

Mother's Day



Capture Mom's Favorite Recipes

Do you have a collection of pictures and recipes of your Mom's best dishes? Does it only feel like July Fourth if her potato salad is on the table? Is there a homemade soup recipe that is the only thing that will make you feel better when you are ill?

This year, make a special Mother's Day gift by collecting all those recipes into a customized cookbook that captures all those recipes for posterity.

INVOLVE EVERYONE

This is one of those gifts that gets better the more people contribute to it.

Browse sites such as Pinterest or sites with teacher lesson plans searching for "Mother's Day Cookbook." There are many templates and ideas for how even very young children can contribute to a cookbook for mom. For example, you could ask a kindergartner or first-grader to answer questions such as "What's your favorite breakfast?" or "How do you make your favorite food?" The answers are likely to be fun and sweet and may involve simple things like toasters or even recipes for something other than food. Ask them to



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draw pictures of their favorite foods. Older kids can probably provide more sophisticated recipes while photos of babies being fed a meal by mom can have them be a part of the project.

FIND RECIPES

Reach out to grandparents, aunts and uncles for recipes that they have shared with your mom and ask them whether they have pictures.

Make a list of recipes you want to include — and decide what your minimum and maximum numbers will be. You may want to create sections

such as "breakfast in bed with mom" or "mom's cookie jar" or "mom's favorite meals" or "family classics" or "must-have holiday dishes."

If your mom has an Instagram account, you might be able to find photos of dishes she's made there. Or you can schedule a photo shoot and have someone come take pictures of your family making meals together in the kitchen and then put those photos throughout the cookbook.

DESIGN THE COOKBOOK

Decide how you are going to compile the cookbook. Is it

something you will be designing and printing from your computer? Or will you be using a printing service? Local print shops are a great option because you can talk to them about exactly what you want and they can show you samples of other work they've done. They can discuss the pros and cons of softcover or hardcover books. Spiral-bound books are also practical for cookbooks as they will stay open on the page you are cooking from.

Another option is to reach out to an online print shop that specializes in cookbooks such

as Shutterfly, Heritage Cookbook, Create My Cookbook or Snapfish.

Create a title and select cover art — either photos or graphic images. The print shop you work with may have some templates. Customize the inside of the cookbook with quotes, stories and pictures. Record how many generations a recipe goes back and whether there are special occasions where it is used.

As a final touch, prepare some of Mom's favorite recipes and serve them to her on Mother's Day when you gift her the cookbook.

Woman Rescued 2,500 Children

Irena Sendler gave birth to only two children, but saved the lives of more than 2,500 Jewish children in Poland during World War II.

When the Germans invaded Warsaw in 1939, she started offering food and shelter to Jews — something that was punishable by death. When the Nazis erected the Warsaw Ghetto, she knew she had to take more action than just helping individuals. She used her papers as a Polish social worker to enter the Warsaw Ghetto, according to “Life in a Jar: The Irene Sendler Project.”

She and her co-conspirators made more than 3,000 false documents to help Jewish families escape the Ghetto. She then joined the Children's Division of Zegota. Zegota was a Polish underground group that helped Jewish people. Even after the war was over, Communist Poland arrested and prosecuted members of the group, which is one reason she lived in obscurity and poverty after the war.

RESCUING CHILDREN

Sendler would visit homes in the Ghetto and convince parents to let her smuggle out their children. She would later in life say that she wasn't the hero — the parents who let go of their children and the chil-



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

dren themselves were the heroes. Each child was given a Polish name, but Sendler recorded their Jewish name and hid them in jars underground in one of her co-conspirator's yard. She told the people who took in the Jewish children that they would need to be returned to their families after the war.

Some methods she and the underground network used to help smuggle children out of

the Warsaw Ghetto included hiding a child under an ambulance's stretcher, escaping through the courthouse, hiding children in a sack or suitcase and taking them out in a trolley, taking children out through sewer pipes or underground passages, or removing them in an ambulance if they could pretend to be sick.

ARREST

In 1943, the Nazis arrested

her and put her in the notorious Piawiak prison where she was interrogated and tortured. She fed the Germans false information she and her collaborators had prepared in case they were captured.

She was sentenced to death. However, Zegota bribed her German executioner, who helped her escape. The Germans hung posters all over the city claiming that she had been shot. She spent the rest

of the war in hiding.

REUNITING FAMILIES

Sendler was the only one who knew where all the children had been hidden and what their heritage was. When the war was over, she started digging up the bottles where she had stored all the information. She dedicated her life over the next few years to finding the children and trying to find a living parent. Most of the parents were killed in the Treblinka Death Camp.

