lovereading4kids.co.uk

Helping you choose books for children

0-5 5-7 7-9 9-12 12+

opening extract from

sam stern's

cooking up a storm

the teen survival cookbook

written by

susan & sam stern

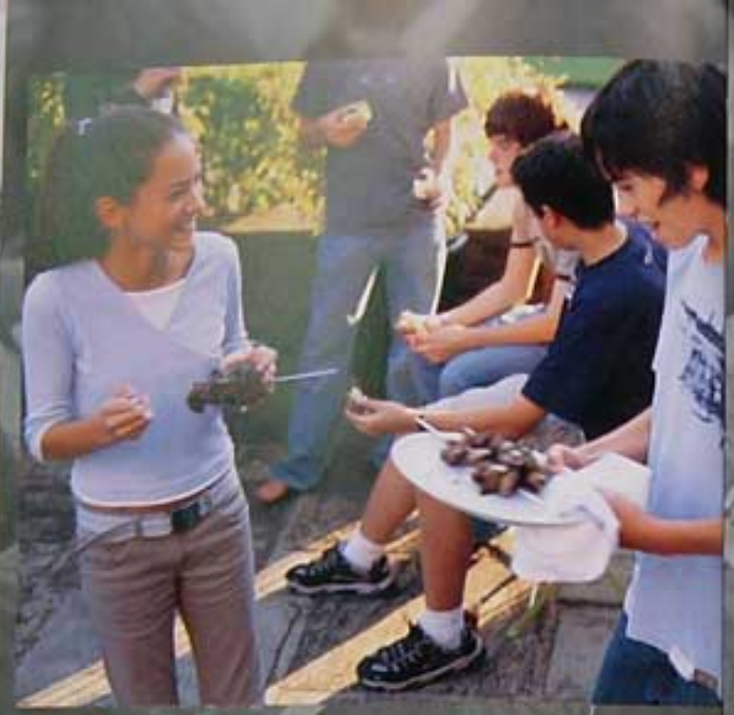
published by walker books

Text © 2005 Susan & Sam Stern
Photographs © 2005 Walker Books Ltd
From Sam Stern's "Cooking Up A Storm"

Reproduced by permission of Walker Books Ltd, London SE11 5HJ

please print off and read at your leisure.











I've written this book for kids like me who enjoy cooking or who are keen to learn to cook. It's full of simple tasty recipes – the sort of things that my mates and I like to eat...

You'll find the full whack of food in here. From snacks that you can wolf down while you're watching The Simpsons through to some full-on dishes that you can serve up to your family.

Cooking's a particular challenge in our house. I'm the youngest of five kids. One of my sisters is a veggie. Another is an ex-veggie who won't eat red meat. My brother's a meat freak. My dad's a bit of a garbage can but he can't eat chocolate or cheese – his favourite foods. My mum won't eat anything that's tough on her teeth. Me? I eat anything but bananas and broccoli. So catering for everyone means that there's a wide range of food that has to get served up. It's those everyday foods that I've learned to cook. And that's where I've got this book full of recipes. There's food here for all tastes. There's what I call "big" food – the stuff that you want when you've been doing loads of sport – you're mega-hungry and want some real eating. There's brain food – treats to get the brain cells and the tastebuds up and the nerves soothed down when you've got exams. And there's food you can eat if you know you've got a bit of a sofa habit but you don't want to end up like a sofa. There's food here to keep you fit and to keep you looking fit. And there's party food when you'll want to put on some spectacular eating.



Why do I like cooking?

Well, I'm usually pretty impatient but I can spend hours chopping stuff, blitzing, whisking and mixing. I find all that activity's really relaxing. First off I get into the kitchen and put on some music. I love all the technical stuff that goes with cooking. Learning the basics – like how to make batters, pastry, bread, sauces, soups. Doing it the way that it says in the book and then when I'm confident, getting more creative – ignoring how Mum does it – doing it my way. You have to take charge when you're cooking. Use your judgement.

I like the fact that when you're cooking you're using your senses. The feel of pastry, the smell of melting



Eggs

When we had chickens at the bottom of the garden we'd eat their eggs. Free-range organic birds produce eggs with a rich orange yolk and an amazing taste. Now the birds have gone we have to buy them. When you buy them, make sure they're fresh. Eggs make a great breakfast food – boiled, poached, scrambled, fried. They build muscle, so get cooking them if you're into your sport. The protein in them is great for your brain. Enjoy them in your favourite fast way. Or maybe save yourself for a holiday or weekend omelette.

Boiled egg

A cracking start to the day (I know uni students who can't do it).

For 1

Ingredients

1–2 eggs at room temperature
Salt

Eat with: Vegemite and butter on toast soldiers.

