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# **Me, You and the Kids Too**

Written by Renée Elliott

Published by Duncan Baird Publishers

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# me, you & the kids too

*Renée Elliott*



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## ME, YOU & THE KIDS TOO

Renée Elliott

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a medical professional before following any of the recipes  
contained in this book.

*To my mom, Lucille, and my dad, Edward. And also  
to Grace, my editor, who gave this book so much.*

### Vegetarian recipes

Vegetarian recipes in this book contain no meat, poultry,  
game, fish or shellfish. They may include eggs or cheese.  
Cheese, especially those made using traditional methods,  
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### Unless otherwise stated:

- All recipes serve 2 adults, 1 child and 1 baby
- Preparation and cooking times refer to the main  
recipes only
- Use organic ingredients
- Use wild salmon
- Use large eggs
- Use medium fruit and vegetables
- Use fresh ingredients, including herbs
- Do not mix metric and imperial measurements
- 1 tsp = 5ml 1 tbsp = 15ml 1 cup = 250ml

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# Introduction

A friend once said to me that raising kids is simple – all you have to do is marinate them in love for 18 years and then send them out into the world. I agree with this completely and from my perspective, the second priority – if you want them to be strong, live well and fulfil their potential – is to feed them nutritious food so that they have good health. Without wellbeing, it is difficult or impossible to do anything. Yet with a foundation of health and vitality, your children can pursue their dreams.

Before I had my eldest daughter, Jessica, I was a pretty good cook. I had been working in natural foods for ten years and cared about what I ate. I made home-cooked food and liked to bake occasionally. When Jessie was born, I happily breast-fed her for four months, but when she started to reach for my spoon, I realized that I actually had no idea how or what to cook for a baby. I hadn't planned on giving her jarred baby food because I knew instinctively that I wanted

to give her fresh, home-made meals. But, other than that, I didn't know what to do.

I knew I didn't want her to have refined foods, like white rice and white flour, because they are so low in nutrition, and I wondered whether she should be eating things like gluten, dairy or soya early on. I found one great book, did lots of nutritional research and quizzed many experts – and formulated a feeding plan as I went. I took notes on recipes I created and techniques I discovered and carried on in the same way when I had my second child, Nicholas. My babies flourished and when my youngest, Cassandra, was ready to wean, I wrote it all down in my first book, *The Best Recipes for Babies & Toddlers*.

However, with work and three young children, I was so tired and busy, that cooking for myself and my husband, Brian, was too often an afterthought. I knew that I had to be well nourished in order to be able to take care of everyone else, but I would make gorgeous meals for them and then wonder what on earth we were going to eat. And I was often too befuddled from the broken nights to figure it out.

My editor, Grace, who had a young baby, was going through the same experience. She said, 'What we need is a book for the whole family – a book that helps people cook great meals for themselves, as well as their kids, so they can take care of their needs at the same time as providing the best start for their baby.' And so this book was born.

This book is filled with the most nourishing and delicious meals for you and your family. Just pick a recipe and, from that recipe, comes food for you, your partner and your kids – as well as a step-by-step guide to preparing a meal for your baby at the same time. You don't need extra ingredients and it's all worked out for you – whether you have a 6–9 or 9–12 month old.

Like all parents, I don't always do a perfect job. But I have managed to incorporate some solid nutritional basics into our daily and weekly routines, such as using wholemeal flours, eating different grains and including superfoods such as seaweeds and seeds. You'll never



begin all of them at once, so just take it slowly. But I hope that you will be inspired to pick some things out of the book that spark your interest and gradually try to make each one a habit – like changing your baking to use wholemeal spelt flour or not buying sweetened breakfast cereals.

When you decide you want a baby and imagine lying on the sofa snuggling your little one, the last thing on your mind is the amount of cooking you will be doing for that little person. But even if cooking isn't really your thing – or hasn't been up until now – it's a fact of life that if you want to make nourishing food, then someone needs to get in the kitchen!

