kitchen's signature dishes, such as plantain-crusted jumbo shrimp with mango salsa butter sauce. Other Rooney's specialties include New York strip steak, rack of lamb and beef tenderloin. The holiday menu will cost \$75 per person for an appetizer, salad, main dish and dessert (plus tax and tip).

Squalli says staff will decorate the restaurant — which he describes as "very small and cozy, very romantic" — with red balloons and present every female diner with a red rose at the end of the meal.

For more: 442-0444 or [www.rooneysrestaurant.com](http://www.rooneysrestaurant.com)

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## **PANE VINO RISTORANTE, 175 N. WATER ST.**

What gives Pano Vino its couple-friendly ambience? "The setting that we have with views of the Genesee River, and the atmosphere that the restaurant provides, as far as fireplaces, and a romantic setting, and lit candle," says manager Ryan Huff. And, he adds, the décor includes rustic wooden flooring, brick walls decorated with sconces, and brown leather and wooden furniture. Although normally closed on Sunday, the restaurant will open for Valentine's Day from 5 to 10 p.m.

"There won't be any special menu, per se," says Huff, "but we'll be running specials that aren't normally ones we run, like more upscale dishes."

For more: 232-6090 or [www.panevinoristorante.com](http://www.panevinoristorante.com)

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## **SIMPLY CREPES, 7 SCHOEN PLACE, PITTSFORD**

Michelle Heroux, manager and co-owner of Simply Crepes, offers plenty of reasons to visit her restaurant for a romantic meal — the fireplace; candlelit tables with tablecloths; comfortable, "shabby chic" décor; special desserts; and the wine, Champagne and mimosas.

"It's very unique — a nice place to impress somebody, especially on a first date," she says.

The restaurant, typically closed for Sunday dinner during the winter, will extend its hours for Valentine's Day to include at least two seatings, Heroux says.

"This is the only time we take reservations during the year, and we always sell out," she says.

The restaurant will offer a set menu that is still being finalized.

For more: 383-8310 or [www.simplycrepes.com](http://www.simplycrepes.com)