

# A Healthy and Sustainable Valentine's Dinner

*Sponsored by Trader Joe's and the Fairfield Green Food Guide*

## Appetizer

### Hearts of Tomato & Pesto with Mozzarella Cheese Flatbread

Flatbread is found in the freezer section nearest the registers. Simply bake according to package instructions then form appetizers by using a heart-shaped cookie cutter. Break out the sparkling white wine! See below for suggestions.

## Main Course



### New England Wild Jumbo Scallops Sautéed with Garlic and White Wine

### Organic Green Beans Almondine

### Organic Saffron Quinoa

Find the scallops and green beans in the freezer section and quinoa and stock for cooking it in the dry goods area. Serve with the same wine you use for cooking (sparkling or still). **Haight-Brown Vineyard's sparkling white** is made in the traditional Champagne method. Haight, located in Litchfield County, is Connecticut's oldest continually operating vineyard and the first in the state to make sparkling wine. **Hopkins Vineyards**, another Litchfield winery, also makes a sparkling white in the traditional Champagne method. Hopkins is a family owned Connecticut Century farm/vineyard. If you'd like a still white, try **Chamard's (Clinton, CT) Stone Cold White, an unoaked Chardonnay** whose vibrant citrus and lemon flavors and bracing acidity marries well with seafood. Harry's, Mo's and Fairfield Wines & Spirits carry Chamard. Ask your favorite wine store for other local choices.

## Dessert



### Cinnamon & Spice Poached Organic Pears with Dark Chocolate and Hazelnut Confetti

Bags of Organic Bartlett or Bosc pears are located in the produce section; ripen for a week before using in this recipe. Serve with a dessert wine like **Hopkins Vineyard's late harvest Vidal Blanc** or **Ice Wine**. If you like brandy, **CT's Westford Hill Distillers' Poire Prisonniere** is a heart shaped bottle containing a Bartlett pear in pear eau de vie and is available at Harry's, Turnpike Spirits & Greenfield Liquor.

**TRADER JOE'S**



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## New England Wild Jumbo Scallops Sautéed with Garlic and White Wine



Looking for a super-fast yet elegant and delicious dinner? Trader Joe's frozen New England Wild Jumbo Scallops are delicate and satisfying. Feel good about serving a sustainably harvested seafood item to boot! Defrost the scallops overnight in the refrigerator for best results and cook them with a little olive oil, garlic and white wine. Serve with truffled organic green beans almondine and organic saffron quinoa.

**Serves 4:**

### Ingredients:

- 1 bag frozen Trader Joe's New England Wild Jumbo Scallops, defrosted
- 1 clove garlic, finely minced
- 1 cup good white wine, preferably unoaked
- Trader Joe's extra virgin olive oil
- Trader Joe's sea salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- Chopped parsley (optional)

### Preparation:

1. Defrost scallops overnight in the refrigerator. I always place inside a storage bag just in case the package leaks.
2. Remove defrosted scallops from bag and blot dry on paper towel lined cutting board. Check to see if there is any tough small muscle attached to the sides of each scallop. If you don't peel off this piece from the scallop, you'll have an extremely tough and chewy piece attached to your tender scallops after cooking. Sprinkle with sea salt and pepper on one side only.
3. Preheat a 12 inch skillet, preferably cast iron, over medium-high heat. Chop garlic and set aside.
4. Add about 2 teaspoons olive oil to skillet and tip to distribute oil evenly along bottom. Using tongs, place scallops one by one into pan, seasoned side down, without crowding them. If you crowd them, they will steam instead of sauté and not get a golden color and crunchy texture. When they are golden on one side, after about 2-3 minutes, flip them over and add the minced garlic. Cook until golden on the second side, another 2-3 minutes. Do not overcook! Scallops are done when they are firm and milky white.
5. Remove cooked scallops from skillet and place in a serving bowl; cover with foil or pan lid to keep warm. Immediately add wine to skillet, turn heat to high, and stir to deglaze pan (incorporate browned bits).
6. Reduce wine to almost 1/3, then pour over scallops, sprinkle with parsley (optional) and serve. Bon appétit!

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## Organic Green Beans Almondine



The secret to making these perfectly is to not overcook the beans. They should be bright green and just crisp tender, not mushy. Buying pre-toasted sliced almonds saves a step and the extra virgin olive oil adds another flavor dimension!

### Ingredients:

- 1 -1 lb. bag Trader Joe's frozen organic green beans
- ¼ cup Trader Joe's unsalted dry toasted sliced almonds
- 1-2 tsp. tablespoons Trader Joe's California Estate Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Preparation:

1. Bring to a boil a saucepan with 2 cups water large enough to hold the beans. Add 1 teaspoon salt when it reaches a boil.
2. Add green beans, stir to loosen and separate beans, return to a boil, and cook uncovered until beans are bright green, about 5-6 minutes. Remove one bean, rinse in cold water to cool and test for doneness. It should be tender but crisp.
3. Drain beans in a colander in the sink.
4. Add oil to same pan over medium heat, add sliced almonds and stir. Add green beans and stir to combine.
5. Season with salt and pepper to taste, toss and serve hot.