There is a lot of food to prepare for kids who can't do anything for themselves in the kitchen for many years. I realized that I needed to work out a way to make my family's meals easily – without having to take time from all of the other things I needed to do (like working and getting some sleep myself).

However, this book isn't just about cooking for your baby and kids; it's about cooking great meals for you and your partner, too. You'll find it easy to cook something delicious for yourselves and enjoy some

time together in the evening, all the while making sure you're nourishing yourself.

Although some of these recipes may take time on the hob or in the oven, they are all very simple to make – using quick preparation techniques and very easy steps to follow. And while you're cooking the meal, you can whizz up a meal for your baby, too. You don't have to puzzle anything out, and the recipes make cooking for your baby a breeze because you're using the same ingredients for your meal.







# chapter one

## start the day well

I love breakfast because it's a brilliant opportunity to get something wonderful into your baby or your kids, as everyone usually wakes up hungry. There are recipes here for rushed mornings when you're short on time, like the Pear & Pecan Smoothie. This recipe then gives you a Pear & Brown Rice Purée for a 6–9 month old and Pear, Rice & Yogurt Mix for a 9–12 month old.

For mornings when you have planned ahead, there are lovely soaked porridges made from fabulous grains like amaranth or millet. And for the leisurely weekends when you get up with nowhere you have to be, you can mix up some American-style Three-Grain Pancakes with Papaya. Forget those sugary breakfast cereals and discover wonderful dishes to start the day well. You'll also find breakfast breads in chapter four.





Saturday pancakes are a family tradition. I like to mix the oat milk, grains and yogurt the night before and leave them at room temperature to ferment a little. In the morning, just mix in the other ingredients.

## Three-Grain Pancakes with Papaya

**MAKES:** 12 pancakes  
**PREPARATION TIME:** 20 minutes  
**COOKING TIME:** 18 minutes  
**STORAGE:** Refrigerate the uncooked batter for up to 1 day. Refrigerate the pancakes for up to 3 days.

1 papaya, peeled, deseeded and roughly chopped  
1 egg  
200ml/7fl oz/scant 1 cup oat milk, rice milk or water  
3 tbsp sunflower oil, plus extra for frying if needed  
50g/1¾oz/½ cup buckwheat flour  
90g/3¼oz/¾ cup wholemeal spelt flour or wholemeal plain flour  
55g/2oz/½ cup fast-cook polenta  
½ tsp baking powder  
½ tsp fine sea salt  
unsalted butter and maple syrup, to serve (optional), or 1 lemon, cut into wedges and cane sugar, to serve (optional)

- 1 Put the papaya in a blender and blend, adding water 1 tablespoon at a time, until smooth, then transfer to a bowl and set aside. **(6-9) (9-12)**
- 2 In a large bowl, lightly beat the egg with a whisk. Add the oat milk and 1 tablespoon of the oil and whisk. In another bowl, mix together the flours, polenta, baking powder and salt. Add the flour mixture to the egg mixture and whisk until smooth.
- 3 Preheat the oven to 100°C/200°F/gas ½. Heat the remaining oil in a large, heavy-based frying pan, or heat a griddle pan, over a medium-low heat. Working in batches, pour 2 tablespoons of the batter into the pan to make a pancake and repeat, spacing the pancakes slightly apart. Cook for 2–3 minutes on each side or until the bubbles that appear on the surface pop and the undersides of the pancakes are lightly browned. Keep warm in the oven while you repeat with the remaining batter, adding more oil to the pan as needed.
- 4 Serve hot with the papaya purée. Alternatively, serve with a little butter spread on top and drizzled with maple syrup, or sprinkle with freshly squeezed lemon juice and sugar.

**(6-9) PAPAYA PURÉE**  
Put 5 tablespoons of the papaya purée in a bowl and serve warm or at room temperature.

**(9-12) BUCKWHEAT PANCAKES WITH PAPAYA PURÉE**  
Mix together 2 tablespoons of the buckwheat flour and 3 tablespoons water in a small bowl to form a smooth paste. Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a heavy-based frying pan over a medium-low heat. Pour the batter into the pan to make a pancake and cook for 1–2 minutes on each side until the bubbles that appear on the surface pop and the underside of the pancake is lightly browned. Transfer to a blender and add 2 tablespoons water. Pulse for 15 seconds, adding extra water 1 teaspoon at a time, until the mixture forms a lumpy purée. Serve warm with 2 tablespoons of the papaya purée.







