

FAMILY RECIPE BOOK

Food, traditions & kitchen memories to make together

Inspired by The Year of the Dad by Michael D. Young



WHAT MAKES THIS A FAMILY RECIPE BOOK

The manuscript repeatedly treats food as more than fuel: pancakes become a Saturday tradition, cookies become a way to cook with children, breakfast in bed becomes an act of love, and freezer meals become service.

Pages marked FROM THE MANUSCRIPT preserve a recipe or tradition actually described in the book. Pages marked COMPANION RECIPE add a practical recipe inspired by the book so families can use the idea right away.

INSIDE

- Pancake traditions · Cake-mix cookies · No-bake treats
- Breakfast in bed · Tacos · BBQ · Spaghetti
- Christmas teacakes · Cookie train · Freezer meals
- Comfort-food planner · Family recipe pages

A SIMPLE RULE

Do not wait for the perfect recipe, perfect kitchen, or perfect mood. The manuscript's food entries work because they turn ordinary cooking into connection: children can stir, choose toppings, roll cookies, build edible creations, or carry a breakfast tray.

TWO TYPES OF PAGES

FROM THE MANUSCRIPT

The book provides the recipe or concrete tradition. I have reorganized and lightly paraphrased it for a printable family format.

COMPANION RECIPE

The manuscript supplies the idea, technique, or food tradition; the recipe measurements are added here as a practical companion.

COOKING WITH KIDS

- Give each child one real job they can do safely.
- Expect the kitchen to get a little messier than usual.
- Taste, adjust, and talk about what your family likes.
- Write down successful variations so they become family recipes.
- For knives, heat, grills, raw meat, and appliances, match the task to the child's age and supervise closely.

COMPANION RECIPE



The manuscript remembers pancakes as a Saturday staple in the Young household, including a sourdough starter that had to be used weekly. Its key lesson is technique: preheat, grease the pan, wait for stable bubbles, and do not worry about the imperfect first pancake.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 1/4 cups milk
- 1 egg
- 2 Tbsp melted butter or oil
- Optional mix-ins: berries, nuts, dried fruit, chocolate or other chips

MAKE IT

1. Whisk the dry ingredients together. In a second bowl, whisk milk, egg, and melted butter or oil.
2. Stir wet into dry just until combined; small lumps are fine. Fold in any mix-ins.
3. Preheat and lightly grease the griddle. Pour batter in family-size or fun-shaped pancakes.
4. Wait until bubbles pop and stay open before flipping. Cook the second side only a few minutes.

KIDS CAN HELP Measure ingredients, whisk batter, choose mix-ins, and invent a family pancake shape.

BOOK NOTE

The batter measurements on this page are a companion recipe. The manuscript supplies the pancake tradition, cooking tips, and mix-in ideas.

FROM THE MANUSCRIPT



This is one of the manuscript's most complete kid-friendly recipes: a shortcut from the author's mother that keeps the ingredient list short and leaves lots of room for family creativity.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 box cake mix - any flavor
- 2 eggs
- 1/3 cup oil
- Add-ins as desired: chocolate chips, nuts, candy pieces, or other favorites

MAKE IT

1. Mix the cake mix, eggs, oil, and chosen add-ins together.
2. Drop portions onto a greased cookie sheet.
3. Bake at 350°F for about 10 minutes.
4. Cool, taste, and write down the flavor combination your family liked best.

KIDS CAN HELP Choose the cake-mix flavor, pour ingredients, stir in add-ins, and help portion the dough.

BOOK NOTE

The manuscript specifically mentions white, yellow, devil's food, strawberry, lemon, and funfetti cake mixes as successful variations.

NO-BAKE CHOCOLATE OAT BITES

Inspired by Dad 79 No-Bake, No Hassle

COMPANION RECIPE

The manuscript remembers no-bake cookies as a favorite dessert to make with both parents, especially in summer because the oven could stay off. It describes the basic idea: sticky ingredients are mixed and chilled until they hold together.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup rolled oats
- 1/2 cup peanut butter or seed butter
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/3 cup mini chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup shredded coconut or chopped nuts, optional
- Pinch of salt

MAKE IT

1. Stir all ingredients together until evenly combined.
2. Chill the mixture for 20-30 minutes so it firms up.
3. Roll into small balls and place on a lined tray.
4. Refrigerate until firm; store chilled.

KIDS CAN HELP Measure, stir, scoop, and roll the mixture. No oven is required.

