

PREPARED TO COOK



Compiled by
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How PREPARED TO COOK came to be

"*She provides food for her household*" - Proverbs 31:15

It is ironic that this "cook book" has been compiled by someone who has very little interest in cooking. It was created out of necessity rather than passion.

Preparing food for my household is not a task I particularly enjoy, and cooking is definitely not one of my interests or strong points. It is a daily chore and to be honest, at times it has been a real burden ... especially when I have arrived home late or when I have not been organised – missing the necessary ingredients, often at a time of day when the children are cranky, baby is whining and hubby comes home tired and hungry.

Recently, I have made it my mission to "look to the affairs of my household" and to get better organised than I was before. Having a new baby and other new business responsibilities at home, I have to be better organised and better *prepared to cook*...

As I set about doing this, I discovered an online recipe service. In return for a fee, one can receive weekly recipes and a shopping list for that week's meals. This sounded like a great idea, but when I looked at the sample meal planner and recipes I realised that there would be very few meals that I could actually use - for two reasons. Firstly, many of the ingredients are not readily available in our local South African supermarkets and secondly, my family probably would not eat such unusual foods.

1. Since I usually have my children in tow when I do my weekly shopping, I try to do a one-stop-shop at the local supermarket. I generally do not go to Woolies foods, fruit and vegetable markets, health stores or delicatessens.
2. As much as I would like to eat mainly vegetarian meals with the odd meat meal in between, my husband is a typical South African man who generally likes his "rys, vleis en aartappels" (rice, meat and potatoes) so that is mainly how we eat. I add vegetables and salads too!

So I decided to make my own meal planner that meets the above criteria. Most meals I have included are typically eaten by South Africans, with the choice of accompanying veggies or salads left open or just suggestions given.

So far it consists of 6 meals per week for 6 weeks. These can then be repeated the following 6 weeks, which will provide 3 months worth of meals. The 7th day of each week is not planned to allow for meals eaten out, take-aways, braais, picnics, eating leftovers or repeating family favourites. Some weeks, there is a bonus recipe - something special to add to the meal or a handy recipe to keep for the right occasion!

My goal is to plan *AT LEAST* another 6 weeks worth of meals, which when repeated, will get me to a total of 6 months worth of meals. When these are all repeated, I will have recipes for a whole year, with the least favourite meals only having to be prepared 4 times in the year...and of course the family favourites can be repeated as often as we like, on the seventh day of each week. If I receive more recipes, there will be less repetition!

I have been typing up my recipes and making the shopping lists for the past few weeks and already it has made my grocery shopping a pleasure, but best of all it has taken away the burden of just thinking about what to make for supper each day. I just look at my list and know that I already have all the ingredients – no last minute panics.

After starting my dinner organiser, I wondered if other moms would not benefit from it too, so I sent out an email, offering it to anyone who would send me a minimum of 6 recipes for MAIN MEALS. I have now compiled another 6 weeks-worth of shopping lists and recipes.

These should be printed out and presented in an attractive Show File with plastic sleeves that can lie on your kitchen counter which is where you will need it. If you make extra copies of the shopping lists, the shopping list can easily be removed each week, to tick off the products you already have in store, before taking it along with you to buy the rest. List any additional household items that you need to buy on the back of the page and you are set to go. You should buy a good quality 50 pocket Show File in which to store the recipes.

Please forward this e-book to anyone whom you think may be interested in or able to contribute to or benefit from this publication. I have placed a copyright on the materials to prevent anyone perhaps publishing anything I have created for their own gain. However, please feel free to pass this on to anyone who you know personally who will be blessed by it, free of charge. If you have received *PREPARED TO COOK* from anyone but the author, please send an email to shirleyjean@whalemail.co.za. I would like to see how many people it reaches.

Any other tips or ideas are also welcome. I hope that this dinner organiser will help to ease the burden for other busy moms who find providing meals a challenge and that you and your families will be blessed by it.

Kind regards
Shirley Erwee, August 2005

P.S. My latest project is building a new website ...and I knew nothing about a web-based business when I started. This is a great opportunity for you to become a Work-at-Home-Mom and earn money sharing something that you choose that you love! Do yourself a favour and take a look at <http://wahm.sitesell.com/info4u-shirley.html>.

If you are a homeschooling mom of little ones (and older ones), you might be interested at browsing my new website:

Shirley's Preschool Activities - <http://www.shirleys-preschool-activities.com>.

Here you will find easy preschool activities, ideas by subject, free printable worksheets, preschool curriculum reviews, parent resources, tips, advice, encouragement and more for homeschool moms and kindergarten teachers too.

How to use PREPARED TO COOK

How many times have you faced the dilemma of what to feed your family or opened your fridge or grocery cupboard to discover that you have run out of a key ingredient for the meal you had planned? *PREPARED TO COOK* is aimed to help you avoid that kind of scenario. The key to successful meal planning is making sure you have a comprehensive shopping list and that you purchase all the required ingredients. Most of the recipes provided will serve 4-6 people.

- Set a time each week to select which week's recipes you will be using from the table labeled **MENU CALENDAR**. Then turn to the appropriate week and read through the recipes. Make a note of which ones you will use on which day, so as to suit the time available in your schedule for that day.
- Decide what you will prepare on the 7th day of each week and add the ingredients to the shopping list.
- Check your inventory of ingredients against the shopping list provided and tick off the items you do not need to purchase. Salt and pepper are never listed.
- Make a list of salad ingredients, vegetables and other side dishes that you will serve.
- Make a note of any recipes that you can double up and freeze for future meals and adjust the quantities of ingredients on your shopping list accordingly.
- List any other household items on the back of the page to complete your grocery shopping list for the week. You can also refer to the additional **GROCERY LIST** provided.
- When you shop, stick to the list and only buy what you need.
- Now you know what is for supper each night of the week and you are *prepared to cook*.

Once you have tried the recipes given, make a note of any adjustments you need to make to suit your family. Substitute any meals they did not like at all with recipes of your own and amend the shopping list accordingly.

After using *PREPARED TO COOK* for some time, try planning your own weekly menu and don't forget to make the shopping list...then pass it on!