

Recipes for Living: Fuel for Your Family's Body, Mind and Spirit

**Recipes for Living:**  
**Fuel for Your Family's Body, Mind and Spirit**

by

Ali Bierman

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Hug your loved ones now.

Recipes for Living: Fuel for Your Family's Body, Mind and Spirit

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## ***Acknowledgements***

Thank you to the many people who persisted in convincing me to fill a need of parents everywhere by sharing what I learned raising my own kids.

I thank Denise Lones for showing me the really big picture and how my work makes a difference for families everywhere. ..

And Bob Gardner who told me, many years ago, that failing to share my writing was selfish for it deprived people of the treasures I have uncovered on my parenting journey.

## ***Dedication***

With love and admiration, I dedicate this book to the memory of my Mom, Edie Bierman, whose countless sacrifices allowed me to grow and stretch and develop my many talents. She always let me know I could be and do anything in life. I know that is why my imagination never tires--or ceases to amaze even me.

I also dedicate this book to the memory of my Bubby, Rose Weiner, who stayed with me while my mom worked. I learned how to cook yummy, heart-warming foods by watching her prepare our everyday meals...always everything from scratch. How lucky was I?

Finally, I dedicate this book to the great treasures and inspirations who are my children: my son, Damien and my daughter, Nili. In doing the best for you I learned how to take any recipe and prepare it using healthy ingredients.

I also learned how much fun life is by constantly creating new ways to entertain you and assist your growing up to be the wonderful, caring beings you are today.

I love you all. Your being in my heart every moment brings a smile to my face and peace to my soul.

## **Why did I write this book?**

Raising kids can be very stressful. And it can be the most fun job in the world. I get to choose how to live and experience my life as a Mom. So when raising my kids I constantly called upon my imagination and, much to my surprise, uncovered talents in many areas that were previously unknown to me.

Thank goodness. How many times did we wind up waiting, unexpectedly, in long lines, in traffic, for appointments of all sorts? Want to keep everyone happy? You entertain your kids--and yourself in the process.

Want to keep your family healthy so you never need a doctor? Eat well. Who chooses your family's diet? You do, Mom. None of us was ever sick--no matter how many people had the flu--none of us got it. Not colds either.

In fact. I had to make sure to expose the kids to the chicken pox when they were small so they would never have to endure either as an adult. Their immune systems were so healthy it took a lot of exposure.

I wrote this book because life is like a recipe book--lots of individual ways to accomplish a desired end--and you get to choose and modify to fit you and yours.

You want to feed the mind and spirit too--not just the body. Each affects the other in one whole person.

## **A Blessing for You, Dear Moms of All Ages**

The most sacred task in all the world  
lies in your hands  
and in your heart

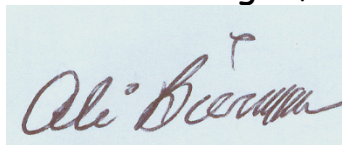
Thank you for braving the doubts, concerns,  
for all the sleepless nights  
and days pacing the floor  
cuddling your precious child  
just because of love.

Being Mom  
you protect and support the betterment of  
your family, your community and the world of mankind.

Thank you.

May you always know  
the blessings of love and the satisfaction of a job well done.

Love and Light,

A handwritten signature in brown ink on a light blue rectangular background. The signature reads "Ali Bertram" in a cursive script.

Hug your loved ones now.

My personal message:

Treasure every moment  
of your child's youth  
for it lasts  
but a fleeting moment

Baby  
crying nursing sleeping  
peace  
cooing smiling standing  
In the heart of things (and people)

delighting doing learning  
child  
questioning unnerving stretching  
teenager

Children grow up too fast

## **Introduction**

I have been creating recipes more than 35 years. I love to cook and I love to make my foods fun, attractive and nutritious. When people eat at my house they ask for lessons and say I should teach classes over a 3 day period so they can begin to shop and cook with the creative eye. Sometimes I do teach classes.

This book is but a tiny glimpse into my culinary world. My objective here is to get you thinking outside the box.

When I shop and I see produce or products I never heard of--I buy them. Sometimes I have to guess how to prepare them . Sometimes I guess wrong. Mostly what I make is pretty darned tasty. I could write volumes of cookbooks--but that would keep me from doing all the other things I love to do!

Here is my introduction, for your enjoyment and to the health of your family.

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**Part 1**

**Body Fuel**

**Recipes that make your mouth water, tickle your tongue and warm your tummy. The stuff of which tasty memories are made.**

## Pizza Recipes

Eons ago, long before Pizza Hut ever thought of it, I was making pizza crusts to delight the senses and tickle the tongue. And I was topping those tasty crusts with everything I could find in my kitchen.

Here is one of my favorite, and simplest, recipes:

Sprinkle 1 package of yeast over 1/4 warm water

Dissolve 3/4 t salt, and 2T honey in 3/4C hot water

Let water cool to about 95 F then add bubbling yeast mixture to it.

Stir in 2 T extra virgin olive oil.

Sprinkle your favorite shredded cheeses into the mixture and add 3C spelt (or wheat) flour along with 1T dried Italian herbs or fresh basil and oregano.

