

Eat Well, Save Money, and Be Happy

By Antoinette Minarchi



Your step by step instruction book (with photos),
to help you create great meals for your family

Thank You

Thank you for trying my recipes. I hope they bring you wellbeing and peace.

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Introduction

If you are like so many parents: working, running back and forth, taking care of your family, then let this book help simplify your life.

Or perhaps, you are like many of my friends, working at your career for many years, and now you can't find your way around a kitchen.

If you work all day, run home to put a meal on for your family, and are crunched for time. My recipes will help you.

Stop spending \$20, \$30, or \$40 to pick up a pizza, or run to some restaurant out of desperation. Be ready for whatever happens in your household. Go home, and serve your family one of your fantastic dinners, right out of your own freezer!

I've written this book for people who are not comfortable in the kitchen. The goal is to teach you how to cook these dishes, the way they were taught to me by my mother and grandmother. If you are an accomplished chef, this book isn't for you.

My recipes are not science projects that must be followed to the letter. In fact, you can't do that with this book. The measurements are only approximations to guide you.

My recipes are a little like making art. Once you know what you are doing, you may feel like spicing it up a bit! Hopefully, this book will show you how to prepare these meals in such a way, that you will gain so much confidence, you'll start adding or subtracting ingredients on your own.

Eat Well, Save Money, and Be Happy

This is how my grandmother cooked, and my mother still cooks. I learned how to cook by helping and watching. I'm still learning from my mother. I hope all the pictures I've taken while cooking these dishes will help you see how it's done, as if you were in my kitchen, watching me.

The whole point of learning to make these meals is to give you the freedom to make a great dinner, even if you don't have everything the recipe calls for. Improvise! Have fun! Get comfortable with a dish, and practice. Best of all, the dinners freeze really well, so you can cook up a storm on the weekends, and relax and enjoy your ready made dinners during the week.

Which brings me to the whole point of this book. To "Eat Well, Save Money and Be Happy", you need to prepare a couple of these dinners during your weekend. I like to cook twice as much as what I need for one meal, so I can have it that day, and freeze the rest. Then, during the week, in the morning, before you go to work, you can look in your freezer, pull out a dinner, and put it in your refrigerator to defrost. That night, when you come home, just reheat, and you have a delicious, homemade dinner for you and your family!

Now, for the most important tip you need to be really great at home cooking, you need to love the people you are cooking for. Then it's not work, but a wonderful gift for your family.

So let's start...

About the Author

I am the proud mother of a wonderful six year old boy.

Somewhere, during his preschool years, I realized that he may never marry a woman that would cook. So I started writing this book. I wanted to make sure that he would always have the know how to make the food he was raised on.

I also wrote this for all the wonderful friends I've acquired through the years. So many have not been exposed to the pleasures of creating good food. So many are at the mercy of fast food restaurants and frozen foods.

I wanted to share the wonderful feeling and sense of accomplishment one receives when you can create something like a satisfying soup. Imagine, you had a hard day at work. You rush home. Everyone is hungry. You can calmly say, okay we'll eat in a few minutes. And you serve absolutely delicious homemade soup. What a great dinner! And you can be proud that you gave your family real food that is good for them.

After many discussions with my friends, I realized that the only way they would try a recipe, was if every step was clearly spelled out, as if they were in my kitchen. And that's how I created this book. As a manual to empower the novice cook.

Table of Contents

Thank You	1
Introduction	2
Eat Well, Save Money, and Be Happy	3
About the Author	4
Table of Contents	5
Kitchen Essentials	6
In your pantry	6
In your Refrigerator	6
In your freezer	7
Tools	7
Plastic Containers	7
Dinners	7
Extras/Side Dishes	8
Sauce for Macaroni	9
Ingredients	9
Method	9

Kitchen Essentials

The mark of an empowered cook is to be able to go into your kitchen at any time, and put together a great meal, with whatever you have. This list will help you do that. Try to keep your kitchen stocked with the following:

