

Saving Valentine's Day Online

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(Written for Yahoo! Tech Job Interview - February 2006) Yes, I've done it before. Despite all the advertising, I did forget Valentine's Day. Okay, I didn't forget, but I might as well have because I didn't attempt to plan anything until a couple days before. Did you know it's impossible to get a dinner reservation two days before? Why did I leave it until the last minute? That's a long story that I'll just call a misunderstanding. More importantly, how did I solve my dilemma? That particular year, I decided to make dinner. Now, Valentine's or any other special occasion requires a special menu. There's no falling back on your basic repertoire of recipes. I know what you're thinking – What does this have to do with technology?

Well, let's jump to what I consider the staple of technology. It's the Web. The Web is a fabulous place to find interesting recipes, cooking tips, tricks, and wines to match a meal. My favorites are Epicurious.com and Cooking.com where I found recipes to create a four course menu. You can search based on the main ingredient, cuisine, and even the occasion to make the perfect meal. Did I get myself out of hot water? Absolutely! But we didn't get to dessert until 11PM. I didn't really calculate how long it takes to make each course. Dinner that year was a five hour affair. If this all sounds like too much effort, plan ahead and make your restaurant reservation online with OpenTable. Some restaurants take online reservations a year in advance.