

## **Valentine's Day Treats**

**Kaylin Kwan, Macy 4-H Club, LA County 4-H Youth Healthy Living Chair**

With Valentine's Day around the corner, one of the best ways to show appreciation for a loved one, or to treat yourself for a day, is baking. Here are three simple recipes that your sweet tooth can indulge on.

[Chocolate Strawberry Covered Popcorn](#)

[Chocolate-Strawberry Cheesecake](#)

[Chocolate-Covered Strawberry Brownies](#)

# Chocolate Strawberry Covered Popcorn

## Ingredients:

- 1 package simply salted microwaveable popcorn
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup freeze dried strawberries
- 1 cup dark chocolate chips

## Directions:

1. Pop popcorn according to package directions. When popcorn has finished popping melt butter and toss popcorn in the butter, making sure to distribute it as best you can.
2. Using a food processor blend 1-2 tablespoons of the dried strawberries. Sprinkle the strawberry dust over the popcorn.
3. Spread popcorn out on a sheet of wax paper, sprinkle the remaining strawberries over the popcorn.
4. Melt chocolate chips according to package directions. Drizzle over popcorn. Let cool and store in an airtight container.

# Chocolate-Strawberry Cheesecake

## Ingredients:

- 14 graham crackers, crushed
- 4 tbsp. melted butter
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 2 blocks cream cheese, softened
- 2 large eggs
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- Pinch of salt
- 1 cup melted chocolate
- 12 strawberries

## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 325° and line a 12-cup muffin tin with paper liners. Spray liners with cooking spray. In a large bowl, combine crushed graham crackers, melted butter, and salt and stir until completely moistened.
2. Press graham mixture into paper liners and set aside.
3. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese until light and fluffy. Add eggs, sour cream, sugar, vanilla, and salt and beat until combined. Pour filling over graham crusts.
4. Bake until center is slightly jiggly, 20 minutes. Let cool in muffin tin, then refrigerate at least 2 hours before topping with chocolate.
5. Spoon melted chocolate over cheesecake tops, then dip strawberries in melted chocolate and rest on top.
6. Let set until firm.

# Chocolate-Covered Strawberry Brownies

## Ingredients:

- 1 box brownie mix, plus ingredients called for on box
- 1 1/2 cup halved strawberries
- 2 1/3 cup semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup heavy cream

## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350° and line an 8"-x-8" pan with parchment paper.
2. Make brownie: Prepare brownie batter according to package instructions. Pour batter into prepared pan and bake until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out with only a few moist crumbs, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool completely in pan, then top with strawberries.
3. Make ganache: Place chocolate chips in a medium, heatproof bowl and set aside. Heat heavy cream in a small saucepan over medium heat. When bubbles begin to break the surface around the edges of the pan, turn off the heat. Pour the hot cream over chocolate chips. Let sit for 5 minutes, then whisk constantly until the sauce is smooth. Pour over the strawberry layer.
4. Refrigerate brownies until the ganache has set, about 15 minutes. Slice into squares and serve cold.