Knead until smooth and elastic then place into a large bowl oiled with more olive oil and let the dough rise in a warm place under a dishtowel.

After about one hour (dough should be light and doubled in size) punch the dough down.

Knead a short time then roll out into whatever shapes you like. (with kids it is fun to make pizza crust in the shape of the first letter of their first name--or maybe make it some shape you can decorate with toppings to create a work of art. Think Picasso!

Oil a pizza stone and heat it in the oven. If you do not have a pizza stone place the pizza on parchment paper on a large pan so it will not stick. You may want to sprinkle cornmeal on that paper first (optional) Parchment paper prevent sticking.

Turn on the oven long enough to warm it, usually 3-4 minutes. Then turn it off. Slip your pizza crust into the oven and let it rise briefly--usually 20 minutes does it.

Turn on the oven to 350F and bake the crust until it loses its moist look. Remove it from the oven and add your favorite sauce and cheese (dairy or non-dairy) and toppings. Remember to sprinkle on extra oregano and basil for a flavor boost.

If you are using leafy vegetables you may want to place those toppings under the cheese so they will not dry out.

Do remember to include fun and nutritious veggies like broccoli, pineapple, spinach and eggplant. Use your imagination. Also be creative with your choice of cheeses. Mozzarella is nice and gooey but Gorgonzola or Parmesan, cheddar and Monterey jack--oh my goodness! What a tantalizing delight you can create. Go for it!

Ah! The aroma will have your mouth watering while it bakes.

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Cut up more veggies to enjoy as finger food with your pizza or toss them all into a salad.

For something even more special ask me about my onion and Swiss rye pizza.

Oh yeah, the dessert pizza--been making those for many years.

Take your favorite nutritious cookie dough recipe and bake a large round cookie. Remove it from the oven just before it gets brown and done. Sprinkle White vanilla or white chocolate pieces all over it. The heat of the cookie dough will melt the chips. Use a heat-proof rubber spatula to spread the melted topping evenly over the cookie and immediately top with dried fruit bits and nuts. You can also sprinkle on some carob or chocolate chips.

Look for grain-sweetened and other non-sugar sweetened chocolate. I recommend xylitol as the sweetener of choice. As the cookie cools the topping sets in the hardened white chocolate. Neat! Literally.

Return the topped "pizza" to the oven for the few minutes it takes to finish the baking. Keep an eye on it so it bakes perfectly.

Who says nutritious food has to be boring!

### **It's a Roll! It's Loaf of Bread! It's an English Muffin!**

Take your favorite bread recipe or use this one.

Sprinkle 1 package of yeast over 1/4 warm water

Dissolve 3/4 t salt, and 2T honey in 3/4C hot water

Let water cool to about 95 F then add bubbling yeast mixture to it.

Stir in 2 T canola or olive oil.

Add 3C spelt (or wheat) flour \*

\*(For a light French or Italian bread, use 1 c semolina flour and 2 c whole wheat or spelt You may want to add sundried tomatoes and or basil to the dough before kneading.)

Knead until smooth and elastic then place into a large oiled bowl and let the dough rise in a warm place under a dishtowel.

After about one hour (dough should be light and doubled in size) punch the dough down.

Here comes the fun part.

Shape the dough into interesting sculptures. I used to make serpents, hands, and arrows. I even used cookie cutters to make cars, elephants and hearts.

To make rolls (no matter what the shape), let the dough rise until double in size then bake at 375 F for about 20 minutes. (Oven temperatures vary so stay nearby in case they bake faster. You want them golden brown.)

You may want to brush egg white over the tops and sprinkle them with poppy pr sesame seeds.

To make baguette shapes, roll out into long roll. Place on cookie sheet that has corn meal sprinkled on it I recommend parchment paper for no sticking and easy clean up. Place a p[an of water in the bottom of the oven. Be sure it has lots of water so it will burn dry while the breads bake. That water steaming up during the baking process makes the baguettes crispy crunchy on the outside.

To make English Muffins roll the dough out about half an inch thick and cut with biscuit cutters for round ones or use cookie cutters for Raggedy Anne and Andy shapes, Mickey Mouse--whatever you have on hand. Take the cut shapes and bake them on top of the stove. A cast iron griddle works super. If you don't have one use

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a frying pan. The English Muffins will rise and partially bake. You can finish baking them in the oven.

Note of caution: be careful and give thought to creative shapes. One day my daughter came home from school and said, "Mom. Please don't ever give me a serpent in my lunch again."

## Real Bagels

Real bagels are made with high gluten flour not with bread flour. That is the reason real bagels are chewy and give your jaw a workout.

Sprinkle 1 package of yeast over 1/4 warm water

Dissolve 3/4 t salt, and 2T honey in 3/4C hot water

Let water cool to about 95 F then add bubbling yeast mixture to it.

Stir in 2 T canola oil.

add 3 c high gluten flour

That is all the ingredients you need for plain bagels. Personally I like to add other ingredients like spinach or raisins, sundried tomatoes, cheeses--sometimes I add cacao powder and increase the sweetener by 1-2 TB depending upon your sweet tooth and maybe throw in chocolate chips before the second rise. I even made chocolate peanut butter bagels once. that was tricky. that is why I only made them once.

