

Valentine's Day is fast approaching. And this year it's on a Saturday. If you are lucky, you have all day to have an adventure. Perhaps you can afford the time for the entire weekend. If not either of those, perhaps a special outing is still possible.

Maybe you want to have dinner out. If so, go for it. But make your reservations right now. Stop reading and pick up the phone. Ask for 5:30 or after 8:00. You have waited too late for any other time to be practical. You'll get better service at those times too.

A great alternative is to go out the day before and spend Valentine's at home. A group of you can do the same thing if you want to have a little party that night.

Ask your favorite restaurant if they will serve you the "Valentine's Special" on Friday. That way you can have that same meal and have a chance to enjoy it more.

Another thing to do is postpone your celebration a day or two. Maybe your favorite spot is doing something special after Valentine's. Jimmy's is having a New Orleans dinner on Monday. Check and see what some other folks may be doing.

If you have decided not to go out, your favorite chef will prepare a special feast for you to share at home that night. You can get it "to go" or your food can be set up for you to finish at home.

Then of course you can do it yourself. If you choose that course, let someone else do some of your dinner. Your chef will do that too. Folks like Christine's do a great job on special treats for you to finish at home. Joe Hippely at Warehouse Bistro can also set you up.

How about a Sunday breakfast, brunch or lunch? There are several places in our area that offer options. The Hilton Garden Inn has a great breakfast. There's a nice variety and they will prepare to order for you.

The AU Hotel and the Marriott have full Sunday breakfast and lunch buffets. My friend Chef John Hamme tells me that he's going to have lots of extra goodies that day just to make Valentine's more special at AU. The hotel has room packages too that include various treats and dinner.

Let's go back to a possible get away. There might still be some availability at a bed and breakfast within an easy drive. The Overlook Inn in Elijay, GA is particularly nice and is easy to get to. Think Outlet Mall ladies.

There are lots of interesting places in the North Georgia mountains. Since the month of February has the best views (less leaves, foliage, grass etc.), you'll see more and perhaps things you've never seen before.

There are some websites that you can try. BnBfinder.com, BedandBreakfast.com are good ones to try. Kayak.com is also an interesting travel site.

Biltmore in Asheville has a great Valentine's package. You get lodging, dinner and a tour at the Biltmore house. A day there is certainly entertaining.

If Atlanta, Birmingham or Mobile aren't interesting and you can't find something else, think about staying here at one of our hotels – whether they offer food or not. You can treat yourself to a movie and then a late dinner in your room. Get your chef to make you something to have or let the hotel do it.

Another good idea is to get a gift basket for that special someone. That basket can include goodies for your hotel stay or for a special night at home. Food, wine, flowers and gifts all fit in a basket just fine. Folks like Jackie Horne at The Brass Brassiere do a great job on custom baskets.

If you want something simpler, try the fine people at Queenie's Cookies right here in Opelika. They can bake you a dozen fine treats that will fit the "sweets for my sweetie" bill perfectly.

Don't forget the wine. If you are a white wine person, stay away from Chardonnay and try Riesling or Viognier. These wines have a sweet edge to them that make them equally at home sipping or drinking with spicy foods.

If red wines are your pick, try a blend. There are lots of them now that have plenty of sweet fruit. One of my favorites is Heron Sexto. Jimmy's was featured on a national wine recommending website

recently called weeklywinepick.com. Sexto is the one I told them about and another one from Hook & Ladder called The Tillerman.

Bubbles is the way I would go. Champagne or a sparkling wine is a perfect choice for Valentine's. Get some advice and prepare to enjoy. There are several non-alcoholic sparkling beverages if you choose that direction. And places like World Market have a vast variety of beer if that is your bubble of choice.

So you have lots of options. The great thing is they are all good. You can never go wrong spending time with that special person in your life, even if her name is fluffy.