LEGACY

For the most part, her work went unknown. She was recognized as a Righteous Gentile, but few official sources even knew whether she was alive. In 1999, four American teenagers began a National History Day project.

They discovered she was still alive and would eventually visit her in Poland five times. She has since become a national Polish hero and was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize before dying in 2008.

Jack Mayer, in writing for the National Endowment for the Humanities, interviewed Elzbieta Ficowska, whom Sendler rescued as a six-month-old infant. Sendler sedated her and put her in a carpenter's box. In her later years, she became one of Sendler's caregivers.

Sendler's daughter and grandchildren — and the descendants of those children she rescued — continue to honor her legacy as a mother who cared for all children.

Create a Memory Book

Mothers can sometimes feel that their work goes unnoticed, whether it is the day-to-day tasks of preparing meals, making sure everyone is healthy and keeping the house in order, planning for big events, healing broken hearts or listening to the excited plans of their offspring.

And while they don't do what they do for the recognition, it can be nice, especially on Mother's Day, to know that their work is seen. So rather than just taking your mom out to brunch or sending a bouquet of flowers, consider creating a more personal gift that lets her know her personal contributions are appreciated.

Create a memory book for your mother that is a combination of written memories, photos, drawings and mementos.

MAKE IT A TEAM EFFORT

Reach out to other people in your mom's life to gather memories. If you have siblings, include them. Talk to her parents if they are alive. Ask her partner or your father



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for memories, if appropriate. Other people who may have stories about her being a mom can include friends, her siblings, co-workers or community members.

Ask anyone willing to participate to share one memory or story about your mom as a mother. Or even ask them to contribute a single word that they think best describes your mom. You can collect those words and make a word cloud (there are many word cloud generators online) that can be a graphic for the cover with her name in the middle.

COLLECTING STORIES

Think about different times in your life with your mom. See if you can recall three to five stories from varied ages in your life. Is there a favorite story you like to tell? Is there a memory you have that is special to you but you've never shared with her?

The stories can be as short as a paragraph or as long as a few pages — depending on how you want to tell the story. You can also intersperse them with poems or quotes about moms in general. If you have artistic skills, include your

own drawings. Moms love art their kids make — no matter how old their kids are.

When possible, include photos of your mom. They don't have to be from the memories that you share, though that is a nice touch. You can create collages using free online photo editors.

FORMATTING

There are many different ways you can put together a book for your mom. You can use a basic word processing program to design it and then print it on an 8 ½x11 sheet

that you fold in half. You can use an online print shop if you want a hard cover with book binding. You could put together a slide show and have the book be purely an electronic one that she can enjoy on her phone and share on social media.

Consider adding the date and year to the cover or the inside cover and be sure to include your name and the names of the people who contributed stories.

It's the type of gift your mom is likely to treasure for years to come.

Celebrate All Moms

Families can take many shapes and sizes and that diversity can create opportunities for creative Mother's Day celebrations.

It's important to create your own traditions when celebrating Mother's Day to include all the mothers in the family, from stepmothers to grandmothers to same-sex family mothers to transgender mothers. Mother's Day can also be a time to remember those mothers who have passed on.

INCARCERATED MOTHERS

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, 62% of women in prison and 80% of women in jail are mothers. Their children are placed with a father only 25% of the time; the other 75% end up in foster care or with other relatives.

Mother's Day represents a chance for children to connect with mothers behind bars. Some organizations hold digital solidarity and letter writing events. The Black Mama's Bail Out takes place on Mother's Day to raise bail money for Black mothers and caregivers.

Mother's Day may also be a time for these children to celebrate the women who are taking care of them such as aunts, older sisters and grandmothers.



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BLENDED FAMILIES

Even when the bonds between husband and wife dissolve, there is still often a bond between stepmothers and children. If the family relationships are good, there can be a joint celebration with stepmothers and birth mothers included.

If there is tension or distance makes that impossible, celebrations could be split

between households and perhaps held over a few days.

INTERGENERATIONAL FAMILIES

A mom doesn't stop being a mom just because she's now a grandmother.

Including grandmothers from both sides of the family can make for a great family get-together. If distance makes this impossible, grandmothers could be included over Zoom

or a video conference call.

SAME-SEX COUPLES AND TRANSGENDER/ NON-BINARY MOMS

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly 15% of the 1.1 million same-sex couples in the U.S. have at least one child under 18. Of those, they were more likely to be female same-sex couples, with 22.5% of those households having children under 18.

