

Home Made

Good, honest food made easy



Tana Ramsay

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Аннотация

Nothing beats the taste and comfort of real home made food. Bestselling cook Tana Ramsay has devised a fabulous range of mouth-watering recipes that will leave family and friends begging for second helpings. Always easy to make, you'll be free to spend more time with the people that count. Great food brings people together and Tana Ramsay's Home Made will do just that. Her recipes are a perfect combination of traditional flavours and modern twists, and are divided into 12 ingredient-led sections for ease of reference, including Chicken, Lamb, Pizzas and Chocolate. Beautifully illustrated throughout, highlights include succulent lemon chicken stew, crispy roast pork with haricot beans, pancetta & thyme, lazy bubble & squeak and a seriously sticky chocolate treacle pie. This is the perfect cookbook for anybody who wants to feed their loved ones great food every day.

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HOME MADE
Tana Ramsay
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nonfiction

To Meg, Jack, Holly and Tilly — my four babes x

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Cook's Notes

Butter: The type of butter is specified where it is critical.

Citrus fruit: If you're using the zest of oranges and lemons, buy unwaxed fruit. If you can't find this, wash the fruit in hot water before use.

Eggs: These are medium size unless specified otherwise. I use free-range eggs.

Poultry: I buy free-range wherever possible.

Salt and pepper: Generally I use sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper; sometimes white pepper is more appropriate and a finer or coarser grade of salt is required, and the recipe will tell you this.

Spoon measures: All spoon measures are level unless otherwise stated.



Introduction

Home has always been the most important place in my life – from my earliest childhood memories when home was the farm I lived on with my parents, brothers and sister, right up to today when home is where Gordon, the kids and I retreat to from the chaos of our busy lives. Even the word ‘home’ conjures up so many emotions for me – happiness, love, security; it’s my haven from the world outside.

When I was growing up in the country, life seemed much simpler than it does today. On non-school days my brothers, sister and I would leave the house early in the morning and run around the fields, making camps amongst the hay bales and only returning home when we were hungry. My children don’t have such freedom to roam in the modern city, but, just as we were, they are out at school and other activities from early in the morning and really active from dawn to dusk. And as they get older, life seems to get even busier.

Weekdays are usually pretty chaotic, and after all the rushing around, the place we all long to be is home, where we can have time out and find some sense of peace (as much as you can with four boisterous children bouncing around the house!). Home is the place where my family and I can switch off and just be. As a family of two working parents and four busy schoolchildren, coming home gives us the opportunity to be together, to take a

break from the madness and pause long enough to catch up on everything that's going on.

Once through the door, the coats and bags are put away and we all switch from working mode into a more relaxed atmosphere. We usually end up in the kitchen and talk about our days and all the things that made it good or bad – doing well at sport or lessons, something nice that someone said, not making the school team or play, or the friendship fall-outs and fights. All these things can be poured out within the comfort and security of our home, where we all know that none of us will judge the other, but just listen. This is home. This is where, for us, real life happens.

Even before I had my children, creating a sense of home was important to me; just as now it is a place for us to talk with the children, so it was for Gordon and me before they arrived on the scene. When we first met he was working late every night and I was working all day and studying to be a Montessori teacher in the evenings, but even then we would have a cup of tea in the small hours when he got home so that we could spend time together (something we still do now). Like any other mother, I want the best for our children; I want them to be happy and healthy and remember their childhood as fondly as I do mine. Even though my childhood in the country was very different to their urban lifestyle, the one thing that remains the same is having that sense of security and peace. And that's what I believe a home is all about.

My mother is my inspiration for how to run a home; no matter how busy she was, she would always have time for us and would make sure that we had everything we needed. My mother puts me to shame: not only did she manage the farm, the home and cook all our food from scratch, but she also still made sure that she always had her lipstick on! When my brothers and sister and I would come home from school or play, tired from our exertions and having worked up an appetite, there would always be a meal ready and waiting for us, and I can even remember a time when everything on the table – from the butter to the wine – was made by her.

Like my mother, I have this idea that there are some things that only I can do for my children, and if you ask my friends and family about this they'll tell you that I like to do everything myself. Unlike my mother, I have no desire to make my own butter, bread, or even wine, but I do feel passionately about providing the family with healthy, nutritious and home-cooked food. Before I had children, good soulful home-cooked food was something that I reminisced about; certain smells and dishes have always reminded me of places and people in my life and spark happy memories of growing up with my family and of my mother's amazing cooking, but now I see it as an essential part of creating a sense of home for my own family.

Because my weekdays are usually spent juggling work and ferrying the children between school and post-school activities, I find that the best way of ensuring these meals are on the table

every night is to plan them in advance. Getting ahead a few days at a time means that I always know what I'm going to be cooking and don't have to think about it as the children spill through the door, tired, hungry and expectantly sniffing for the comforting smells from the kitchen that will reassure them their dinner is on its way. Sometimes this planning might only go as far as knowing that I'm going to cook chicken one night and fish or pasta another, and then it's a case of raiding the cupboard or the fridge and perhaps using up what's in there to go with it. But that's often enough to make life easier, and I love being able to pull out various ingredients to produce something quick and delicious from a few odds and ends. Of course, I've cooked all the recipes in this book at some time or another, but if I'm honest, the majority were created just by experimenting with what ingredients I had at the time.

So that's why this new collection of recipes is based around my favourite core ingredients: chicken and duck, beef, fish and seafood, lamb, pork, vegetables, potatoes, fruit and chocolate, and also essential dishes such as soups, pizza and pasta. My aim is to give you inspiration for those times when you stand staring into the fridge wondering what to do with the chicken thighs, pork, or salmon fillet that you want to cook tonight, and to give you a few new options for easy ways to pep up essential basic ingredients with just a few extra ones. Good honest home cooking doesn't need to be complicated; even putting the simplest meal on the table should warm the heart and restore the soul, just because it

gives you the opportunity to sit down together as a family.

My attitude to cooking – and to family life in general – is quite relaxed and not precious, and I suppose I'm more of a 'chuck it all in the pan' kind of cook. This is probably because, on busy weeknights when the family are all returning home at different hours, I don't have time to mess around with complicated dishes and getting everything just so. If I do follow a recipe, I use it as the skeleton of a dish, and I'll happily substitute one vegetable for another that I have in the fridge that needs using up, for instance, or use something that looked particularly appealing when I was out shopping. So when following any recipe, mine included, my advice would be to not get hung up on quantities – if there are three mushrooms left in the bag more than the recipe calls for, chuck them in too, or if the recipe demands two celery sticks and you have only one, don't rush down to the supermarket to buy it. Getting a meal on the table for the family after a long day at work or doing other things can be stressful enough, so why make it more complicated than it needs to be?

So if, like me, you think about your meals in advance and like to have meat or chicken a couple of times a week, or pasta once, or keep desserts only for the weekend, then I hope this book will help you to make a few decisions on what you're going to cook. The chapters here are divided up by the ingredients I cook with most at home and reflect how I plan the meals for my lot. Whether you're cooking a revitalizing supper for a horde of hungry schoolchildren, a lovely, homely meal for the frazzled

family winding down on a Friday night, a lazy weekend lunch for friends and extended family, or a cosy meal à deux after the kids have gone to bed, I hope you can find something here that suits your needs, keeps your family happy at the end of a day, and that the look on their faces as they tuck in will remind you just how good home cooking can be.



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