



Foreword

## RELAX MAMA IN THE KITCHEN



**T**oddlers who cling to your leg like a koala, children who call ‘I’m reaaaady!’ from the toilet just at the moment you are wondering what ingredient you have to put in your pan next. Cooking for kids is just like hurdles for advanced. Only this finish is not always a moment to cheer. Kids’ mouths are quite critical.

I used to make exotic dishes, but nowadays I break my head for recipes that are not too exciting, but neither that boring your taste buds will die. When the kids were not there yet, it did not matter how late you ate. Today it is a race against the clock to have a nutrient meal on the table at a decent time. My pleasure for cooking would almost disappear.

Therefore, I think its time to gadder the forces. Time to collect success recipes from other mothers, because we all have those. That one recipe that works always. The one you can make with your eyes closed, while you are comforting one child and helping the other with his homework, or when you are checking your WhatsApp.

This book is a collection of relaxed mothers recipes. Recipes that are not really complicated, that has been approved by other children and which are (really!) delicious for yourself. Thanks to all those moms who send their recipes and to our recipe writers who have tested all of them and written them down.

And further on? I have asked a cook, an educational, a nutritionist and a coach for tips on how you can keep children at the table, how you can seduce them to eat everything and how to be more relaxed in the kitchen. You will not find information about the latest food hypes in this book. However, a few tidbits that are useful to give your child food that is as healthy as possible, or at least a little.

I hope this book will give you new inspiration for cozy, nice and relaxed meals. May the kitchen princess in you live a long and happy life!

Elsbeth Teeling

Ps. And remember... Also other children don’t like everything to eat.

Introduction

## MY 'RULES' FOR A WEEK MENU



If I have to complete two blogs, write six bills, have to make a PowerPoint presentation, lost the swim pass of Teun again and promised Keet to help her with her lessons about the Golden Century; it may occur that I cannot come up with what we should eat. Blank. Nobody home. Therefore I have mended my life since writing this book.

I go for weekly menus. It costs me any time during the weekend, but it delivers quite some rest at weekdays.

A weekly menu, with the 'rules' I set up. For example, we start the week with potatoes and vegetables mostly (then we've had that). And I try to switch as much as possible between the different types of cuisines during the week. Thus once pasta, once rice, once fish, once meat, once vegetarian. One day Dutch, the other Italian, Indian or Mexican for example. And in busy weeks I use a chance card: the take away sushi or frozen pizza.

My week menus exist of five days. Just like the chapters in this book. You'll find recipes for a healthy start in the Monday chapters. Tuesday is also known as 'busy Tuesday', so this chapter

is all about the easy and quick recipes. At Wednesdays recipes that need some time in the oven, and the Thursday chapters are called #throwbackthursday because you'll find the more classic recipes over here. And Friday, how can it be different, dishes that fits with a Friday drink, because #thankgoditsfriday.

And how about the weekends? For a non-planner like me this five days menu is already a big deal. Think beforehand what we should eat on the weekend? I can't! Especially since no weekend is the same. Because we just may end up somewhere and we are often away. Because the drinks ended later than we thought, and especially because... We are more relaxed in the weekends anyway.

**WANNA  
KNOW WHAT  
I'LL EAT THIS  
WEEK?**

**[clubvanrelaxtemoeders.nl/  
tag/weekmenu](https://clubvanrelaxtemoeders.nl/tag/weekmenu)**



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## RELAX MAMA WEEK MENU

*Don't think further! This is what you'll eat this week.*

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## FEEL FREE TO DO YOUR OWN THING!