In your pantry

Olive Oil
Red Wine Vinegar
Apple Cider Vinegar
Oregano
Herbs de Provence
Rosemary
Rice
Macaroni (Various Types)
Tomato Paste
Tomato Puree
Whole Canned Tomatoes
Dried Parsley
Vegetable Oil Salt
Pepper

In your Refrigerator

Potatoes (If you have a cool cellar, they are better off there)
Onions (They also do better in a cool cellar – keep a few feet away from the Potatoes)
Tomatoes (They do very well right on your kitchen counter)
Garlic
Lemon
Lettuce
Eggs

In your freezer

Ground Beef
Whole Chicken
Whole Chicken cut into 8-9 pieces
Chicken Breast with Bone
Pork Chops
Italian Sausage
Frozen Corn
Frozen Peas
All Purpose Flour

Tools

2-3 Wooden Spoons with long handles
Stainless Steel strainer for soup
(see photo)
5 quart non-stick pot
2 large kettles



Plastic Containers

Make sure you have large airtight plastic containers to hold the food you create. The containers need to be freezer proof, so your food will not get freezer burn.

Dinners

You'll notice that these dinners are basic, everyday foods your family will love. I definitely recommend making the Sauce for Macaroni and the Chicken Soup. Once you are stocked up with those two items, your life will immediately become much easier and happier!

Just by keeping the Sauce and Chicken Soup stocked in your freezer, you will always have two different delicious dinners ready for your family. Of course, I hope you try the other recipes for variety. But, if you only make the Sauce and the Chicken Soup, you and your family will feel the difference. (Less stress, more money.)

Sauce for Macaroni (With Meatballs)
Baked Chicken with Potatoes and Onion
Marinated Chicken Breasts with Lemon
Pork Chops with Potatoes and Onion
Pork Roast with Potatoes
Chicken Soup
Beef Stew
Pasta Fagioli (Beans and Pasta Soup)

Extras/Side Dishes

The following recipes can be made while you reheat the main course.

Salad Dressing
Peas – with garlic and onion
Easy Asparagus
Beans and Greens
Broccoli
French Fries

Sauce for Macaroni

Ingredients

Meatballs (see recipe)
1-2 pounds Italian Sausage
(Sweet or Hot or Both)
1-2 pounds Pork – Country Style
Ribs
a. 1-2 pounds Neck Bones
(Optional)
2 small cans Tomato Paste – 6
ounce cans
2 large can Tomato Puree – 1
pound cans
Salt and Pepper – 1/2 teaspoon
each, if in doubt
2 tablespoons or more of Olive Oil



Method

Brown each type of meat separately. Start with Meatballs, then brown the other meats. Pour about a cup or so of water in your pan. Make it a 1 inch deep.

When browning Pork, poke holes with a fork in each piece.



To make sure the Pork is cooked, cut a piece in half. It is not cooked if it is pink.

If the water evaporates, add more, about a 1/2 cup.



After the meat is browned – remove to a large bowl.



Then pour the drippings into a large kettle.

Repeat steps for each meat type. Brown, remove, pour water into kettle.

When all the meat has browned, and all drippings are in the kettle, add the Tomato Paste to the kettle. Put the burner on low.



After you have emptied the Tomato Paste cans, fill them with water, then pour into kettle. Let this cook for a few minutes, until it is smooth. Stir often. Do exactly the same with the puree. Fill each can with water, so it can grab any leftover puree, and add it to the kettle.



Add 2 tablespoons (or a little more) of Olive Oil to kettle, and Salt and Pepper to taste. Simmer on low for a half hour. Stir occasionally.

Add all meats back to kettle, let simmer until thick, about 1 to 1½ hours.

Stir occasionally.



Note: If you don't make the Meatballs, do this before you add the puree, add a couple of tablespoons of Olive Oil to the broth, and 2-3 chopped cloves of Garlic. Sauté. Then add puree, and continue with directions.

What to do with this sauce...



Separate the Meatballs to make sandwiches for lunch.

Separate into thirds or fourths, then freeze, to use for future meals.