A RECIPE SAMPLER FROM

THE FOOD NANNY
RESCUES DINNER

EASY FAMILY MEALS FOR EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK

Liz Edmunds
The Food Nanny Rescues Dinner is a book about getting the family together at mealtime to eat some great-tasting food while sharing ideas and concerns and teaching values—and having a great time in the process. It is about good food that your whole family will eat and that can be made with your family’s budget in mind. It is about consistency and simplicity.

The book is a menu-planning tool that you will use for the rest of your life. It is about taking the stress from all you moms and dads who are wondering what to fix for dinner. It’s about helping you get organized. It’s about helping you and your family to eat more healthfully. It’s about helping your family to bond together for a lifetime.

This book is about making dinnertime a priority, putting it into your family culture where it belongs.

Food is the heart and soul of our lives. Everyone is hungry at the end of the day and everyone needs to have a place to be at dinnertime. The family dinnertime each night helps everyone to be accountable for their day: what happened, where did you go, what took place? And these family connections provide enormous benefits for children.

This pamphlet is a sampler of recipes from my book, The Food Nanny Rescues Dinner. I’ve selected one recipe for each night of the week plus a bonus salad and dessert. I invite you to pick up your own copy of the book for 200 more delicious recipes that will make it easier to bring YOUR family together for dinner.

Liz Edmunds
The key to consistent dinnertime at home is meal planning. The hardest part of planning any meal is figuring out what to have. If you wait until the end of the day, it is too late. You may be too stressed at that point to even decide, let alone shop for ingredients and prepare the meal. Then it is too easy to just buy processed, packaged foods; stop at the deli; pick up fast food; or go out to dinner. None of these options works as well day after day, week after week, as having the family sit down together over a meal prepared at home. That’s where my plan comes in.

What is my plan? I devised “theme nights” as a place to start, and I have been planning meals around these themes for almost 30 years. In my family these are our themes:

- **MONDAY:** COMFORT FOOD
- **TUESDAY:** ITALIAN NIGHT
- **WEDNESDAY:** FISH & MEATLESS
- **THURSDAY:** MEXICAN NIGHT
- **FRIDAY:** PIZZA NIGHT
- **SATURDAY:** GRILL NIGHT
- **SUNDAY:** FAMILY TRADITIONS

These themes are easy to carry out and will keep you consistent in having dinner together as a family. And you know what else? The themes make dinnertime more fun for your children.

I must emphasize that “theme night” does not mean having a “party” every night at dinner. The night’s “theme” is merely the starting point for deciding what to have for dinner. Just turn to that chapter and choose a recipe. I rarely carried the theme any further than that. No special centerpiece. No theme music. No party hats.

Still, my children always looked forward to our theme nights. The greatest part was that they—and Dad—knew at the end of a hard day that there would be dinner on the table. And they knew it would be something they liked, because all of the recipes are tried and true and delicious.

This plan will get Dad and/or Mom home on time from work, and get kids helping in the kitchen. If parents are working outside the home, then teenagers can get the meal started before they get home. Younger children can help set the table and encourage other family members to be home for dinner. This will bond your family and create the atmosphere that we all want in our homes.

Using theme nights makes menu planning so easy. All you do is go to the chapter for the night you’re planning, and choose. There are more than a dozen recipes for each theme, so it’s not as if every Tuesday Italian Night is going to be the same lasagna. Plus, there are chapters of salads, breads, side dishes, and desserts, so you can mix and match to your heart’s content.
This is a foundation for anyone to put dinner on the table at home at least five nights a week. I say five nights a week because I figure you may want to give yourself and your family one or two nights a week “off.” After all, we all love to eat out at our favorite fast-food or casual-dining restaurants from time to time. Then again, some weeks we don’t feel like going out. No problem. My plan gives you recipes for seven nights a week, and then you choose which nights to take off, if any.

### MAP OUT TWO WEEKS AT A TIME

I said earlier that the key to having a consistent dinnertime with a home-cooked meal is meal planning.