Knead until smooth and elastic then place into a large bowl oiled with more olive oil and let the dough rise in a warm place under a dishtowel.

After about one hour (dough should be light and doubled in size) punch the dough down.

Here is the tricky part, for me. Shaping the bagel. But before you shape them, get a couple pots of good water boiling on the stove. You are going to boil the bagels before baking them--which is how they get that shiny outside.

Take the dough and roll it into ropes then twist the ends together. Use a drop of water to seal the connection closed.

NOW, remember that boiling water? You do not let the bagel dough rise again. You put it into the boiling water. Once it rises to the surface turn it over for about 1 minute more minute.

Now place bagels on a cookie sheet and bake at 350F until browned.

## Pasta

Kids can really get into stamping out the ravioli. Let them. It saves you time and energy.

If you want to make pasta I highly recommend using a pasta maker just because the dough is so delicate it is very tricky to roll out yourself. I know because I tried to do it by hand. I use a pasta maker now.

Follow the recipes that came with your pasta machine as far as liquid to flour proportions go. Here is the recipe I finally figured out for making healthful pasta:

1 C wholewheat bread flour

1 C semolina flour

$\frac{1}{2}$  t salt

7 oz water

1 T canola oil

blend all ingredients in your pasta machine. This recipe makes perfect ravioli.

Just for fun, add cacao powder to make chocolate pasta. Be sure to add fine confectioner's sugar to the recipe. the first time I made chocolate pasta I thought the sweet cherry sauce would cover the bitter unsweetened chocolate. Wrong. Yuck! Very inaccurate assumption.

Another point to know, if you want to make spinach pasta--use powdered spinach from the healthfood store. I used real spinach and made pasta so heavy it did not float in the pot when I cooked it.

A surprising fact I discovered is that pasta molds if you leave it out at room temperature. For that reason you find fresh pasta in the refrigerator section in the grocery store. Only when I was making and giving homemade pasta as gifts back before it was in vogue to do so, I found my gifts molded unless people ate them within a few days. Now I know better.

the thing about ravioli--you can make exquisite flavors of ravioli, MY favorite is filling them with butternut squash and then, after boiling them,. dry them and sauté them in cinnamon butter. Oh my gosh! I can taste them now. Is your mouth watering? My point here is be original both in creating the ravioli itself and then in the way you serve it.

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## **One Of My Unique Quiches**

Here is the recipe for the pie crust I always use. It took a while to figure out how to make it light and tasty. It was worth the effort. My daughter created the apple quiche concept when she was 5.

### **Ali's Lightest Pie Crust Ever**

1 c wholewheat flour

1/2 c oat flour

dash of salt

1/3 c oil

1/4 c orange juice (When I did not have fresh oranges I made this from concentrate and added more concentrate than the usual amount for a richer flavor)

- 1) Mix the flours and salt together.
- 2) Combine the oil and orange juice well.
- 3) Stir the liquids into the dry ingredients with a fork. Stir until a ball forms.

There are a few ways to shape a pie crust. You can use a marble roller and board. You can use wax paper (get the brown kind that is not chemically created) or (this is the most fun way) use your hands to plop the dough into the pie plate and squish it around. I then formed pretty rims with my fingers.

Prick the crust all over before baking it so it will not rise.

Bake the crust at 400 degree F for about 5 minutes so it is no longer raw.

You now have a crust ready to go for a meal. You just the cut-up apple and shredded cheese (I recommend Mozzarella--it gets really gooey and fun when melted) combined with cheddar. When the partially baked pie crust is as full as you can make it then beat one large egg and pour it over the apples and cheese mixture.

Place the small pie on a baking pan. Sometimes the quiche overflows its pan when baking so you want to protect your oven from messes--that you would have to clean!

## Beverages

You have probably heard that soda is extremely unhealthy for everyone. Never ever drink any diet drink. the chemicals are addicting and worse, carcinogenic. AND they also cause you to eat more. ever notice that people who drink diet drinks tend to be overweight?

Hey, why would anyone drink chemicals--with their ice cream and cake? I don't get it at all. Want to be healthy? then eat healthy and cut out the junk.

Bubbly water, even Perrier-like brands--is not good for you. Think about it--you breathe in oxygen and you exhale the waste product carbon dioxide. Waste product--CO<sub>2</sub>. What makes the water bubbly? Waste product, CO<sub>2</sub>.

So if you really want to indulge, make it a special treat not an every day occurrence, okay? Make your own soda by taking bubbly water and mixing in pure juice concentrate to taste. Want orange soda? Put orange juice concentrate into bubbly water.

With the vast variety of juice concentrates out there today, you can enjoy some delicious combinations that tickle your nose.

Do you know you can brew a cup of tea using more than one tea flavor? Grab 2-3 bags and create your own taste sensation next time you boil some water. And if you choose to make iced tea--do it in the refrigerator not in the sunshine-- you can add juice to it for more exciting flavors. Been doing it for years!

## Breakfast

Who says it has to be eggs or cereal? Leftovers make a yummy start to the day. Cold pizza is really a sandwich.

