

How to Make a Family Cookbook with Your Old Family Recipes

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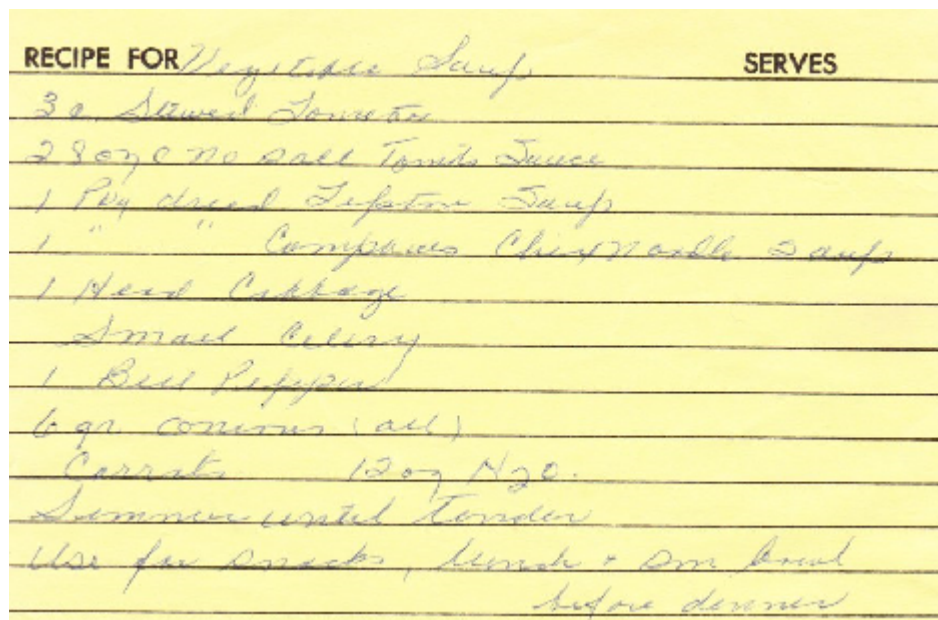


Family cookbooks are classic homemade gifts. Make yours extra special by adding a little family history to the mix and celebrating the people and places behind the recipes you love. We'll show you how in 4 simple steps.

1. Pick a Theme and Plan Your Cookbook

One of the great things about a cookbook is its versatility. You choose what goes in your cookbook, how long it is and what it looks like. With so many options, it is helpful to pick a clear theme to guide your project and keep it focused.

Your cookbook could include recipes for your whole family, or just the dishes you enjoy in your household. Perhaps your book honors one specific ancestor or relative. Think of ways that your recipe book can tell a part of that ancestor's story.



Handwritten recipe for vegetable soup.

Another creative option is to create a cookbook based on your family's heritage or ethnicity. Are there certain ethnic or religious foods that are important to you? Your recipe book could focus on those dishes that have a special cultural or religious significance for your family.

If you don't have many family recipes, these [historic cookbooks](#) can help you get an idea of the types of dishes your ancestors might've eaten.

Once you have your theme, it's time to answer some logistical questions:

- How many books will you be making?
- How much will it cost?
- How will you deliver the final product to everyone?

Having these details decided before you begin will ensure your project doesn't get out of hand!

2. Gather Your Recipes, Photos and Stories

Now it's time to gather your recipes! Begin by writing down or making copies of the recipes you already have. If you're fortunate enough to have old, handwritten recipes, [scan them](#) to preserve their original look, grease stains and all.

If you're gathering recipes from other family members, send requests for recipes, photos and information about the book you're compiling. Ask for memories associated with the dish, such as who it came from and when it was served. Encourage people to get back to you by giving a deadline or asking them to bring the recipe to a family gathering.

Alternatively, you could host a family potluck dinner and invite family members to bring their favorite dishes (along with the recipes). Take a picture of each relative along with the dish he or she brought and ask relatives what they remember eating on special

occasions, and for their memories of a certain dish.

This would also be the time to do a little research on some of the religious or cultural dishes in your recipe books and traditions associated with them to ensure the story is preserved for future generations.

Once you have all the recipes you need, make sure that there are uniform measurements and directions for each. For older recipes check out [this article on converting old measurements](#).

3. Design and Create Your Family Cookbook

Now comes the fun part! Choose how you are going to create your book and how it is going to look, then bring it to life. You can choose to make your project resemble a classic cookbook, a simple binder, or even a [collection of recipe cards](#).



A collection of recipe cards, complete with pictures and details.

You can create a simple cookbook with recipes, stories and inserted photos in Word. Make copies at a copy shop (where you can have it spiral bound if you want).

Another option is to create your cookbook using a digital photo-book service such as [Snapfish](#), [Shutterfly](#) or [MyCanvas](#). Depending on the size and type, books usually start around \$20 (search online for coupon codes before placing your order).

If you plan to make a large number of books, consider a self-publisher such as HeritageCookbook.com.

Keep in mind the goal of your project. Is it a gift for a recent grad or family member? You might consider a space for note-taking. Is your book honoring a specific ancestor? Consider including a short biography page at the beginning of your book.

Here are other elements to consider:

- Table of contents or index
- Chapters or sections
- An introduction from you
- Blank pages or room for notes

Tip: It's helpful if the book can lie flat on a kitchen counter, or be propped up for easy reference while cooking.

4. Share, Celebrate and Eat!

Congratulations, your cookbook is done! Celebrate the culmination of your hard work by hosting a family dinner party or book launch. Now all that's left to do is savor your family's history.