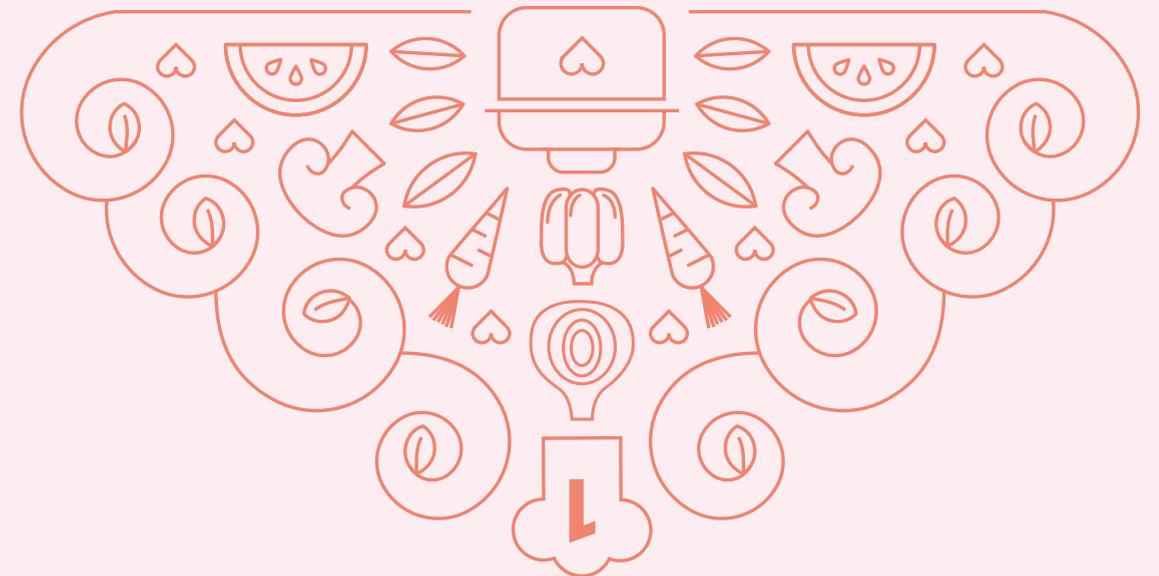
*"Does your children eat that really?" asked a friend surprised when I showed the recipes in this book. "No, of course not!" I answered her cheerful. Keet (11 years) eats pretty much everything, but I make from some of the things a simpler version for the toddler. For example, that curry from page 28 won't work for him yet. I'll give him just the white rice ("my favorite rice!") and the cauliflower separately. Everything has its time. In the meanwhile we make sure we have good food. And we still have the cherry tomatoes on hand if anything fails.*





**MONDAY**

*healthy start*





*Kitchen column*

## NO, NO, NO



**H**enno cried and I could just laugh when she got out after tree presses. On and a half kilos she was. I could hold her briefly, but she was taken to the incubator after a few minutes. Henno said: 'But what if I don't recognize here amongst all the other babies?' And the gynecologist replied: 'Don't fear for that, there is only one little one with that long legs'.

That's how our adventure with Keet started. Breastfeeding was not as obvious as you think as non-mom. Keet received breast milk by gavage, in mice bites. Twenty milliliters per time, twelve times a day. She grew well, she pooped (hooray!), and she kept on temperature and the three of us walked out of the hospital after three weeks. We kept scrupulously diagrams of how many she drank back home. Never before we were so ordered: getting a child was truly a life-changing event.

Keet grew, and before we knew it we could change the breast milk for fruit snacks. We started in good spirit with prunes, oranges, bananas. Followed by carrots and cauliflower. We felt uncertain after she gaged from a spoon fruit, and she neither liked the vegetables.

I bought green beans gunk from the factory and a stew with beef and carrot for a change. And yes, they were excited received. She ate! The jars were our best friends. Unfortunately there was a voice in my head that said that fresh food would be better and that she had to learn to really eat. Every time I made a culinary delight, she resolutely said: 'no, no, no' and kept her mouth shut. It did not make the dinner cozier.

I made it better for myself. 'She is never ill,' 'She won't eat from jars when she turns sixteen', 'She won't hold anything from it' and that kind of things. And guess what? I was right. She is eleven in the mean time, you can count the times she got ill on one hand, she did not develop bad eating habits, is still very slim and now she eats basically everything.

Well... Almost everything.