And if you do want cereal--make your own granola and avoid the oil that makes store bought cereal greasy and fattening. If you have a healthfood store, you can get rolled grains--about 8 varieties, other than oats, that make a very tasty granola--especially when sweetened with maple syrup or seasoned with nutmeg instead of ginger or cinnamon--like the mass produced brands.

You can even add carob or cacao to the mix--just remember when you add cacao you also need to add sweetener.

Add dried fruits after you finish baking the granola and after it is cool. I usually remove the granola from the baking pan and cool it in a big stainless steel bowl. Stir it frequently to prevent clumping.

Like hot cereal? Ever have cream of rye or creamed rice? These days you can find both in the healthfood store. I used to grind up grains and make them like other cereal products--2:1 water to grain and cook 15-30 minutes depending on the grain.

do you really love your oatmeal? How about putting some oomph into oatmeal. First of all, instead of buying lifeless rolled oats that slide down your throat, buy Scottish Oats, also called Steel cut oats. cook them slowly at 4:1 water to grain. Then, instead of the utter and salt ( by the way, lavender or rose salt is amazing in oatmeal) put in 2 sunny side up eggs. OR put in your favorite flavor of protein powder and stir vigorously.

when I have company for breakfast, I make a buffet of ingredients for my guests to add to their oatmeal--including greens powder. Use your imagination and make your oatmeal luscious AND power-packed nutrition.

One of my favorite treats on a cold day is creamed rice with cashew milk. Man is it ever hard to squeeze that milk out of each cashew! Just kidding,. You make nut milk by putting the nuts in the blender with a little water and blend it smooth. I like to add a touch of maple syrup to my cashew milk.

## Salads

Some people say I put everything in the salad but the kitchen sink. That is because I let my imagination run wild when creating salads. go through your refrigerator and cabinets. Pull out nuts and seeds (including hemp and sesame), crackers ( whole grain, of course), fruits (grapefruit is delightful in a salad), dried fruits, meats, poultry, tofu in various forms (did you ever eat tofu shaped like spaghetti?) and exotic cheeses.

I am not suggesting putting every flavor into every bowl of greens. Use different combinations and you will find your salads to be endlessly varied and fun to eat.

Oh, the dressing--here is the simplest recipe:

mix equal parts of fresh-squeezed lemon juice and olive oil, add fresh sliced ginger and garlic cloves. Variations include adding tahini ( roasted sesame seed butter) and or tamari (or soy sauce).

Mayonnaise is simple to make and so very much tastier than store-bought brands. Break an egg into your blender. Add a dash of your favorite salt ( veggie salt like Herbamare, or lavender or rose salt is great), about on TB of honey or xylitol for sweetener, and 2 TB fresh lemon juice or vinegar (your favorite variety). Now add 1 TB mustard--I prefer Dijon.

Turn the blender on its lowest speed. Remove the little cap on the blender lid. Slowly pour in the olive oil while the blender swirls all the ingredients. Watch closely. when you see the mixture reaching mayonnaise consistency stop the blender. Put a spatula in to test the consistency. If it is just right you are done. If not turn the blender back on (cover the opening with your hand) and let more oil trickle into the mayonnaise.

At this point you can add wasabi for a spicy hot flavor, or curry for an Indian flavor--whatever spice sounds good. I often use Italian herbs. Refrigerate it in a jar. Always use jars. You use organic foods. Store them in inert glass not in plastic!!!!

Flavored mayonnaise adds zest to cole slaw (use broccoli, red and green cabbage for color and flavor enhancement--as well as seeds, nuts and dried fruits).

When you add it to carrot or Waldorf salad our family's eyes will pop with surprise and delight.

Hug your loved ones now.

## Recipes for Living: Fuel for Your Family's Body, Mind and Spirit

There is no rule that says you can or cannot add any ingredient to any dish...except the rule of your taste buds. Only eat what you like.

If a recipe calls for black pepper and you do not like black pepper then omit the black pepper. You do not need to scratch that recipe off your list. I don't think I ever follow any recipe as it is written. Always take it and make it yours.

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## **Sandwiches**

Who says sandwiches have to be on bread? Use rice cakes, apples, lettuce leaves, rice sheets, tortillas, potato pancakes--even cookies (just bake cookies meant for sandwich fillings so they are not too sweet).

Fillings--get creative here. Instead of chicken salad or tuna salad how about adding curry to the mix? raisins? cheeses?

Peanut butter and jelly? How about cashew butter and honey? Put some carob powder into the nut butter along with some honey or xylitol. Really good stuff!

This is one of my favorite when traveling because most hotels serve continental breakfasts these days. I take peanut butter and cream cheese packets and mix them with silken tofu (you can buy boxes of it that do not need refrigeration making them perfect for travel) and bananas. Mash it all together. It may sound weird. it is yummy--especially as a dressing on mixed greens.

Tofu is such a versatile product. Mash it up and use it in place of eggs for eggless salad.

Freeze it and when you defrost it its texture is similar to chicken. Use it as you would chicken. It's all good!

You can make everything from soup to nuts out of tofu. And if you are good, no one has a clue you used tofu. How about fudge? How about peanut butter fudge? Pumpkin pie? The list goes on and on.

