Coconut, Cauliflower, and Carrot Soup

Preheat oven to 375°. In a large pot, heat 2 Tbsp. **vegetable oil** over medium heat. Add 1 medium **onion**, sliced, and ¼ cup peeled and minced **ginger** (from a 3½" piece). Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook, stirring a few times, until onion is soft, about 8 minutes. Add ¼ tsp. **turmeric** and ½ tsp. **ground cumin** and stir 30 seconds. Add 3 cups low-sodium **vegetable stock** or water; 4 **carrots** (about ¾ pound), sliced ¼" thick; and 4 cups (about 1 pound) **cauliflower** florets and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer until vegetables are tender, about 15 minutes. Stir in 1 (13-ounce) can unsweetened **coconut milk** and boil, uncovered, over medium heat until liquid has reduced slightly, about 5 minutes. Season with ½ tsp. each **salt** and ground **black pepper.** Meanwhile, spread ½ cup unsweetened dried **coconut flakes** on a rimmed baking sheet and bake until golden brown, about 2 minutes. Remove from oven, sprinkle with a pinch of salt, and set aside. In a blender, puree soup in batches. Divide among 4 bowls, top with reserved toasted coconut, and serve immediately. *Active time: 25 minutes. Total time: 45 minutes.*

MIXING BOWL

The makings of a delicious month, from a sweetheart of a valentine to a Super Bowl beer buffet.

For the Table
FAUX GLOW

A flameless candle is fantastic for the worry-free factor, but the static light doesn't have a convincingly cozy effect. Now there's an ingenious new version: Technology developed for Disney's theme parks makes these battery-powered candles flicker and glow just like the real thing—minus the fire hazard. (Luminara pillar candles, from $32 each; qvc.com)

My Guilty Pleasure
VELVEETA

"It's the essential ingredient in my queso dip, which my wife loves so much that she asked me months ago to make a batch for the Super Bowl. I slowly cook a minced white onion on low heat until it's soft—that takes about 20 minutes. After that I mince three fresh and three pickled jalapeños and throw them in. I pour in a can of Mexican lager and cook that down until it's almost dry. Then I add ½ cup of heavy cream and a brick of Velveeta, cut into cubes, and stir until it's all melted. You have to use Velveeta. It's built to melt and stays liquid for hours, like cheese from another dimension."

—Alex Stupak, chef and owner of New York City's Empellón restaurants and coauthor of *Tacos: Recipes and Provocations*

The Find
Over the Top

You don't need to be a barista to give your latte an artful finish. Float one of Topperfino's Belgian dark chocolate disks, which come in four flavors and more than 20 graphic patterns, on the foam, and it transforms your coffee into an elegant mocha. The disks can also add a little something special to your virtuous oatmeal or other hot cereal. (From $14 for box of ten; topperfino.com)

Genius Idea!
ACE OF HEARTS

For a valentine that's good enough to eat, try this inspired cookie-decorating technique from Jocelyn Delk Adams, Grandbaby Cakes blogger and cookbook author. First, Delk Adams decorates heart-shaped cookies with royal icing (or rolled fondant) and lets them dry completely. She then places a paper doily on top and sprays it with edible food-coloring spray, such as Wilton Color Mist. Finally, she repositions the edge, adds a second color spray, and removes the doily quickly to let the colors bleed into each other. The result? A romantic watercolor effect. We're in love.

Easy Upgrade
Draft Picks

For a sophisticated alternative to the standard cooler-and-ice setup, we're fans of this Super Bowl buffet from Mary Giuliani, New York City caterer and author of *The Cocktail Party: Eat, Drink, Play, Recover.* Her four-ingredient beer cocktails are foolproof: You simply set out bottles and garnishes and let guests mix their own—which means you won't have to miss a single play.

LAZY MICHELADA
1 (12-ounce) bottle Mexican-style lager
+
6 ounces spicy tomato juice (plus a few shakes of hot sauce, if desired)
+
juice of 1 lime
+
1 bacon strip or 1 celery stick

SHANDY ITALIANA
1 (12-ounce) bottle wheat beer
+
1 ounce Aperol
+
juice of 1 lemon
+
juice of ½ orange

IRISH FLOAT
1 (12-ounce) bottle stout
+
1 shot espresso
+
1 scoop vanilla ice cream
+
1 cinnamon stick