## RECIPE OF IRENE

Mother of Fedde and Thomas

*“A grilled cheese sandwich, but different. Irene varies with the salsa: sometimes she uses black beans instead of kidney beans or add some diced ripe mango. And it is on the table within 20 minutes!”*

4 PERSONS

20 minutes cooking time

### NECESSITIES

- 8 (multigrain) tortillas
- 250 g grated cheese

### For the salsa

- 2-3 ripe tomatoes
- 1 can black beans (400 g) rinsed and drained
- 1 red or yellow bell pepper, seeds removed and diced in cubes
- 3 spring onions, thinly sliced
- 2 ripe avocados, peel and pit removed and diced
- Juice of ca. ½ lime or lemon
- A handful of coriander or parsley leaves, finely chopped

# Quesadillas *with black bean salsa*

Begin with making the salsa. Cut the tomatoes into four parts each, remove the seeds and cut the flesh into small cubes. Mix the tomatoes with the beans, peppers, onions and avocado in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper and lime or lemon juice (test if it is the right taste!). Mix in the coriander or parsley.

Heat a frying pan for 1-2 minutes (I use a cast iron skillet). Place a tortilla in the pan and top with ¼ of the cheese. Cover with a second tortilla and cook for a few minutes at medium heat until the cheese begins to melt. Flip the quesadilla with a spatula and cook the other side also golden brown. Bake at the same way the rest of the quesadillas. Cut the quesadillas with a pizza knife or sharp knife into slices and serve immediately with the salsa. Serve hot sauce with it for the parents.



# “Tomorrow there's another day!”

You come home from work tired or rushed off. The kids are tired and hungry and dinner has to be made. It is for a reason called ‘witching hour’ in England. It is great moment for short fuses and explosives. How do you make it a bit relaxed for yourself? Charlotte Fielmich, also known as Mme Charlotte, is cook, author of cookbooks and single mother of two, meanwhile big daughters. She gives tips from her own kitchen.

## *Don't be too strict*

“It all starts with not to be too severe for yourself and not too high maintenance in the busy days. I love delicious and extensive cooking, but on the days I came home from work and when I had to race to pick up the girls just for six o clock, I planned no complex or new recipes. I have a list of success recipes in my head that you can make in less than fifteen minutes. My tip is to make such a list. Pasta with frozen spinach is a quick meal; you do not have to think about how to make it. And even when that is too much, you have to be honest to yourself and go to the snack bar right away from the daycare. Throw a frozen pizza in the oven or make a meal with breadsticks, cherry tomatoes and cucumber.

## *3-0 behind*

Relaxed Cooking stands or falls with good preparing. You are 3-0 behind if you're at work and dealing with a deadline, while you don't have food at home and you still have to come up with ideas for dinner. Charlotte: ‘It helps to do groceries for multiple days. You don't need to know what you're having for dinner all these days. You're almost there when you buy a huge crate of vegetables. And it can be useful to do groceries in your break when this fails.’ Charlotte: “You can always rejoice people with food. Cook now and than for your friends who are dealing with a harsh time or your neighbor who's on her own with the children. Invite, so that you can or dare invite yourself at someone else. Dare to ask for help when you have a busy week ahead. Or make a deal with a friend that you both will cook meals double, so you can share. In short: dare to ask for help.”

## Every week, allow yourself a chance card (or two)

No energy, time or inspiration today?  
Draw a chance card and take it easy.

### CHANCE

**Hurray! You can get  
Chinese food as take away.**

### CHANCE

**Congratulations.  
You have the right for a  
pizza at your choice today.  
Call 0900-PIZZA**

### CHANCE

**Official note:  
This day is just unexpectedly  
declared to national  
grilled cheese sandwich day.**

### CHANCE

**Go directly to a  
restaurant. Don't stop at  
the groceries store, but  
let others cook for you.**

### CHANCE

**You received the  
second place in the  
Relax Mama competition.  
You may order sushi.**

### CHANCE

**You don't have to cook  
today, you may .....**  
.....  
.....  
.....



*“Tal’s children really love Asian food. This is her success recipe. A simple stir-fry recipe, you can replace the broccoli with peas and mushrooms. And you can skip the chili pepper of course!”*