With two moms in the family, there can be twice the celebration. However, some couples want to make sure each mother gets a chance to be spoiled, especially if their kids are too young to plan any Mother's Day celebrations themselves and the planning will fall to one of the partners. This might involve roping in someone to help with the plans. Other couples will arbitrarily assign one mom to celebrate on Mother's Day and the other to celebrate on Father's Day.

Gender can be tricky when celebrating as gender and motherhood are not wholly linked. If you're going to send cards to someone who is transgender or non-binary, ask which holiday they prefer to celebrate — Mother's Day or Father's Day. Every family will navigate the holiday differently and there is no one right or wrong way to do it.

DECEASED MOMS

Mother's Day can be painful for those who are mourning the loss of their mother, no matter how recent or how long it has been. Mother's Day can be a time to pay tribute to the beautiful memories formed with a mother. It could be a time to fix her favorite foods, for her children to share stories about her or to go through old pictures.

Whatever the makeup of your family, celebrating Mother's Day should be an opportunity for laughter, joy and to make the mothers in your life feel special and loved.

Bring Out Your Mom's Glamour

Sometimes moms don't have a whole lot of time to show off how glamorous they really are.

This year, you can bring out your mom's fancy side by treating her to a glamour photo shoot. Sure, everyone has a camera in their pocket these days, but it can't replace the skill of a great photographer.

Adobe defines glamour photography as a portraiture genre designed to bring out a person's inner and outer beauty. It includes elements of fashion and boudoir photography. Some moms report that after a glamor photo session they feel more confident and proud of their body — the body that they have used to bring life into the world.

FINDING A PHOTOGRAPHER

Do some research to find a great local photographer who is willing to make your mom a star. You can search for studios online and see samples of their work on their website or by searching such photo sites as Flickr. Make a list of four or five and interview your top choices to see whether their services match with what you want to provide for your mom as a Mother's Day gift.

While early glamour photography was all about high-contrast black and white photos that evoked images of old Hollywood, today's glamour



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photography is more expansive and is designed to bring out the individuality of the subject. Some looks might turn your mother into a fine art portrait or an avant-garde fashion photo.

Look for a photographer who will take the time to talk to you and your mom and create a background and photo shoot that best fits her personality. The shoot should be a collaborative process where they understand what your goals are for the shot.

Many photographers will

offer packages that include studio shots, remote locations or both. Decide whether you want to be part of the photo shoot. Some packages will include "mother/daughter" or "mother/son" shots.

Find out beforehand what is included as deliverables. Will you have electronic files? Will they provide a photo album? How many shots will you get to choose?

SALON VISIT

While many glamour photographers will provide makeup

and hair services (along with pre-shoot wardrobe consultations), why not add to your Mother's Day gift and take mom out to the salon for a morning of beauty before the shoot?

Go with her to a salon that will style her hair, give her a manicure/pedicure and do her makeup.

LOCATIONS

Talk to your photographer about locations. They may prefer studio shots because they can use their advanced equipment and set up dramatic light-

ing that is necessary for glamour shots. However, if there is a place that is special to you or your mom, be sure to discuss that. You may want to have the photo shoot at a garden, a waterfall, a beach or a park.

While surprises are great for Mother's Day, this might be a gift that you want to tell your mother about in advance and include her in the collaboration so she can provide input and help to create an experience that she is comfortable with and will give her great photographs to cherish.

Pack Up the Picnic Basket

You know that the restaurants are going to be chock full of people on Mother's Day. Not only will it be a challenge to get a reservation, but even Mom's favorite restaurant may be less enjoyable when it is crowded, loud and filled with stressed employees.

So if you're looking to provide a perfect meal for Mom that she doesn't have to prepare, clean up after or prepare for beforehand, consider taking her out for a picnic.

FINDING THE PERFECT PLACE

While there are many options for a picnic, consider picking somewhere meaningful to your mom or your family. Is there a favorite park where your family spent a lot of time? Is there a local botanical garden? Does your mom like animals — how about a picnic at the zoo? Is there a beach nearby? Is there a place she enjoyed as a child that you could make a daytrip to?

Don't overlook your own backyard, especially if it is a place filled with memories.

What happens if the weather turns bad? Take your picnic indoors! There's nothing say-



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ing you can't spread out a blanket on the living room floor and enjoy a picnic with all the comforts of home.

PACKING THE BASKET

Depending on where you are having the picnic, you may want to pack things such as a blanket or lawn chairs. An actual picnic basket adds a nice touch and you can find

them in local craft stores or locally owned boutiques. Other great picnic containers include a cooler or a hamper lined with a tablecloth. Insulated containers are a good idea if you are packing food you need to keep hot or cold.

