



How to Write Your Family Cookbook

Get out your recipes, photos and your food memories and let's get started.

Step One. Establish Your Style

- Start by looking at your favorite cookbooks to get ideas for how to set up your own cookbook. Look at the format of the recipes, the layout and design, and the way they are grouped into the table of contents.
- Start thinking about working titles for your book, as well as the approx. number of recipes, personal stories and sidebars.
- Begin by writing your introduction. Establish your vision for the book to keep it in your mind's eye as you continue to piece together all the elements.

Step Two. Set up a working calendar

- Do you have a specific publication date? Write it down and begin to work backwards. Create a working calendar with a roughed-out table of contents to determine the number of recipes you will type.
- Think how you might assign tasks to others to meet your goals and make it more fun and engaging.
- Establish the "short roll" chapter folders to keep each recipe separate and be consistent with your recipe format to make it easier to design and layout.

Step Three. Recipes and Food Writing Narratives

- A proper recipe follows a certain format that lists the ingredients in order they appear in the instructions. Choose a recipe title that reflects and describes the recipe, add serving instructions.
- A headnote describes the taste, the way the recipe is served, where you first tasted this recipe and any special tricks and techniques.
- Learn to write about food by reading food lit, food magazines, and immersing yourself in the language of food.



Step Four. Food Styling and Photography

- Food styling and photography are an art form which can take years to learn, yet when you begin to observe the details such as lighting, backgrounds, utensils and table tops, your skills will grow.
- Once you begin to learn tips and techniques, you will notice techniques that will improve your own food photos to look more professional.

Step Five. Organizing Chapters and Design Layout

- It's time to make a mock book and start to design your mini-book. This will give you a way to see your whole book and begin to get an idea of the number of pages, the photos, and the general layout.
- Design your front cover and back cover, write your acknowledgements and author bio, perhaps adding other elements that are not in your side bars.

Step Six. Proofing and Publishing

- It's the home stretch...time to put your "short roll" together with your "long roll" and print a draft. Time to proofread and possibly test the recipes to make sure they are all 100% perfect.
- Time to review layout and print options, cover stock, printed paper, ink, and binding decisions that you will need before you go to press.
- Ask a designer to help, make sure to test recipes and proof all copy before taking it to the print shop.