## chapter two time for lunch

Lunchtime is a great opportunity to take a little bit of time out of your hectic day and sit with your family. Here you'll find a wide selection of recipes to fill them with delicious, nourishing food – all easy to make, and all with variations for your baby.

Try the ingenious recipe for Chicken, Ham & Cheesy Pasta, for example. No need to make a separate cheese sauce, or to cook the vegetables first. What's more, you can whizz up a Chicken, Broccoli & Cauliflower Pasta Purée for a 6–9 month old, or a Chicken with Mixed Vegetables & Pasta for a 9–12 month old.

Lunches are wonderful eaten outdoors and sometimes need to be on the run. You'll find recipes that work for you – Corn Fritters with Ham & Mango Salsa and Bean Dip Feast, for example – both perfect for filling lunchboxes or for picnics in the park or on the beach.





My brother, David, gave me this favourite recipe of his. The combination of chicken, ham and cheese create wonderful, strong flavours. My friend Kate made it and said it was so good that she managed to get her son Barny to eat cauliflower.

## Chicken, Ham & Cheesy Pasta

**SERVES:** 2 adults, 1 child and 1 baby  
**PREPARATION TIME:** 25 minutes  
**COOKING TIME:** 30 minutes  
**STORAGE:** Refrigerate for up to 1 day.

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3 boneless, skinless chicken breast fillets or 6 boneless, skinless chicken thigh fillets  
1 tbsp unsalted butter  
85g/3oz cauliflower, cut into small florets  
85g/3oz broccoli, cut into small florets  
1 small green pepper, halved, deseeded and chopped  
1 small onion, finely chopped  
1 garlic clove, crushed  
2 tbsp wholemeal spelt flour or wholemeal plain flour  
85g/3oz ham, diced  
30g/1oz mature Cheddar cheese, grated  
30g/1oz Parmesan or Romano cheese, grated  
1 tbsp Dijon mustard  
1 tsp fine sea salt  
300g/10½oz brown rice pasta, millet pasta, quinoa pasta or buckwheat pasta, any shape  
freshly ground black pepper

**1** Preheat the grill to medium. Put the chicken on a baking tray and grill for 5–8 minutes on each side until cooked through and the juices run clear. Remove from the grill and slice the chicken into thin slices. **6-9** **9-12**

**2** Heat the butter in a large, heavy-based frying pan over a medium-high heat. Add the cauliflower, broccoli, pepper, onion and garlic and cook for 5 minutes until just cooked but crunchy. Stir in the flour, then add 185ml/6fl oz/¾ cup water and bring to the boil over a medium-high heat. Cook for about 5 minutes, stirring continuously, until the sauce thickens. Mix in the ham, cheeses, mustard and salt, and season with pepper.

**3** Meanwhile, cook the pasta in plenty of boiling water, according to the packet instructions. Drain well, add to the cheesy sauce and mix well. Serve hot, topped with slices of chicken.

**6-9** **CHICKEN, BROCCOLI & CAULIFLOWER PASTA PURÉE**  
Put 3 pieces each of the cauliflower and broccoli in a steamer and steam, covered, for 10 minutes until completely soft. Transfer to a blender and add 50g/1¾oz of the cooked chicken, 2 tablespoons of chopped, cooked pasta (without the cheesy sauce) and 4 tablespoons water. Blend for 30 seconds, adding extra water 1 teaspoon at a time, until smooth. Serve warm.