## Soups

Have you ever thought of adding beaten eggs--not just to chicken soup (as in Chinese egg drop soup) but also to tomato and tomato/pepper soup? Once the soup is hot simply pour the eggs into the pot and cover. In about 3 minutes you have delicious textured egg drop soup.

I enjoy both hot and cold soup. Here are two I serve either way depending on the time of year and my mood.

### Ali's Ginger Red Lentil Soup

2T oil

1 medium onion

2T freshly cut ginger ( as finely cut as possible)

1 c cut-up dried non-sulphured apricots

2 C red lentils

juice of half a lemon

2  $\frac{1}{2}$  C pure water

Sauté the onion in the oil until soft (Not brown). Add ginger and sauté 2 minutes more. Add remaining ingredients except for salt and lemon. those go in at the end just before serving.

Cook on low for about 2 hours. The soup is ready when red lentils have dissolved.

**Ali's Carrot Fennel Soup**

1 medium onion--cut up  
1 pound of organic carrots--cut up  
1 large bunch of fennel--cut up  
4 C water  
1 C organic cream  
xylitol to taste  
salt to taste

Sauté onion in Dutch oven until soft. Add other ingredients (Except cream) and cook until tender and the house fills with rich mouth watering aroma. Carefully remove the fennel and discard all the leafy parts and all stems that are not chewable. Place the softer fennel pieces and all the carrot pieces in a blender. Add enough soup (CAUTION this is hot) and then add the cream. Blend until smooth. You may need to do this in two steps. Use caution blending and handling the hot soup. Add xylitol and salt only if you think you need to.

## Ice Cream

I want to put a sweet ending on this section of the book. What better way than to share my ice cream ideas.

I have an old fashioned 5 quart ice cream maker--the kind that needs rock salt, ice and water to freeze the custard. the whole point is I make custard--real rich custard--2 quarts worth.

Whip 5 eggs and place them over medium low heat on your stove with your sweetener. I use xylitol as it is actually good for you and does not react in the body as sugar does. Stir frequently as the custard wants to form on the bottom and sides of the pot.

When you see steam rising from the pot remove it from the heat. Stir in 1 quart of organic milk, 1 pint of organic heavy cream, and 1 pint of yogurt--plain with no additives like gelatin or aspartame or sucralose.

Blend until smooth then stir in 2 T vanilla.

Place the custard in the refrigerator for a few ours or over night so it cools and thickens. You want to put cold custard into your ice cream maker. You will not get smooth rich ice cream unless you cook the ingredients into custard first.

Pour the custard into the container with the dasher in place. Be sure the cover is on tight. If your freezer is eelctric turn it on now. If it is not electric WORK FAST as the custard will start freezing along the outside of the container where the ice meets it .Pack your ice cream freezer layering rock salt and ice. Pour in just enough water so the container with the custard easily moves. Water will pour out the flow hole so you want to do this outdoors or over a sink.

In the 20 minutes or so it takes for the custard tobecome ice cream prepare your flavor additions.

My all time favorite ice cream is yellow tomato--made with summer tomatoes picked fresh from the organic garden.

A very interesting flavor is chili--use chili powder.

Fresh off the tree plums make yummy ice cream too.

Then there are the stand-bys--chocolate, chips of all flavors. granola, crumbled cookies, nuts. If you want to use fruit you want to have that prepared in advance as it needs to sit in xylitol. Fruit loses its sweetness when frozen. So pre-sweeten it.

When you ice cream is done the machine will turn itself off if electric. For hand churning you will feel resistance.

Remove the container and quickly wash off the salt. Open the container. Remove the dasher and let the kids lick it. They will enjoy the antique vanilla taste.

Now take the 5 quarts of plain vanilla ice cream and divide it among as many containers as you want flavors. I usually do 5.

Add your extras into each of the 5 containers--allowing each container to be one unique flavor.

So for the work of churning the custard you get 5 flavors to savor for weeks.

If you have someone in your home who cannot do dairy--freeze fruits--bananas and grapes are terrific frozen and need no extra sweetener. You can pop them into your mouth (cut the banana up first) OR put the frozen chunks into a blender with some nut milk or rice milk. Pulse the blender and you will create frozen sorbet! WOWSERS! Really great stuff!

From very fun food to recipes for fun--what a perfect segue.

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**Part 2**

**Recipes for Fun**

**Enjoying each other's company**

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## **Everyone Is An Artist**

Sometimes you wind up waiting in places---just needing to fill time until your turn happens. How can you prepare yourself to entertain your young--or even your older kids, so the time flies?

If you no longer carry a huge bag filled with games, snacks and the other things (what I used to call "my Mommy bag,") then how about a single sheet of paper and pen or pencil? That is pretty easy to fold up and carry all the time.

Fold the sheet of paper into thirds so that only 1/3 shows at a time. The first person draws the "head" of this creature you will create together. No peeking at what someone else draws. Now be sure that you extend the lines of the neck onto the middle of the paper and hand the sheet to the second artist.

The second person starts at the neck lines and draws the body of this creature, going onto the third section just to indicate where the legs are.

