



# true romance By Kat James

Make your Valentine's Day sweeter by adopting a healthful sugar-free lifestyle. The benefits include better health and better, more meaningful connections with the ones you love

**Thinking of buying** your sweetheart another box of candy this Valentine's Day? With the economy on everyone's minds these days, isn't it silly to spend good money each February on "fancy" Valentine chocolates loaded with sugar? For many, this yearly indulgence brings nothing but a New Year's resolution setback. With February being national heart health month, let this year mark the end of health-sabotaging gifts, and the beginning of more healthful, meaningful Valentine's Day traditions.

Whether you are married, in a relationship, or single, make this Valentine's Day more loving by indulging in a decadent sugar-free lifestyle on which you can truly thrive. I've included the recipe for my new favorite Valentine's confection. First, get inspired with the following quotes from couples that share a mutual motivation for healthful living.

## Bonding Through Better Health

"We used to drink Jack Daniels just about every evening. After eliminating sugar from our diets, all of our cravings have ceased, including cravings for alcohol. We still occasionally have a cocktail or two, but we plan them and try not to drink more than one time per month. We now love to cook amazing food together, and have both experienced wonderful health benefits as a result, from better skin to better moods."

—Cathy and Ted, Atlanta

"Before we decided to save ourselves from our unhealthy habits, my husband's addiction was Pepsi. But his IBS got so bad that when he started

having to take high doses of steroids, we both knew it was time to get serious. Now that we are off all junk food and sugar, his energy level has skyrocketed. My commitment to making what he loves in the kitchen, coupled with his commitment not to stray from our plan was the magic combination. The most unbelievable thing to me is that we don't even think about our nightly wine anymore. My arthritis was basically gone soon after we got off sugar, and I can now sleep deeply."

—Laura and Mike, Downers Grove, Ill.

"The unhealthy influence we've always had on each other is eating out. If one of us suggested it, the other would rarely suggest cooking at home. After I got informed about more healthful food and supplements, my knowledge and confidence, along with the physical changes that followed, have made it much easier to gain Blaine's support. He no longer questions my expensive supplement purchases or my need to play tennis. And I give him his space for working out too. I think we inspire each other now."

—Carol and Blaine, Seattle

"We both used to cook, but once we were married, we fell prey to the restaurant habit. Up until last year, we were big on mini-mart cappuccinos and always tempted each other to eat junk food. But since getting off all sugar early in 2008, we have become 'kitchen Valentines' all year round. We love creating healthful versions of unhealthy recipes. Doreen has lost a lot of weight, and though I had no weight to lose, my energy is back."

—Pat and Doreen, Clark Summit, N.J.

## bejeweled chocolate-pomegranate bark

Serves 12

**6 oz. unsweetened baking chocolate (such as Green & Black's Organic Chocolate)**

**4 Tbs. organic butter**

**2 drops liquid stevia**

**1 cup powdered xylitol (such as NuNaturals Sweet-X Pure Xylitol Crystals)**

**1 tsp. vanilla extract**

**1/3 tsp. sea salt**

**1 cup toasted crushed pecans, lightly salted (also try pumpkin seeds, pistachios, walnuts, or coconut)**

**1/2 cup fresh pomegranate seeds**

1. Melt first six ingredients together in a double boiler or metal bowl set over simmering water, stirring occasionally. Let cool slightly.
2. Spread pecans and pomegranate seeds over cookie sheet. Pour melted chocolate over nuts and seeds to cover; freeze. Break into pieces before serving.

PER SERVING: 219 CAL; 3 G PROT; 18 G TOTAL FAT (8 G SAT FAT); 11 G CARB; 10 MG CHOL; 70 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 2 G SUGARS



KAT JAMES is the author of *The Truth About Beauty*, recently completely updated. James transformed her own body and skin after a 12-year eating and liver disorder nearly took her life. James has been featured on the Today

show, MSNBC, PBS, and in numerous national magazines. She regularly lectures and conducts workshops on healthful lifestyles. To learn about her Total Transformation program, visit [informedbeauty.com](http://informedbeauty.com), where you can also e-mail her questions. ♦

Photos: James Hammel