The key to effective meal planning is mapping out your meal schedule a week or two in advance. (Two is easier.) Here’s how:

1. **Get out your calendar.**
2. **Go through my recipes and choose meals.**
3. **Write down your chosen meals on our form,* a sheet of paper, or a 5x7-inch card.**
4. **Make a grocery list.**
5. **Go shopping.**

*Menu forms are free and will be available at www.thefoodnanny.com.

### DINNER MENUS FOR October 6-19

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See you at dinner!

31 MONDAY: COMFORT FOOD
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CHEESY SCALLOPED POTATOES WITH HAM & CORN  6 to 8 servings

2 pounds baking potatoes, peeled
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
Pinch of ground white pepper
2 cups milk
2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese, divided
1 (8.5-ounce) can corn, drained
1 (1-pound) precooked ham steak, cut into bite-size pieces

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and grease a shallow oblong baking dish.
2. Thinly slice the potatoes into a large bowl.
3. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the flour, salt, and pepper. Add the milk all at once and cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture thickens and bubbles. Remove from the heat and add 1 1/2 cups of the cheese, stirring until combined. Pour the mixture over the potatoes and lightly mix.
4. Gently stir in the corn and ham. Spoon into the prepared dish.
5. Cover with aluminum foil and bake about 1 hour or until the potatoes are tender. For a browned top, remove the foil about halfway through the baking time. At the end of the baking time, sprinkle the remaining 1/2 cup of cheese over the top. Bake a few more minutes until the cheese is melted.

Serve with a green salad, hot cooked green peas or broccoli, or fresh fruit.

Variation: Omit the ham and corn from the casserole and serve the Cheesy Scalloped Potatoes with baked ham or Savory Meatloaf (p. 45) and a green salad or Baked Buttered Carrots (p. 207).

We all get hungry for a ham dinner from time to time. Many nights when my children were home, I would brown a ham steak in the skillet, bake some potatoes, heat some corn, make some biscuits, and there was dinner! This casserole classic is also a good ham dinner and it was my boys’ favorite casserole.
PENNE WITH SAUSAGE, RED POTATOES, AND GREEN BEANS  4 servings

8 ounces uncooked penne pasta
4 small red potatoes, quartered
8 ounces low-fat spicy bulk Italian sausage
1/4 cup minced yellow onion
2 small garlic cloves, minced
1 cup chicken broth
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 tablespoon butter
1 pound fresh green beans, trimmed and cut in half (see Note)
1 tablespoon coarsely chopped fresh parsley
Salt and ground black pepper
1/2 cup grated Romano, Asiago, or Parmesan cheese, plus additional

1. Cook the pasta according to package directions. Drain.
2. Steam the potatoes or cook them in boiling salted water until tender. At the same time, steam the beans or cook in the microwave until tender, 6 to 12 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, brown the sausage in a Dutch oven or large pot over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic; cook and stir until the onion is soft and the sausage is completely cooked. Pour in the broth and simmer for 3 minutes. Stir in the oil and butter until the butter melts. Add the green beans, potatoes, and pasta. Mix well with a large spoon. Add the parsley and salt and pepper to taste.
4. Decrease the heat to low and sprinkle 1/2 cup of the cheese over the mixture. Cover the pan and cook a few more minutes until the cheese is melted.
5. Serve immediately in the same pot or spoon the mixture into a large, shallow serving bowl or deep platter. Pass the extra cheese.

Note: As a speedy alternative to preparing fresh beans, heat 1 (14.5-ounce) can of cut green beans, drained, in the microwave and add them with the potatoes and pasta.

Can be made **Meatless**.
**FISH TACOS**

4 servings

- 8 white corn or taco-size flour tortillas
- Buttermilk Ranch Dressing (p. 198), or bottled ranch dressing
- 1 pound tilapia
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and ground black pepper

**CONDIMENTS:**
- Diced tomatoes
- Sprigs of fresh cilantro
- Sliced avocado
- Shredded cabbage
- Tabasco sauce

1. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Wrap the tortillas in aluminum foil and heat in the oven 20 to 30 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, make the dressing and set aside.
3. Prepare the condiments and put them in individual serving bowls and place them on the dinner table.
4. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat and fry the fish. Cooking time will depend on the thickness of the fish. A thin fillet may need only 2 to 3 minutes on each side; a thicker fillet may need 4 to 5 minutes on each side. The fish is done when it flakes easily with a fork. The outside should be crunchy, the inside soft. Remove the fish to a plate and season with the salt and pepper.
5. To serve, pass the tortillas, fish, condiments, and dressing.

