

AGGIE *life*

THE BATTALION

Breakfast in bed

is not just for Mother's Day celebrations anymore

Most college students probably have fond memories of Mother's Day celebrations where Dad would gather the children at the crack of dawn to a preparation of burnt toast, seedy orange juice and sunny eggs. The delicacies would be placed on a tray that would be delivered with much festivity from (who was in the midst of a sound sleep). Today, the ceremony continues, but where dear old once slumbered, there now lies a someone who is little harder to impress — the significant other. Now, a crayon card smile will not make up for inedible food and hideous presentation. For those whose breakfast-in-bed technique is that of a 5-year-old, here are a few tips to make that early morning meal a genuinely pleasant surprise.



STUART HUTSON

two go hand in hand).

A weekend or "day-off" morning is also prime for this wonderful surprise and serves as the perfect start of a "day in bed," the highly celebrated act of forgetting the rest of the world and losing yourselves.

"Breakfast in bed" does not mean that the meal cannot come at the end of a hard day. Simply suggest that your downtrodden partner spend a relaxing hour or two in bed watching television or reading a book, and then surprise him or her with a three-course sausage, pancake and chocolate-covered strawberry meal with a little wine on the side. Again, breakfast in bed is the ultimate stress reducer.

The morning "in" is all that is needed to set the right mood for a day that just cannot go wrong. You would probably be surprised how an hour of being spoiled at the beginning of the day can affect how one looks at life's problems.

Prepare early

Know what you are preparing ahead of time, and spend a little time the day before so that as little preparation as possible is necessary in the morning. If you are anything like me, you can barely open your eyes before noon, much less prepare an elegant meal. One morning, I almost severed a finger trying to cut a grapefruit in half, only to spill salt into the wound while cooking eggs.

Buy pastries fresh from the bakery the day before so that you do not have to make a bleary-eyed drive to the doughnut shop at six in the morning, and make sure that any fruit or vegetables are ripe. If you want to prepare sausage or bacon, buy the microwavable variety.

You also need to have something upon which to serve the food. If a breakfast tray is out of your price range for one morning of use, anything sturdy will work. Glass cutting boards, turkey serving trays and removable shelves are popular improvisations (as long as they are covered with a place mat). Once, I was served breakfast in bed on a pizza pan wrapped in a pillow case.

Breakfast trays are worthy investments, but no one really cares what they are eating off right after they wake up.

Set the mood

Remember, this is about stress relief. Light some fragrant candles or get the coffee going early for an invigorating smell that will complement the meal. Temperature allowing, open a window to let early-morning air breeze through the room and make being under a warm comforter even more appealing.

Candles are perfect for creating a romantic atmosphere while not blinding the person with the glaring harshness of a light bulb.

Put on some music that reflects the tastes of the person you hope to surprise. Stick to some-



thing upbeat but soothing. Light jazz and Sinatra usually work well. One more note: No matter how much the person may enjoy booty music, do not play it.

Baby, it's cold outside

The primary determinant of what you should serve is the likes and dislikes of the person, but you need to alter the menu with the temperature and weather.

On cold days, hot, heavier food tastes best. Pancakes swimming in hot maple syrup and steamy sausage links along with a frothy cafe latte make a bed the perfect sanctuary from the harsh bite of Jack Frost.

During the dog days of summer, fresh fruit and chilled orange juice can make the morning a refreshing experience. For a little wake-up call, try a frozen cappuccino.

On a dreary, rainy morning, some dried fruit, a black cup of joe and a nice bowl of cereal with banana slices suit the mood perfectly. Some people prefer a glass of wine instead of coffee in this situation, but those people would generally prefer a glass of wine in any situation.

Sunshine deserves nothing less than exotic citrus. For extra tropical flavor, try serving some pineapple in a split coconut.

Remember the basics

Whatever the weather, you must include some basic items. There needs to be some sort of pastry. This can be a croissant, a bagel or just some toast with butter, cinnamon and sugar. Whatever you serve, remember to include the condiments. Butter goes with a croissant. Bagels need cream cheese, and maybe try it with some smoked salmon.

Try not to get crumbs on the sheets. It may be uncomfortable later. Water is a must. Most people wake up a little parched and need to get that "morning breath" taste out of the mouth. A little lemon goes a long way to help the water in both cases. For those with intolerable breath, a chocolate mint is better.

It is a mortal sin not to serve chocolate-covered strawberries during breakfast in bed.

If you cannot find any in the store, buy a box of strawberries and coat them in a chocolate glaze from the baking section. There are instructions on the box.

Chocolate strawberries come at the end of the meal and are always the most fun to eat. I suggest feeding them to one another.

If you use the glaze, leave the strawberries in the freezer overnight. If you do not, they will be too sticky, unless you prefer it that way.