**9-12** **CHICKEN WITH MIXED VEGETABLES & PASTA**  
Put 3 pieces each of the cauliflower and broccoli, 1 teaspoon of the onion and a pinch of the garlic in a steamer and steam, covered, for 10 minutes until completely soft. Transfer to a blender and add 50g/1¾oz of the cooked chicken, 2 tablespoons of chopped, cooked pasta (without the cheesy sauce) and 4 tablespoons water. Pulse for 15 seconds, adding extra water 1 teaspoon at a time, until the mixture forms a lumpy purée. Serve warm.







## chapter three around the table

I find that I need a wide selection of dinners. There are weekdays when there isn't much time and I haven't planned ahead; weekends when I am happy to spend a little more time putting a meal together; and dinners with friends where I want to create something quite special. Whether you're feeling like meat, chicken or fish; beans or lentils; or anything from pasta to rice to more unusual grains, there are recipes to tempt you.

There are spring delights like Herb-Crusted Fish, summer favourites such as Open Quesadilla with Salsa, autumn treats like Pancetta-Wrapped Chicken with Quinoa Salad or winter stews such as Slowly Simmered Beef & Onion Stew. These will all provide you with wonderful meals for the whole family – whether they are 6-month olds or 60-year olds!





# Lamb Biryani

**SERVES:** 2 adults, 1 child and 1 baby  
**PREPARATION TIME:** 30 minutes, plus at least 7 hours soaking, plus at least 2 hours marinating  
**COOKING TIME:** 1 hour 10 minutes  
**STORAGE:** Refrigerate for up to 1 day.

300g/10½oz/1½ cups brown basmati or long grain rice  
1½ tbsp natural yogurt or kefir, for soaking  
500g/1lb 2oz boneless leg of lamb, trimmed of fat and cut into chunks  
¼ tsp saffron threads  
3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil or ghee  
3 onions, halved and thinly sliced  
1½ tsp fine sea salt  
steamed mangetout, to serve

## FOR THE MARINADE

185ml/6fl oz/¾ cup natural yogurt  
1 tbsp lemon juice or white wine vinegar  
2 fresh green chillies, halved, deseeded and thinly sliced  
1 tbsp grated root ginger  
3 garlic cloves, crushed  
1½ tsp ground coriander  
1 tsp paprika  
¼ tsp turmeric  
½ tsp ground cumin  
½ tsp chilli powder  
¼ tsp ground cinnamon  
¼ tsp ground cardamom  
¼ tsp ground cloves  
1 tsp fine sea salt

**1** <sup>(6-9)</sup> <sup>(9-12)</sup> Put the rice, yogurt and 800ml/28fl oz/scant 3½ cups water in a large saucepan and leave to soak, covered, for 7 hours or overnight at room temperature.

**2** To make the marinade, put all of the ingredients in a non-reactive bowl and mix well. Add the lamb and stir well, making sure the lamb is covered in the marinade. Cover and leave to marinate in the fridge for 2 hours or overnight.

**3** Put the saffron in a small bowl, cover with 1 tablespoon warm water and leave to soak. Heat the oil in a large, heavy-based saucepan or casserole dish over a medium heat. Add the onions and fry for 5 minutes until beginning to brown, then turn the heat up to medium-high. Add the rice and soaking water, salt and the saffron mixture and bring to the boil over a high heat, then turn the heat down to low.

**4** Add the lamb and the marinade and simmer, covered, for 1 hour until the lamb is tender and the rice is soft. Gently stir the lamb and rice together until they are mixed well. Serve hot with steamed mangetout.

## **6-9** LAMB, MANGETOUT & BROWN RICE PURÉE

Put 4 tablespoons of the brown rice, 1 teaspoon of the yogurt and 240ml/8fl oz/scant 1 cup water in a heavy-based saucepan and leave to soak, covered, for 7 hours or overnight at room temperature. Add 50g/1¾oz of the lamb and bring to the boil over a medium-high heat. Turn the heat down to low and simmer, covered, for 50 minutes. Add 4 steamed mangetout and simmer, covered, for a further 10 minutes until the lamb is completely cooked through and the rice is completely soft. Transfer to a blender and blend for 30 seconds, adding water 1 teaspoon at a time, until smooth. Mix in 1 teaspoon of the oil and serve warm.