Artist #3 (which can be the same person as #1) now draws the bottom of the creature.

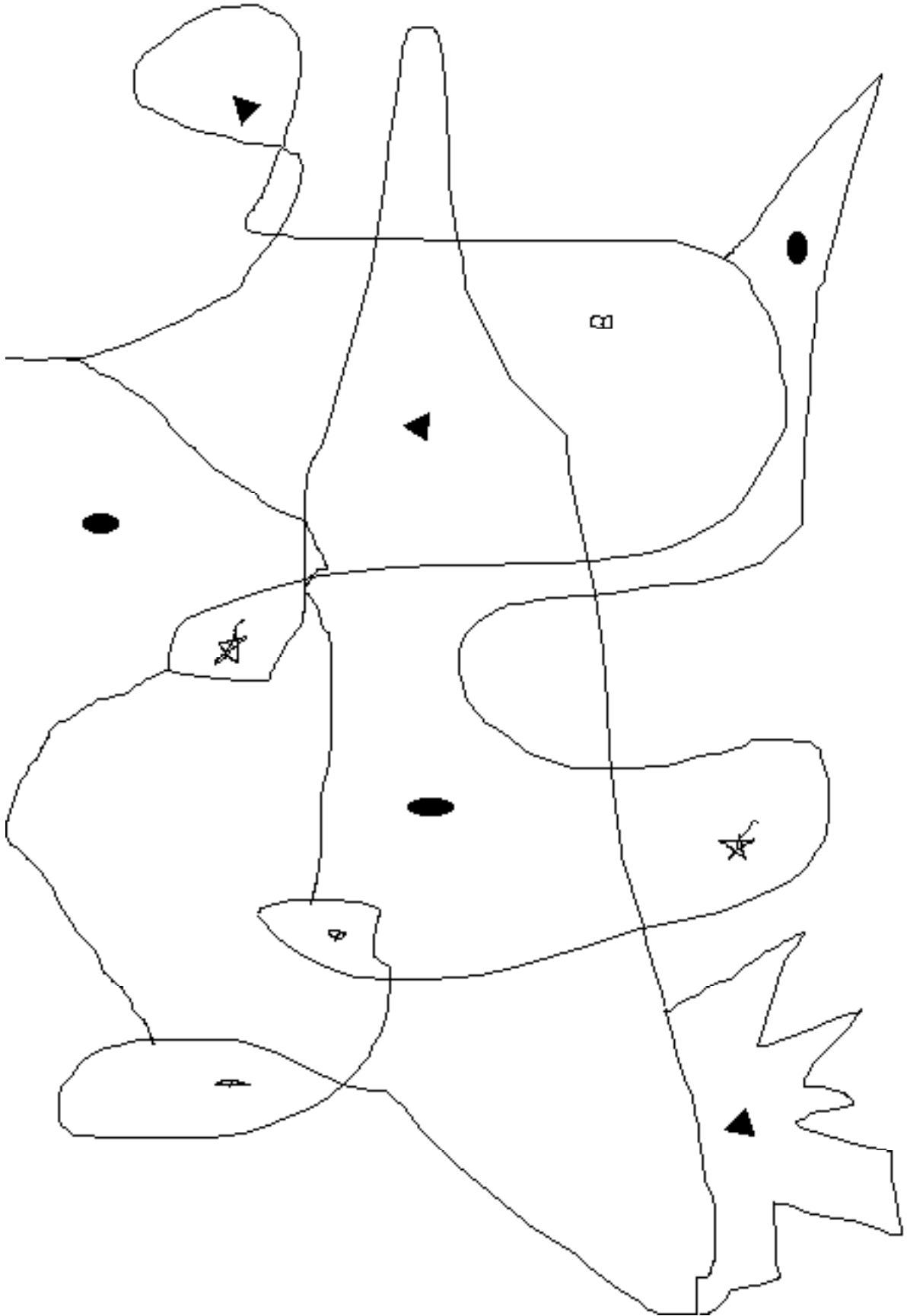
Unfold the paper so you can all admire--and probably laugh at quite loudly-- what you have created!

### **The Great Picture Mystery**

Another way to pass time with paper and pen (note the variations at the end) is for Mom to take a single page ( one for each child--and pen for herself too) and just squiggle lines all around the place. Make sure the lines enclose areas by crossing each other. See the illustration on the next page.

Next, instruct your child ( or you) to fill in each section according to the rules you make which can be:

- if you just make simple dots in some random areas then color in **ONLY** the areas with the dots
- if you have different shapes in areas then make a pattern to color in each area **OR** a color for each area, e.g.. maybe fill in the triangle areas with triangles and the oval areas with ovals, or maybe stripes--use your imagination and go wild! The surprise is looking at the finished design...and I do mean the surprise!



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## **Yet another time passer using paper**

Draw a "race track" on a piece of paper. Now tear off a small piece of paper and crumble it up into a "ball" that is now the "car."

"Drive" the "car" either by poking it briefly with a finger flick OR by blowing on it. count the number of flicks/blows it takes to reach the end of the "race" then run the race in reverse and see which way is faster.