Be creative with presentation

Whatever you do, make all the food look good on the tray (or cutting board or pizza pan). A single rose can make any presentation complete, but for an even more entertaining flower, make a tomato rose.

This is done by cutting the bottom off of a roma tomato and then peeling it with a sharp knife, making sure that the peel is left in a long strip. Cut out the goeey, seedy middle and wind the peel back up.

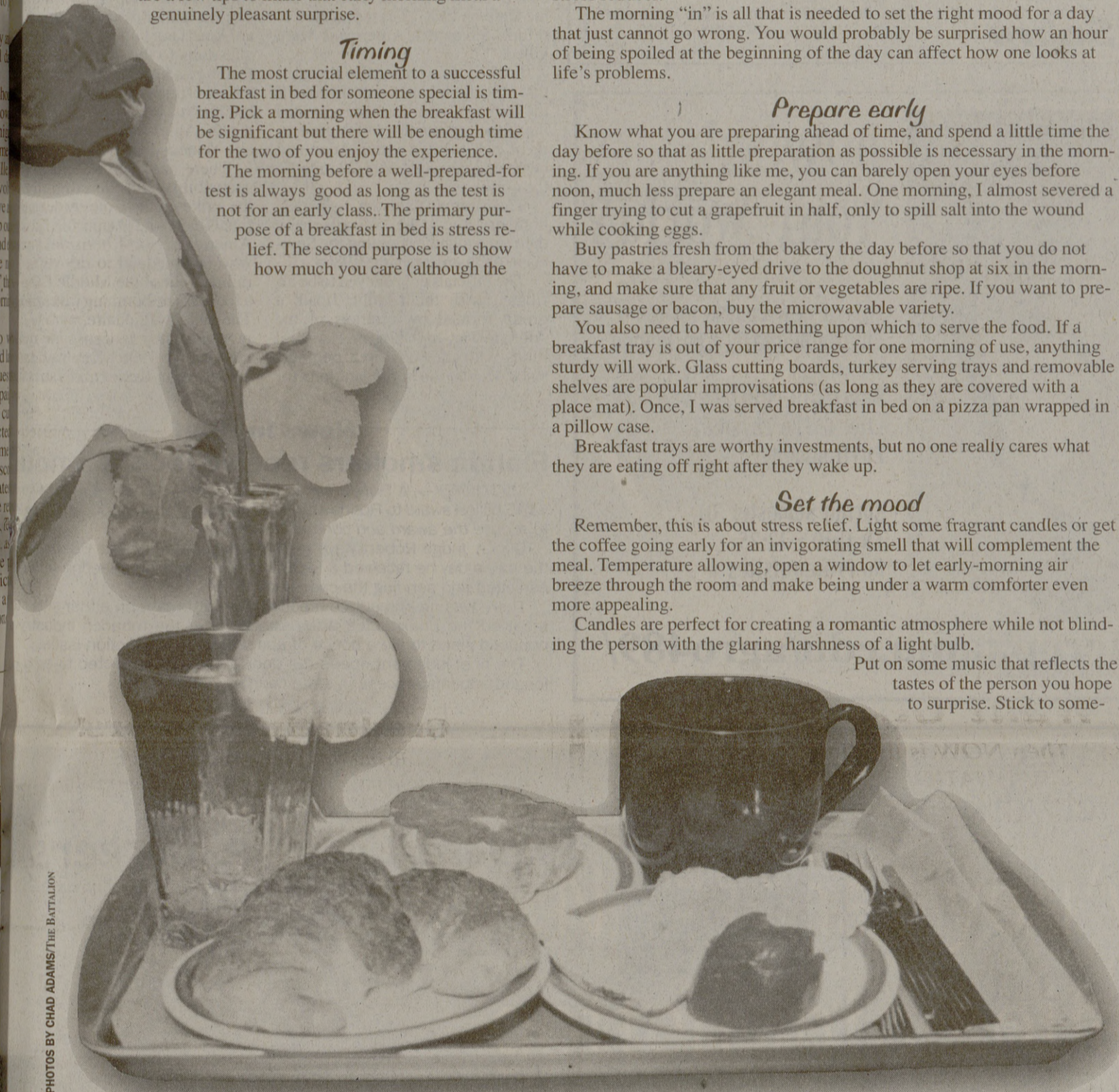
If you are making omelets, use cookie cutters to cut them into shapes like little hearts. For pancakes, write something sweet on top with syrup like you would with a cake.

You are only limited by your aesthetic sensibilities.

Go all the way

The biggest mistake made when serving a breakfast in bed is not following through.

The treatment does not end when he or she gets out from underneath the covers. Leave scented candles in the bathroom and draw a bubble bath while he or she is eating. From here on out, use your imagination.



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