Serve with **Santa Fe Lime Rice** (p. 123), black beans, and a bowl of crunchy red, orange, and yellow bell pepper strips.

**Variations:**
- Use sour cream instead of the dressing: spread it on the warm tortillas, then add the fish and toppings.
- For crisp corn tortillas, fry them in hot canola oil following the instructions on page 110, step 2, using about 1/2 cup of oil.
- Omit the tomatoes, cilantro, avocado, and cabbage, and replace with **Mango Salsa** (p. 124).
Thanks to Aunt Sue, we have been making these tacos for over 30 years. This is an original Mexican recipe and is one of our family favorites. You may skip frying the tortillas and simply make soft tacos with heated tortillas.

### CHICKEN TACOS

6 servings

- 2 tablespoons butter
- Canola oil, for frying
- 2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-size pieces
- 3 tablespoons chopped onion
- 2 to 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 vine-ripened tomatoes, chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- Salt, ground black pepper, garlic salt
- 12 corn tortillas

#### TOPPINGS:
- Shredded Cheddar cheese, pepper Jack cheese, or a combination
- Sour cream
- Fresh spinach, thinly sliced
- Fresh Salsa (p. 125) or Tabasco sauce
- Lime wedges

1. Heat the butter and 2 tablespoons of oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken and onions and cook and stir until the onions are soft and the chicken is tender and no longer pink. Add the garlic and cook about 1 minute more. Decrease the heat to low and stir in the tomato and cilantro. Add water (or chicken broth) if the mixture seems too dry. Season generously with salt, pepper, and garlic salt. Continue cooking about 2 minutes. Cover and turn off the heat. Preheat the oven to 200 degrees.

2. Heat 3/4 cup of canola oil in a small skillet over medium-high heat. Fry one tortilla: With tongs turn it once to cook both sides, then quickly fold halfway over and cook for a few more seconds to make the taco shape. Drain on paper towels. Place the tortilla in the oven to keep warm. Repeat with the remaining tortillas, putting each one into the oven to keep warm. (If the taco shells cool, they lose their crispness and become tough and chewy.) For soft tacos, simply heat the tortillas one at a time in a dry skillet over high heat for a few seconds on each side. (Or wrap tortillas in aluminum foil and heat in the oven at 275 degrees for 20 minutes.)

3. To serve, place a small amount of the chicken mixture in each taco shell. Put the filled tacos on a platter and serve. Pass the cheese, sour cream, spinach, salsa and lime.

Serve with Mexican Rice with Fresh Tomatoes (p. 123) and refried beans with a little shredded cheese on top.
**ARUGULA PIZZA WITH FRESH MOZZARELLA AND CHERRY TOMATOES** One 12-inch thin-crust pizza

1/2 recipe Basic Pizza Dough (p. 135)

- Fresh mozzarella cheese, or shredded regular mozzarella
- Fresh baby arugula, torn into pieces
- Fresh cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
- Olive oil, for drizzling
- Salt and ground black pepper (see Note)

1. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Oil a pizza pan with olive oil.
2. Prepare the dough and place it on the prepared pan.
3. Slice the fresh mozzarella cheese and place it on the crust, or top with shredded regular mozzarella.
4. Bake the pizza on the lowest oven rack for 12 to 15 minutes or until the crust is brown on the bottom and the cheese is melted. Remove from the oven and immediately pile the arugula pieces onto the hot melted cheese and top with the tomatoes. Drizzle on a little olive oil. Season lightly with salt and pepper. Serve immediately.

A Note About Pepper:
If you have a pepper mill, freshly ground peppercorns will offer a more “lively” flavor than pre-ground pepper. If you do use pre-ground pepper, buy only small amounts, as the flavors fade away over time, just as with other dried herbs and spices.