## **9-12** LAMB STEW

Put 4 tablespoons of the brown rice, 1 teaspoon of the yogurt and 240ml/8fl oz/scant 1 cup water in a heavy-based saucepan and leave to soak, covered, for 7 hours or overnight at room temperature. Add 50g/1¾oz of the lamb, 1 teaspoon of the onion and a pinch of the garlic and bring to the boil over a medium-high heat. Turn the heat down to low and simmer, covered, for 50 minutes. Add 4 steamed mangetout and simmer, covered, for a further 10 minutes until the lamb is completely cooked through and the rice is completely soft. Transfer to a blender and pulse for 15 seconds, adding water 1 teaspoon at a time, until the mixture forms a lumpy purée. Mix in 1 teaspoon of the oil and serve warm.







## chapter four baked treats

We finish off with the absolute joy of baking. Here are breakfast breads, healthy snacks, bakes and cakes, pies and puddings – and fruits galore. Not a huge fan of dessert, I make my sweet treats with ingredients like wholemeal flour, rice malt syrup, fruits or vegetables. But you'd never know it – guests never guess that my brownies contain sweet potatoes and who cares if pie is made with wholemeal pastry?

This chapter is not about serving desserts to your children every day – and certainly not to a baby. But it will provide you with methods for cooking and baking fruits, like Apple & Blueberry Bake, which is great for snacking or adding to lunchboxes, and means you've got Baked Apple & Buckwheat Purée for a 6–9 month old or Baked Apple & Blueberry for a 9–12 month old.





Irresistible to children and grown-ups, these are densely chocolatey and lightly sweet. These brownies are made with sweet potato so they are a twist on the American classic. Although the rice malt syrup won't over-excite you, the chocolate will, so go easy.

## Sweet Potato Brownies

**MAKES:** 9  
**PREPARATION TIME:** 30 minutes  
**COOKING TIME:** 40 minutes  
**STORAGE:** Refrigerate for up to 3 days.

350g/12oz sweet potatoes, peeled and diced  
90g/3¼oz unsalted butter, plus extra for greasing  
40g/1½oz/½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder  
2 tsp vanilla extract  
2 large eggs  
240ml/8fl oz/scant 1 cup rice malt syrup or 140g/5oz/scant ¾ cup cane sugar  
135g/4¾oz/1 cup + 1 tbsp wholemeal spelt flour or wholemeal plain flour  
1½ tsp baking powder  
½ tsp fine sea salt

**1** Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas 4. Grease a 20 x 20cm/8 x 8in baking tin with butter, line with baking parchment and grease again. Put the sweet potatoes in a steamer and steam, covered, for 8–10 minutes until completely soft. **6-9** **9-12** Transfer to a large bowl and mash thoroughly until smooth.

**2** Heat the butter in a saucepan over a low heat until melted. Remove from the heat, add the cocoa powder and vanilla extract and stir until well combined. In a small bowl, lightly beat the eggs together with a whisk. Add the eggs, cocoa mixture and rice malt syrup to the sweet potatoes and mix well. In another bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder and salt, then add to the sweet potato mixture and fold until well mixed, but take care not to overmix.

**3** Spoon the mixture into the baking tin and smooth the surface with a spatula. Bake for 35–40 minutes until the surface is cracked and a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean. Remove from the oven and leave to cool in the tin for 5 minutes. Cut into squares and transfer to a wire rack to cool. Serve warm or at room temperature.

### **6-9** SWEET POTATO PURÉE

Put 5 tablespoons of the steamed sweet potato and 3 tablespoons water in a blender. Blend for 30 seconds, adding extra water 1 teaspoon at a time, until smooth. Serve warm.

### **9-12** BUTTERY SWEET POTATO MASH

Put 5 tablespoons of the steamed sweet potato and 3 tablespoons water in a blender. Pulse for 15 seconds, adding extra water 1 teaspoon at a time, until the mixture forms a lumpy purée. Mix in 1 teaspoon of the melted butter and serve warm.