BOOK NOTE

The manuscript does not give one specific no-bake formula; this is an added companion version using the chocolate/peanut-butter style it mentions.

FROM THE MANUSCRIPT



The author remembers his father surprising his mother with breakfast in bed for Mother's Day, anniversaries, birthdays, and sometimes just because. As the children grew, they were invited to help prepare and carry the tray.

MAKE IT YOURS

- Choose foods the person actually loves. The manuscript remembers sourdough pancakes with buttermilk syrup, scrambled eggs, bacon, juice, or sometimes donuts and milk.
- Plan quietly the night before: decide who cooks, who sets the tray, and who carries each item.
- Let children contribute one element each so the meal becomes a shared act of love.
- Do not save it only for holidays. "Just because" can be the most memorable occasion.

PLAN OUR ROOM-SERVICE MORNING

Who are we surprising? _____

What will we serve? _____

What can each child do? _____

When will we do it? _____

FROM THE MANUSCRIPT



The manuscript encourages fathers to know the comfort foods their spouse enjoys and to use that knowledge as a thoughtful gesture after a difficult day. It also cautions that food should not become the only coping strategy.

MAKE IT YOURS

- Ask each family member what food feels comforting to them. The answer may be ice cream, chips, soup, a favorite dinner, or something entirely different.
- Keep one or two easy comfort options available for genuinely hard days.
- Pair the food with another form of care: listening, a walk, a break from chores, prayer, rest, or time together.
- Teach children that caring for people means noticing what helps them feel loved, not just handing them food.

OUR FAMILY COMFORT MENU

Dad's favorite _____

Spouse's favorite _____

Kids' favorites _____

Non-food comfort ideas _____

BUILD-YOUR-OWN TACO NIGHT

Inspired by Day 237: Tacos

COMPANION RECIPE

The manuscript calls tacos an easy, highly adaptable meal. It highlights cumin as a key seasoning and suggests experimenting with pepper, paprika, garlic, onion, and other spices; it also notes that beef, chicken, steak, or fish can work.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground beef, chicken, turkey, steak, fish, or beans
- 8-12 tortillas or taco shells
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp onion powder
- Optional heat: red pepper flakes or chili powder
- Toppings: lettuce, tomato, cheese, salsa, sour cream, avocado, etc.

MAKE IT

1. Cook the chosen filling completely; drain excess grease if needed.
2. Add the seasoning and a splash of water, then stir and simmer until coated.
3. Set out shells, filling, and toppings in separate bowls.
4. Let everyone build a taco that matches their own tastes.

KIDS CAN HELP Wash produce, place toppings in bowls, grate cheese with supervision, and build their own tacos.

BOOK NOTE

The spice quantities and serving format are added here; the manuscript supplies the flexible taco-night concept and seasoning ideas.

COMPANION RECIPE



The manuscript treats barbecuing as a useful skill for ordinary dinners as well as special occasions. Its strongest practical point is to use a meat thermometer rather than guessing whether meat is done.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup oil
- 3 Tbsp soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice or vinegar
- 1 Tbsp honey or brown sugar
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1-2 lb meat or vegetables suitable for grilling

MAKE IT

1. Whisk the marinade ingredients together.
2. Marinate food in the refrigerator in a covered container or sealed bag.
3. Preheat the grill and cook using a clean, oiled grate.
4. Use a meat thermometer for meat and follow current food-safety guidance for the specific food being cooked.

KIDS CAN HELP Whisk the marinade, brush vegetables, set the table, and help prepare side dishes away from raw meat.

BOOK NOTE

The marinade is an added companion recipe. The manuscript does not provide a marinade formula.

COMPANION RECIPE



The manuscript presents spaghetti as an easy meal that feeds a family and can provide leftovers. It suggests three levels: use jarred sauce, improve a jarred sauce with additions, or make a sauce from scratch; then customize with herbs, meats, cheeses, and noodle shapes.

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz spaghetti or another family-favorite pasta
- 1 jar pasta sauce (about 24 oz)
- 1 lb meatballs, ground meat, chicken, or no meat
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder
- Optional: basil, oregano, onion powder, black pepper
- Parmesan, Romano, cheddar, or another cheese for topping

MAKE IT

1. Cook the pasta according to the package directions.
2. Warm the sauce. Add cooked meat or meatballs if desired.
3. Taste and customize the sauce with herbs and seasonings.
4. Serve over noodles and let everyone choose a cheese topping.