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## Organic Saffron Quinoa



Quinoa is an ancient grain (which is really a seed of the Goosefoot plant) that the Incas called The Mother of All Grains. It remains a staple food in Bolivia and Peru. Gluten free and unusually high in protein (12%-18%), quinoa is a complete protein and has been classified by the United Nations as a “super crop”. Quinoa cooks in about 15 minutes in a rice cooker or on the stovetop and is soft and fluffy with a mild nutty flavor.

Quinoa is typically cultivated in Bolivia and Peru. Efforts to cultivate it in the US have met with challenges. Bolivian farmers are paid a premium for organic quinoa, which helps raise their standard of living and preserve their lands.

### Serves 4:

### Ingredients:

- 1 box Trader Joe’s Organic Quinoa
- 1 container Trader Joe’s Organic Free Range Chicken Stock or Vegetable Stock
- 1 pinch Trader Joe’s Spanish Saffron (optional)
- Salt to taste

### Preparation:

Using a rice cooker:

1. Measure 1 cup quinoa and place in strainer. Rinse well under cold water to remove the bitter tasting resin-like coating called saponins. Let drain.
2. Add quinoa, 2 cups broth or water, a pinch of saffron and a pinch of salt to rice cooker. Set to cook.
3. Quinoa cooks in about 15-20 minutes and is soft and fluffy when done.

On the stovetop:

1. Measure 1 cup quinoa and place in strainer. Rinse well under cold water to remove the bitter tasting resin-like coating called saponins. Let drain.
2. Bring 2 cups water or stock to a boil in a small saucepan.
3. Add quinoa, saffron and pinch of salt and return to a boil.
4. Reduce heat to a low simmer, cover and cook until done, about 10-15 minutes. It will be soft and fluffy when fully cooked.

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## Cinnamon & Spice Poached Organic Pears with Dark Chocolate and Hazelnut Confetti



Poaching pears in simple syrup with whole spices is an easy yet elegant way to enjoy this abundant year-round fruit. Poached pears are a fantastic make-ahead special dinner or dinner party dessert and if you use red wine (please no cooking wine!), you will create the most gorgeous and irresistible, ruby-colored pears. Please make sure the pears you select are firm and ripe but not overripe for this recipe.

**Technique Note:** Poaching is the technique of cooking foods gently in a liquid just at the simmering point, not boiling. Try to keep the pears covered in the liquid or turn them often. If cooking a large number of pears, consider reusing the poaching liquid instead of doubling or tripling the recipe.

**Ingredient Note:** If you want specks of vanilla to appear in your poaching syrup, score the vanilla bean once lengthwise with a paring knife before adding to the pot. An uncut vanilla bean can be rinsed, dried and reused.

**Makes 4 servings:**

### Ingredients:

- 4 ripe pears from 1 4-pack or bag of Trader Joe's organic pears (Bartlett or Bosc)
- 1 cup Trader Joe's Simple Syrup or 1 cup water plus 6 tablespoons sugar
- 1 cup red or white wine
- 1 vanilla bean
- 1 long piece cinnamon or 2 short pieces
- 2 star anise (optional)
- ¼ cup finely chopped Trader Joe's hazelnuts or candied walnuts (optional)
- 1 bar Trader Joe's dark chocolate, such as Scharffenberger

### Preparation:

1. Peel pears, leaving stems intact. You may wish to rub the pears with lemon to prevent them from browning. If using red wine, this is unnecessary.
2. Using the small end of a melon baller, remove cores by scooping from the bottom of the pear and working your way towards the top. Stop when you have removed the seed and surrounding core, leaving the top of the pear intact.

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## Cinnamon & Spice Organic Poached pears with Dark Chocolate and Hazelnut Confetti

(Continued)

3. In a deep saucepan just wide enough to hold pears in a single layer, add Simple Syrup or combine water and sugar to make a simple syrup by bringing to a boil and melting the sugar.
4. Add red or white wine – use whatever you have on hand but avoid heavily oaked wines. Add the vanilla bean, cinnamon and star anise, reduce heat to a simmer, and add the pears.
5. Simmer pears, turning often so all sides cook and color evenly, until tender but not falling apart, anywhere from 15-30 minutes depending upon the size and ripeness of the pears. I recommend turning with a curved plastic spatula or wooden spoon to avoid bruising or mashing the fruit.
6. The flesh should yield easily to a paring knife when done. When done, carefully remove pears from poaching liquid and set aside.
7. Remove cinnamon, vanilla and star anise from poaching liquid. Raise heat to a boil and reduce poaching liquid until it has a syrup-like consistency. If you overcook it and it becomes too thick, just add a little water. Just don't let it burn!
8. Roast hazelnuts at 350 degrees for 5-10 minutes or until light golden. Be careful not to burn them! Upon removing the nuts from the oven, place them in a damp kitchen towel and roll it vigorously against a hard surface to rub off the skins. Allow to cool and then chop and set aside. Use a vegetable peeler to make chocolate curls and set aside.
9. Serve pears warm with the poaching syrup drizzled on top and a sprinkling of nuts and chocolate. You may prepare pears up to a few days ahead and store in syrup in refrigerator until ready to serve. Gently reheat.