The first time I ate this pizza in Italy, I just could not believe how much I loved the nutty flavor! But you have to love arugula. This pungent salad green is an acquired taste. If you want to try something special and different, take a chance on this pizza. It is so fresh, so healthy, so good for you.
When I was growing up, my dad was great on the old-fashioned potbelly grill with coals that you waited for hours to get perfectly ready. He rolled whole onions, corn on the cob, and just about anything he felt like in aluminum foil and placed them individually on the grill to cook. They were done to perfection and delicious! Today we love remembering this great man and his BBQ sauce. He basted most of his meats and salmon with this sauce.

**GRILLED CHICKEN WITH DAD’S SWEET BBQ SAUCE**  
**6 servings**

1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce  
1/2 to 1 cup packed brown sugar  
1 teaspoon prepared mustard  
1 teaspoon cider vinegar  
6 to 12 chicken parts of your choice  
Salt and ground black pepper

1. Combine the tomato sauce, brown sugar, mustard, and vinegar in a small saucepan. Bring the sauce to a boil and then decrease the heat to simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 30 to 45 minutes until thickened.

2. Preheat the grill to medium. Trim excess fat from the chicken pieces and remove the skin if desired. Wipe the chicken with damp paper towels; discard the towels immediately to prevent cross-contamination. Season with salt and pepper. Place the chicken on the grill and cook until the chicken is tender and no longer pink: 10 to 15 minutes per side for breasts and thighs, 8 to 12 minutes per side for drumsticks and wings.

3. Pour half of the sauce into a bowl to pass at the table; set aside. Baste the chicken with the remaining sauce only during the last few minutes of cooking, to prevent the sauce from burning.

Serve immediately with Rice Pilaf (p. 213) or Grilled Vegetables in Chicken Broth (p. 159). Any remaining sauce may be stored, covered, in the refrigerator for up to one week.

**CONVERSATION STARTER:**

I’ve been really enjoying the classical music that’s been playing here in the house, but I know there’s other music you might enjoy, too. Let’s take turns choosing. What appeals to you?
CROCK-POT ROAST BEEF DINNER

8 to 12 servings

1 (4-pound) beef sirloin roast
Garlic salt
1/3 cup packed brown sugar
3 tablespoons cider vinegar
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 (10.75-ounce) can condensed cream of mushroom soup
1 (1-ounce) packet onion soup mix
1 cup beef broth
5 large carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces (optional)
6 red potatoes or medium russets, scrubbed and quartered (optional)

1. Place the roast in a slow cooker. Sprinkle with the garlic salt.
2. In a medium bowl, mix the brown sugar, vinegar, soy sauce, Worcestershire sauce, mushroom soup, onion soup mix, and broth; pour over the roast.
3. Add the carrots and/or potatoes to the slow cooker if it is large enough to hold them.
4. Cook on high heat 5 to 6 hours or on low heat for 10 to 12 hours.

If you choose not to add the carrots or potatoes to the slow cooker, then two good side dishes are mashed potatoes and Reds & Greens Salad (p. 191).

Variation: Use a pork roast.

DO AHEAD
Start this dish at least 6 hours ahead of time, or up to 12 hours ahead of time (see step 4).

SUNDAY TRADITIONS

Using a slow cooker, such as a Crock-Pot, is a great, easy way to fix dinner, especially meats. Make this recipe, go to work or away for the day, and come home to a great meal! If eight servings are too many, simply halve the recipe. My children cut roasts in half and freeze the remainder for another time. You need not have a large group to enjoy a roast.
SPINACH SALAD WITH FRUIT AND CHEESE

4 to 5 servings

4 to 5 cups spinach
1/3 cup shredded Swiss cheese
1/2 cup sliced fresh strawberries
1/3 cup mandarin oranges, drained

Easy Sugared Pecans (p. 201)
Poppy Seed Dressing (p. 199)

1. Tear spinach into pieces, if necessary, and put into a large salad bowl. Add the cheese, strawberries, mandarin oranges, and pecans.
2. Just before serving, add just enough dressing to moisten the ingredients, and toss to coat and combine.

Variation: Vary the fruits using red seedless grapes, blueberries, dried cranberries, or red apples.