The more irregular your "car" the more fun and challenging the game.

If your child has space to kick a bigger crumbled up paper ball around the floor then make a goal or target on the floor. Again, see how many kicks it takes to get the ball right on or in the target.

Do the same using hands instead of kicking.

Now move the ball while leaning over and looking back through your legs. That may be a tad disorienting at first...and definitely a challenge. Falling off balance is okay. Just keep smiling!

## **Make Your Own Toys and Games**

When my kids were very young we lived in North Carolina and my mom lived in New York. Traveling by train or plane meant not bringing toys along on visits. Sure, we left special games at Grandma Edie's house so they would always be there and always be very special since the only time we played them was when we went to her house to visit her.

The really neat fun came when we made our own toys and games. I remember when we searched the house of paper rolls--big ( like from gift wrap) and small--like from paper towels and toilet tissue.

The long gift wrap roll was the perfect length for a 3 year old to use as a golf club. We made a slit in the bottom of one end of the roll and put in a cardboard shape that allowed for hitting a tiny wiffle golf ball.

We took the other rollers and everything we could find to make a miniature golf course right there in Grandma Edie's living room.

Making the course and clubs was every bit as much fun as playing the golf game. By the way, the object of the game was to get through it not to count strokes and complete with each other.

Important note: I raised my kids to enjoy whatever they did. by doing so they got good at the things they really liked. When they got older and wound up in competition in sports or performing, they handled it just fine.

Let your kids be kids while they are young. They have plenty of time to be serious later. Start the habit of enjoying life. Afterall, life was never meant to be hard. Life is meant for joy, love and laughter.

## **What You Can Do With A Tissue**

Being Mom, you likely carry tissues with you all the time. Never know when you will need to wipe up or wipe up something or someone. Do you know you can take a tissue and twist tie and make a flower?

Take the tissue and fold it in half the long way. Gently tear the tissue along that crease. Next lay one tissue on top of the other tissue half--making sure the torn edges overlap. Now fold the tissue back and forth like when you make a paper fan. Once done tie the twist tie in the center of the folded tissue.

Gently separate the layers of tissue.

Voilà! A flower!

## **Teepee Fun**

Another cool pass-time we created at Grandma Edie's New York house was making a teepee. When I was little I used to gather small tree branches and tie them together at the top then throw blankets over them and sit outside in my teepee, my own private place, and read.

With my kids I added another dimension. We found the three or four thin tree branches that were just the right length to tie together and form a teepee big enough for the three of us to be inside at the same time. And then my Mom gave us a big sheet, a big white sheet to use instead of a blanket.

What made the teepee extraordinarily special was my kids got to draw designs all over the sheet. Now the teepee was their own decorated playhouse. When we went home, I threw the sheet in the suitcase so they got to have their Grandma Edie memory continue at home.

Privacy spaces are lots of fun for kids. Let them arrange chairs or sofas in way that allows them to drape a sheet over the top that hangs down. Instant fort!

## Fun Bedrooms

Who says bedrooms have to be stodgy places with formal furniture? I made a park for my daughter--bright sunshine on the door opening into her park. the walls were sky and grass. I created a huge tree book shelf that took up her biggest wall and held almost everything she owned. I covered the shelf with calico fabric over foam so she could hide the shelf contents and live in her park.

Below her loft bed I made a "cabin" with corrugated cardboard walls. The bedroom walls were virtually an art gallery--huge butterfly made of yarn, small apple tree that hung on the wall and then assembled into a small table for play, a giant yellow daffodil and string art, pillows--just about anything you can imagine and then a whole lot more...right down to satin ballet slippers clock.

My son's room was all about soccer and super heroes and--the Beatles! His huge fabric foam covered shelf was a soccer ball. I made a large soccerball clock and covered his windows with panels on which super heroes "lived."

His captain's bed allowed him to roll out his bed for sleeping and then hide it during the day.

Life is all about fun. When you are happy you bring more happiness to you.

## Family Fun on the Road

Living in North Carolina and visiting my mom in New York meant lots of very long road trips. Rarely did my kids ask the stereotypical question, "Are we there yet?"

Well how come? We kept them busy during the ride. No, not by sitting them in front of a boob tube. We played word games and talking games and sang a lot! In fact, Nili, as a small child, would never go anywhere in the car unless we sang for the entire ride. Good thing we loved to sing, huh? If we stopped, she would cry!

For many families vacations are a hectic time with stress so great that parents can't wait to get back to the peace of work! Something is wrong with this picture. Family vacations are supposed to be a time to be together without pressures of schedules and commitments to others, a time to enjoy one another and being together.

That is how it is supposed to be.

That controversial topic, appearing in the headlines of major newspapers including the Wall Street Journal, really surprised me

Right now I am sharing one activity we did when traveling on long and mini-vacations as a family.

1. Give person #1 a sound and rhythm, called "A" to make over and over and over again for the entire "round" of the game
2. Give person #2 a different sound and rhythm called sound "B" to make that works with sound "A"
3. You guessed it--give person #3 still a different sound and rhythm to make that works with "A" and "B"
4. Person #4 now makes the music that is the melody or lead voice, as it were. Enjoy your sing-a-long and you will enjoy each other.

