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### **Aphrodisiac foods spice up Valentine's Day**

Oysters top list of classic dishes that help put us in mood for romance

Aphrodisiac. The sound of the word hardly conjures the meaning of it. Say it out loud and it sounds more like a cold remedy than a sexy love potion.

But for eons, all sorts of food — and drink — have been thought to lure us into love. From oysters to chocolate (don't forget the ground rhinoceros horn), aphrodisiacs have helped us get in the mood. But the real question is: Do these love foods actually work?

"They absolutely work," food historian and writer Francine Segan said. "In modern times, we use drugs for sexual enhancement. But in ancient times, they made these kinds of 'drugs' from food."

Scientists have argued for years that foods thought to enhance sexual performance merely rely on the placebo effect: If you think it's working, it is. Segan's argument that the suggestive quality some foods have — either visually (think oysters and asparagus), texturally (think oysters and chocolate) or how they are eaten (think oysters and figs) — is enough proof that indeed, these foods enhance how we feel about love and lovemaking, which in turn, enhances mood and performance. Have a variety of these foods on hand for Valentine's Day, and all you'll have left to do is cue up Marvin Gaye.

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