While it might be tempting to bring disposable plates, consider a more eco-friendly

choice and pack reusable enamel plates that will hold up better and not get soggy if the food sits on them. Pack wet naps and garbage bags so you can leave your picnic site as pristine as you found it.

If your local farmer's market is open, head there to fill the basket with artisan cheeses, fresh fruit and vegetables, homemade bread and other

goodies. If where you are going allows alcohol, pack a bottle of wine or some other drink you know your mom likes.

Sandwiches are popular picnic foods and can range from as simple as peanut butter and jelly to as fancy as watercress and cucumber sandwiches. The Utah State University Extension suggests making a fix-your-own sandwich bar and fill plastic containers with sandwich fixings. Add different kinds of breads and a variety of spreads from mayonnaise and ketchup to pesto, tapenade or flavored soft cheese. They also recommend simple finger foods like carrots, celery and sliced bell peppers.

A PERFECT PICNIC

Plan things to do for your picnic. Do you want just quiet time with your mom catching up on each other's lives? Will it be a family event with lots of kids and relatives? Plan activities accordingly. Bring Frisbees or lawn games, coloring books or reading books.

Consider putting together a playlist on your phone for music to picnic to. This can include anything from classical or jazz to your mom's favorite music.

Keep your local conditions in mind. Pack bug spray or sunglasses if necessary. Consider hanging umbrellas from nearby trees to provide shade.

Be sure to take pictures and enjoy an outdoor meal celebrating everything your mom has done for the family.

Personalized Packages

Every mom is unique in her personality, interests and talents. Putting together a themed gift bag can create a gift that is as unique as its recipient.

The following ideas can get you started on certain themes. Use it as inspiration to put together a unique gift bag filled with things that will delight your mother.

SPORTS MOMS

Is your mom always the first on the field to cheer on the local sports teams—or passing out water at every child's game?

Gift ideas: Tickets to a local sports game, signed memorabilia from her favorite athlete, a ticket stub diary to hold past tickets, an ESPN+ subscription, NBA Special Edition coffee, books about their favorite athlete or sport, a smart watch, a dry-erase draft board or a travel mug with a sports saying on it.

Packaging: A great gift “bag” idea can be a cooler on wheels that is perfect for taking to the game, as well as holding all the cool gifts you've found.

LITERARY MOMS

Sure, you could just get her a gift certificate to Barnes & Noble or a pile of books and she'd probably be thrilled.



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Chances are, though, your book-loving mom already has a pile of books waiting to be read.

Gift ideas: Bookmarks — especially ones you make or get in local boutique stores, a signed name plate from one of her favorite authors, a Kindle, an Audible subscription and a pair of Apple AirPods, socks that say “Shhh! I'm reading” or other book sayings, a book light, a book journal, blue light glasses, a

book caddy for the bath, bookends from a local art gallery, tea bags (there are several literary options) and a cozy throw.

Packaging: Find a great book bag printed with books or literary quotes.

OUTDOORS MOMS

Some moms are happiest when they are outdoors, whether at the beach, hiking through the mountains, camping or gardening in their own

backyard.

Gift ideas: A bison adoption certificate from the World Wildlife Fund, an insulated hoodie or fleece jacket, a headlamp for hiking, GPS/Satellite mini-communicator that sends out SOS signals, a solar lantern, flower seeds, outdoors knife set, ski goggles, stormproof matches, hydration tablets or camper mugs.

Packaging: Find a great hiking backpack and fill it up

with goodies.

ARTISTIC MOMS

Some moms are happiest when at an art studio, the theater or the symphony. Others have only reluctantly retired their ballet shoes.

Gift ideas: Season tickets to a local theater company, ballet or symphony; a calligraphy set, paints, art supplies, graph paper, frames, art lessons — whether visual or performing arts, playing cards with art work on the back, a charm bracelet with charms for Mom's favorite musicals or artists, sheet music, dance leggings, or a shadowbox frame for holding tickets.

Packaging: Build your own mini-set and fill it with gifts.

GAMER MOMS

Gen Z and Millennial moms were raised playing games and haven't stopped just because they have kids. In fact, they may enjoy them now more than ever.

Gift ideas: Steam gift cards, headphones, mouse pad, gaming headset stand, colored dice, gaming mouse, controller charging stations, cookbook with video game-inspired recipes, Apple Arcade gift cards, Xbox Game Pass/membership, Tamagotchis, LED light strips, USB microphones, a seat cushion or a virtual reality headset.

Packaging: This might be the time to get a “Bag of Holding” on Etsy or a laptop bag and fill it with the electronics that will make her swoon.