4 PERSONS  
20 minutes cooking time

**NECESSITIES**

- 300g small broccoli florets
- 250 g rice noodles
- 2 tbsp sunflower or peanut oil
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2-3 cm fresh ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- potential 1 red chili, seeds removed and finely chopped
- 400g chicken thigh meat or chicken breast, thinly sliced
- 125g bean sprouts
- 2-3 spring onions into rings
- a handful of fresh coriander, to sprinkle

*For the sauce*

- 3-4 tbsp lime juice
- 4 tbsp Thai fish sauce
- 1 tbsp brown sugar

**TIP!**

**Sprinkle eventual with finely chopped peanuts or cashews.**

# Pad Thai *with chicken & broccoli*

Cook the broccoli in salted water 2-3 minutes until al dente. Drain and rinse them under cold running water. Prepare the noodles according to the instructions on the packaging. Rinse the noodles under cold running water and possibly cut with scissors into large pieces. Mix a few drops of oil with it.

Mix for the sauce all ingredients with each other in a small bowl. Put aside.

Heat in a wok the oil and fry the garlic, ginger and possibly the chili 1 minute. Add the chicken strips and stir-fry for 4-5 minutes or until tender. Stir in the broccoli and sauce and stir-fry yet 1-2 minutes. Add at last the bean sprouts and stir-fry very briefly. Taste and if necessary add some extra lime juice. Spread over bowls and sprinkle spring onions and coriander. Serve immediately and serve it for the parents with hot sauce.



## COOKING MADE POSSIBLE BY:

- NETFLIX
- YOUTUBE
- ZAPPELIN
- BABYTV



## LONG LIVE THE PANTRY & THE FREEZER

*You will make it really  
easier for yourself  
when you have these  
at home always:*

### PANTRY

- dry pasta
- canned tomato
- onions and garlic
- cheese
- breadsticks
- crackers
- cucumbers
- baguettes that you  
have to bake
- sandwich bread
- noodle soup

### FREEZER

- vegetables
- fish & meat
- bread
- potatoes for in  
the oven

## COOKINGTIPS

- 1** Create fun, even when you don't feel like cooking. Invent something crazy: picnic with a pasta pot on the balcony or in the park, eat spaghetti in Pippi Langkous-style (with scissors), eat pancakes on the counter.
- 2** No inspiration and little in the fridge? Google the ingredients you have. Often a great recipe comes out.
- 3** Still nothing planned for dinner? Discuss in the morning at breakfast with the family which things they will like for dinner.
- 4** Make at the days you do have time extra large portions of soup, stew or pasta sauce and freeze half of it. You can also freeze in pizza bottoms and quiches.
- 5** Dive on the days that you have more time in a cookbook for exciting new dishes.
- 6** Are the children in your way while cooking? Put them behind a tablet or television.
- 7** Put away your phone while cooking. Cooks a lot more relaxed.
- 8** Can't you finish your meal as planned? Give hungry children something easy, and eat the meal you're cooking later. You can eat together at another day.



**RECIPE OF ELSBETH**  
Mother of Keet and Teun

*“We ate this soup at my friend Silvia for the first time, with the note that this was the favorite soup from her daughter Luna. Meanwhile it’s also the favorite from my toddler. It is so beloved, that I even misuse it. Leek soup, zucchini leek soup and spinach soup: I simply call everything arugula soup nowadays. Success is guaranteed.”*

**4 PERSONS**  
15 minutes cooking time

**NECESSITIES**

- 1 table spoon olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 150 g potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 liter of vegetable stock
- 150 g bacon, not too thin sliced
- 150 g rocket

**EXTRA REQUIRED**

kitchen towels, hand mixer

## Soup with arugula & bacon

Heat the oil in a soup pot. Add the onion and garlic and cook until the onion is gold yellow. Add the potato cubes, stir and pour the broth to the pan. Bring it to the boiling point, turn down the heat and let the soup boil for about ten minutes, until the potato is ready.

Meanwhile, fry bacon in a skillet without fat; and drain on kitchen paper.

Add the arugula to the soup (keep a few leaves behind for garnish) and cook 1-2 minutes. Pour the cream with it and heat through. Puree the soup with a hand mixer. Divide the soup into 4 bowls and garnish with rocket leaves. Serve the bacon with it at the table. Serve with thick slices of bread.