CONVERSATION STARTER:
If you could trade lives with one person for a day, who would it be? Why? How would you spend your day?
One of my favorite things to serve with fish, meat, or lasagna is a beautiful platter of steamed or sautéed vegetables. Choose from any of these vegetables; at least three vegetables make an appealing presentation:

- Asparagus roasted in olive oil
- Zucchini slices, sautéed in light olive oil
- Butter beans
- Carrot slices, steamed and lightly seasoned
- Artichokes, steamed, lightly seasoned with lemon and garlic
- Red and yellow bell peppers, sliced and sautéed in olive oil
- plus explore your local farmers’ market or greengrocer for new things to try
DESSERTS WE LOVE
ALL-AMERICAN APPLE PIE

One 9-inch pie; 8 servings

PAstry for a double-crust pie:
2 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup shortening
1/4 cup (1/2 stick) chilled butter, cut in small pieces
4 to 6 tablespoons ice-cold water

FILLING:
4 or 5 medium-large Granny Smith apples
3/4 cup sugar
3/4 tablespoons flour
3/4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon allspice

1. To make the pie crust, stir the flour and salt in a large bowl. Cut in the shortening and butter with a pastry blender or two knives until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs (see Note). Sprinkle with the ice water, a tablespoon at a time, and stir with a fork to moisten all the dough. Gather the dough into a ball with your hands. Divide the dough in half. Roll out one half on a lightly floured surface and fit it into a 9-inch pie plate. Roll out the other half and set aside.

2. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

3. Peel and core the apples and cut them into thin slices into a large bowl. Combine the sugar, flour, cinnamon, and allspice in a small bowl and toss with the apples. Spoon the filling into the pastry-lined pie plate. Dot with butter.

4. Position the top crust over the pie and seal the edges. Cut steam vents in the top crust in a design of your choice. Trim and flute the edges.

5. Beat one egg with a fork, brush it over the crust, and sprinkle lightly with sugar. Cover edges with aluminum foil or a pie crust shield. Bake for 25 minutes; remove the foil. Bake an additional 25 to 30 minutes until the crust is golden brown and the filling is bubbly.

Variation: Add 1/4 cup raisins to the filling.

Note: See “Ingredients for a Flaky Pie Crust” on page 250.

DESSERTS WE LOVE

The first time I tasted this pie from my friend Sherrie, I knew it was a keeper. Make your own pie pastry from this recipe, or save time with a packaged refrigerated pie crust. Many people think that making pie crust is intimidating, but it goes together quickly. When you use your own homemade crust, it makes eating and sharing the pie all that much more enjoyable.
Over 200 delicious kid- and budget-friendly recipes

Turn off the TV! Turn off the computer! Even if there are only two of you home for dinner, eat together and reap the benefits of a stronger family bond. When families eat together consistently, everyone wins. Studies show that children who have regular meals with their families typically—

• Eat healthier.
• Are less likely to use drugs and alcohol.
• Get better grades.
• Are more likely to discuss serious issues with their parents.

As the Food Nanny, Liz Edmunds helps families with her theme-night solutions and strategies for successful family dinnertimes:

• Get past the “Yes, buts…” that are keeping you from cooking.
• Plan meals the easy way: a template, pantry list, shopping advice.
• Involve family members in the preparations.
• Fill your home with the aromas that convey caring, safety, and comfort.
• Engage your kids in dinner conversations.
• Have a family homemade pizza night.

Liz Edmunds, the Food Nanny, consults with families one-on-one about meal planning to help them create a consistent family dinnertime at home. She and her husband raised their seven children outside Park City, Utah, where they now regularly welcome their growing brood of grandchildren with their parents for family meals of all kinds. Visit the author’s website at www.TheFoodNanny.com.

“Liz...takes the key ingredients of life—friends and family—and mixes them into a daily tradition of mealtime. These are vital nutrients to keep family and mealtime thriving.”

Debbi Fields, Founder, Mrs. Fields Cookies

“I recommend this book for every family—especially those who think they don’t have the time or talent to cook great dishes.”

Dr. Laura Schlessinger, International Radio Talk Host and author, Stop Whining Start Living

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