By the way--no one is right or wrong in creating the sounds that go together. The person creating, composing--is always right in their choice. Play, literally using your voice or clapping, or whistling, etc, your part! You can't help but smile all the while!

[Click here](http://www.kidswhocan.com/roadfun.mp3) to listen to my sample at: [www.kidswhocan.com/roadfun.mp3](http://www.kidswhocan.com/roadfun.mp3)

Hug your loved ones now.

**Part 3**

**Feed the Spirit**

Hug your loved ones now.

## **Spirituality is different from religion.**

To live a happy and fulfilled life you need to nourish your inner -self, your spirit, your soul. Teach your child, by example, to do the same.

While our strength always resides and comes from within, knowing there is something beyond us that breathes life into all creatures, some force that is always present so we are never alone--those lessons carry us through the tough moments and hard times.

For me, the Ultimate love is the love for God. Kids need something to believe in outside themselves, not to think they will be judged or punished but to know they are held in every moment of every day with Love in Light.

That force, called God, Spirit, Universe, Allah, Buddha, whatever name fits for you, is pure love. (Note: love is always unconditional. If you place any conditions then you are not talking about love at all.) Teach your child you love him or her simply because he or she exists--you always have and you always will. [In Parents, Are You Making These 17 Mistakes With Your Child](#) you will learn what love is and how to teach it to your child.

Love is the foundation that sets one free to be, do and have anything they want in life. It feeds the soul and creates the limitless self image that leads to success across one's life.

I taught my children I loved them even when I did not like the behaviors in the moment. I hugged them LOTS every day and tell them, "I love you."

Hug your loved ones now.

## **The Hugging Game**

A popular game my kids played with me when they were very little is "Huggy Huggy Huggy"

I sat on the floor. My child would go across the room from me.

I smiled and called out, "Huggy! Huggy! Huggy!" and held out my open arms.

My child then ran into my arms and we hugged.

Then my happy youngster went back across the room and we played again.

We played until they got tired.

Lots of fun. Lots of smiles. Lots of giggles.

**AND LOTS OF HUGS!!!**

Did you know that Virginia Satir, who founded family therapy, said it takes 4 hugs a day to survive, 8 to get by and 12 to thrive?

Have you hugged your kids today?

Do it now--and notice, every time you give a hug--you get one back.

Nice, the way that works, huh?

Hug your loved ones now.

### **Squeeze Out the Monster**

People (remember kids are people) act out when they feel frustrated and unable to figure out how to get beyond their stuck point.

The last thing they need is punishment. The thing they most need is love. Whenever an undesirable behavior happened I would grab my child and hug really tightly and tell him or her I was squeezing out the monster that had gotten into him or her causing that behavior.

And after we hugged and hugged (which calmed both parent and child) well then, you see, there was this empty space inside my child that had to be filled with love so no monster could slip back in. Yup, we hugged and hugged some more. The end result was always a smile, two calm people and a restoration of intelligence. Then, with emotional discharge gone, then we could calmly discuss what happened.

You can probably tell that being a Mom is the most important thing in my life. My kids are now in their 30s---and I will always be their Mom. You see, being a Mom is a life-long job. Take it from me--it is an honor not a punishment! Honest, you will forget the bad times. What will linger in your heart are the warm memories and loving moments--pictures to cherish forever.

## **Meditation**

Meditation has countless benefits--mental and physical health, forming a deeper connection with oneself and with Spirit, uncovering--in the silence--your own solutions and directions for your life. the list goes on and on.

there are many ways to meditate--none are right and none are wrong. Not one is better than any other form. they all just are forms of meditation and there is at least one form that works for each person.

So if you do not already meditate start now, today. Do it with your child so your child gets in the habit of taking time each--every day--to be at peace and in touch with himself or herself.

Some people use a special room with special seating and music, maybe special lighting too. I want to suggest if you need a special environment to meditate then maybe you are not meditating at all. Maybe it is the room that is meditating. What do you do when you are not home in that room? forget the meditation?

It goes for those who like guided meditation. That works well. But what if you find yourself without a means to play the recording? Then what??

I suggest sitting still--being comfortable, of course--for 3 minutes a day. When that works for you move to 5 minutes. Extend your time as you feel comfortable and good about your results.

No specific results to stride for--just feeling good.

You will notice that meditating with someone else boosts your own level of energy and your meditation is deeper with more profound, more noticeable results for you and for each other.

## Recipes for Living: Fuel for Your Family's Body, Mind and Spirit

sometimes being outdoors is a meditation, You might walk and notice the sounds, sights, scents--feel the air move past you or recognize how still it is when you move through it. Walking can be a meditation too.

If you know of a labyrinth nearby see how you feel when you walk it. Maybe you have space to build your own either indoors or in your yard. whatever you do, please do it daily--for you and for your child. Remember, you are your child's role model. Hr and she will do what you do--and not do what you do not do.

Hug your loved ones now.

## **Final Thoughts**

**Mom, here's to you and all the kind, loving wonderful things you do every single day--that no one ever notices because you do them out of love and simply have no need to tell them about it.**

Hug your loved ones now.