KIDS CAN HELP Choose the noodle shape, stir the sauce with supervision, sprinkle herbs, and add their own cheese.

BOOK NOTE

The ingredient quantities are added here. The customization ideas come directly from the manuscript.

FROM THE MANUSCRIPT



The manuscript says the author's mother made many Christmas cookies, while his father had a specialty: Russian teacakes, also called kiffings. The point is as much inheritance as dessert - passing a family recipe to another generation.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 6 Tbsp powdered sugar
- 1 cup finely chopped walnuts
- Additional powdered sugar for rolling

MAKE IT

1. Heat oven to 350°F. Cream butter and vanilla until smooth.
2. Whisk flour and 6 Tbsp powdered sugar separately; stir into butter mixture until just blended. Add walnuts.
3. Roll small scoops into 1-inch balls and place about 2 inches apart on ungreased sheets.
4. Bake about 12 minutes, until edges begin to turn golden. Cool about 15 minutes, then roll in powdered sugar once or twice.

KIDS CAN HELP Measure dry ingredients, roll the dough balls, and coat fully cooled cookies in powdered sugar.

BOOK NOTE

This page paraphrases the recipe reproduced in the manuscript.

FROM THE MANUSCRIPT



Every Valentine's Day, the author's family built an edible cookie train together - something like a Valentine version of a gingerbread house. Because each year came out differently, the construction itself became the tradition.

MAKE IT YOURS

- Use round sandwich cookies for tanker-style cars and stacked rounds for the front of the engine.
- Use long wafer cookies and frosting to build rectangular cars.
- Decorate with frosting, candy, and conversation hearts.
- Display the finished train somewhere visible before the family begins "sampling" it.

DESIGN THIS YEAR'S TRAIN

Theme / colors _____

Cookies we will use _____

Candy decorations _____

Who builds which car? _____

FREEZER SPAGHETTI BAKE

Inspired by Day 317: Making Freezer Meals

COMPANION RECIPE



The manuscript recommends freezer meals as a way to help a family dealing with illness, a new baby, or another difficult season. It notes that several can be assembled in one session and that helping hands can participate in making and delivering them.

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz pasta, cooked just shy of done
- 1 jar pasta sauce (about 24 oz)
- 1 lb cooked ground meat or meatballs, optional
- 1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella
- 1/3 cup grated Parmesan
- Freezer-safe 9x13 pan or two smaller pans

MAKE IT

1. Combine cooked pasta, sauce, and cooked meat if using.
2. Spread in the freezer-safe pan and top with mozzarella and Parmesan.
3. Cool completely, cover tightly, label with the name and date, and freeze.
4. Thaw safely in the refrigerator before reheating; heat thoroughly before serving.

KIDS CAN HELP Stir the cooled mixture, sprinkle cheese, make the label, and help deliver the meal.

BOOK NOTE

The manuscript gives the freezer-meal service idea but not a specific dish; this spaghetti bake is an added companion recipe.

COMPANION ACTIVITY



Food in The Year of the Dad repeatedly becomes a way to serve: surprise a spouse, cook with children, feed the family, or bring a meal to someone who needs help. This page turns that theme into a repeatable family habit.

MAKE IT YOURS

- Once a month, choose one food project that is meant for someone outside your immediate household.
- Let children help choose the recipient and the food, then give them age-appropriate jobs in preparing it.
- Include a simple note or label so the recipient knows what the dish is and, when relevant, how to store or reheat it.
- Talk afterward about how making food for someone else felt different from cooking only for yourselves.

OUR NEXT FOOD-SERVICE PROJECT

Who could use a meal? _____

What will we make? _____

Who will help? _____

When will we deliver it? _____

OUR FAMILY RECIPE

Write down the one everyone asks for

MAKE IT YOUR OWN

Recipe name _____

Who taught us / where it came from _____

INGREDIENTS

DIRECTIONS

WHY THIS RECIPE MATTERS TO US

KIDS CAN HELP BY _____

OUR FAVORITE VARIATION _____

A RECIPE TO PASS DOWN

Write down the one everyone asks for

MAKE IT YOUR OWN

Recipe name _____

Who taught us / where it came from _____

INGREDIENTS

DIRECTIONS

WHY THIS RECIPE MATTERS TO US

KIDS CAN HELP BY _____

OUR FAVORITE VARIATION _____