Method

1. Bring a small saucepan two-thirds full of water to the boil. Add a little salt. Use a spoon to lower the eggs into the pan.
2. Bring back to the boil. Set the timer for 4 minutes (soft) or 5 minutes (medium). Or 6 minutes if eggs straight from fridge.

Perfect poached egg

You can buy a poacher for this but you don't need it. Rely on a steady hand and a bit of science!

For 1

Ingredients

1 fresh egg
Buttered toast
Salt and black pepper

Method

1. Two-thirds fill a small saucepan or frying pan with water. Add a pinch of salt and bring to the boil.
2. Turn the heat down a smidge. Crack the egg into a cup.
3. Use a wooden spoon to stir the water, creating a whirlpool effect. Slip the egg down into the centre of the whirling water (this keeps the egg white together in a neat shape).
4. Simmer gently for 3–4 minutes until the white is set.
5. When the egg is done, lift it out gently with a slotted spoon (or fish slice if cooking in a frying pan). Drain well.
6. Set on buttered toast and add a twist of black pepper.

VARIATION
Put dressed salad leaves on a toasted English muffin. Perch a poached egg and crisp bacon rasher on top for a great brunch.

Scrambled eggs

Making perfect scrambled eggs is like getting to the next level on a tricky PS2 game. You need a good eye and well-fast reflexes. Cook the eggs for too long and they end up dry and clumpy. Stop the exact second before they're ready – they'll be softer and sweeter.

For 1

Ingredients

2 eggs
Knob of butter
Buttered toast
Salt and black pepper

Eat with: Grilled tomatoes, mushrooms and bacon on the side.

Method

1. Crack the eggs into a bowl. Beat well with a fork. Season.
2. Melt the butter in a small saucepan on low heat. Tip in eggs and stir like mad with a wooden spoon for 1–2 minutes as they cook, making sure the egg doesn't stick to the pan.
3. Take off the heat while the eggs are still soft. Keep stirring for a few seconds. Chuck onto your toast. Eat now.



VARIATION
At STEP 3, toss in any of the following:
grated cheese;
chopped parsley, chives or tarragon;
finely diced tomato and a pinch of sugar;
diced cooked ham;
crumbled crisp bacon;
diced fried chorizo sausage;
diced smoked salmon.





Makes 12

Ingredients

225 g/8 oz self-raising flour
Pinch salt
1 tablespoon caster sugar
2 eggs
300 ml/½ pint milk
25–50 g/1–2 oz butter, melted

Eat with:
SWEET: Honey, golden syrup, peanut butter, maple syrup or butter and jam.

SAVOURY: Cream cheese and smoked salmon. Crisp cooked bacon and maple syrup.

Drop scones

If you're down with pancakes then you're ninety-nine per cent of the way to drop scones. The recipe's close but the method's quite different. (We had to text it to my brother at uni to make for his mates.) Eat these warm. Pile them high with excellent flavours.

Method

1. Sift the flour, salt and sugar into a bowl. Make a deep dent in the flour mixture. Add the eggs and a little milk.
2. Use a wooden spoon to beat the egg and milk, gradually mixing in the flour, as for pancakes (page 18). Mix till all the milk is used to make a smooth thicker batter.
3. Use a pastry brush to brush melted butter on to a large heavy frying pan. Heat the pan on medium heat.
4. Drop a tablespoon of the batter on to the hot pan. Repeat, leaving room between them.
5. Cook for a couple of minutes until the surface breaks into bubbles and the bottoms are just browned.
6. Flick over with a spatula. Cook other side.
7. Spread scones on a tea towel. Cover to keep warm.



For 4

Ingredients

450 g/1 lb plums
250 ml/8 fl oz water
3 tablespoons sugar or to taste
1 vanilla pod or 1 teaspoon natural vanilla extract

Eat with: Natural yogurt or porridge, warm or cold.

VARIATION
Add fresh apricots, nectarines, peaches or blueberries.

Baked vanilla plums

We've got plum trees in the garden so if it's a good crop we've got to find lots of different ways of using them. Throwing them isn't popular. Here they're baked with a vanilla pod – which looks a bit like something the cat's brought in. Slit the pod with a sharp knife to release the flavour and let it bake with the plums. These really sharpen you up if you eat them for breakfast. Wash the pod and let it dry on a bit of kitchen paper, so you can re-use it next time.

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas 6.
2. Cut the plums in half and remove their stones if you wish or leave whole. Stick them in a shallow baking dish with the water and sugar. Add a little more water if needed.
3. Slit the pod and throw it in or add the vanilla extract. Cover with a lid or foil.
4. Bake for 30 minutes, until the plums are soft and starting to break up.

