

Fay makes it *easy*

100 delicious
recipes to impress
with no stress

Fay Ripley



A stack of four bowls is placed on a light-colored windowsill. The bottom bowl is blue with a white leaf pattern. The other three bowls are plain white. In the background, a window with white curtains is visible, and a small potted plant sits on a shelf to the left.

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**'We must have a pie.
Stress cannot exist in the
presence of a pie.'**

David Mamet

making
it easy





In a world where food is political, powerful and controversial it's important to me to make the most of every morsel. My family and friends are the tick in my clock, and sharing time and great food with them is what makes the grotty bits of life palatable.

In this, my third book (I now have more books than kids), I have made sure there are 100 delicious recipes that will multi-task for you – that will strip away stress like a fake tan covers up cellulite. My No-knead Crusty Sunflower Loaf (see [here](#)) works for breakfast right through to a midnight snack; there's a super, tasty Salmon & Leek Lasagne (see [here](#)) with a cheaty sauce to save you time; while the Scandi Sharing Plate (see [here](#)) or Sushi Bites (see [here](#)) are great for a party, as a starter or a light lunch with the kids, and roasts like the Beef Ropa Vieja with Creamy Polenta (see [here](#)) will delight a tableful or can be used as leftovers during the week ahead. There's also a double serving of desserts that will make you look like a genius while leaving time for a cuppa and a box set.

Many of these work on a 'Stay at Home Tuesday' when time is tight and nerves are frayed, but are SO delicious and doable that you could easily serve them to a crowd. It's all about taking away the stress so that you can get back to loving the food you cook, the food you eat and the food you share.

Every meal has the potential to be a celebration, not only on a high day or holiday but also on a 'Washing Day Wednesday' or 'TGI Friday'. So I felt it was time to sort out the problem of 'What on earth am I going to cook?' when the boss/vicar/headmaster/boyfriend/girlfriend/old friend/new friend/mother-in-law/neighbour/vet comes for breakfast, lunch or dinner.

It does seem that for a lot of us, the weekend is when family and friends get together but it's only fun when you have the perfect recipe up your sleeve which will then leave you time to enjoy being king or queen of your castle.

This much I know; too many ingredients mean there is always something you can't find, don't have or simply forget to put in. Too much preparation means you don't get to brush your hair or teeth before it's time to eat. Techniques only used in restaurants that poach their eggs in nitric acid mean you lose confidence and your pride when it all goes wrong. And dear God, it does go wrong.

Not so long ago I found myself inviting a woman for dinner whom I admired tremendously. A grown-up girl crush and I wanted to impress the hell out of her. Bad start – I cared way too much about what she thought of me, my home and most of all my food. I started preparing weeks in advance. I gave the house an enema, terrified that my key guest might open a drawer and discover some skanky pant or other. I bleached the kids, shaved the dog and landscaped the garden. Then I began to plan the food; so I sent an email asking if she had any dietary requirements. Nothing. No response. I forged on with my banquet. A spring soup with peas, herbs and goat's cheese, homemade bread, an elaborate lamb dish that needed marinating for 40 days and 40 nights and a huge, I mean HUGE, pavlova. So huge was my pavlova I didn't even have a plate big enough to serve

it on. So in my hosting madness, that was by now at tranquilliser stage, I made a plate .. admittedly out of egg boxes and foil, but still. Things had clearly got out of hand. I was now swigging from any bottle I could get my hands on – cough mixture included – just to calm my perimenopausal hysteria. So, again I sent an email asking if there was anything she or her husband could or would not eat. No response until 20 minutes before they pulled up outside my house when I received a text saying, ‘Hi, forgot to mention that we are both off dairy, meat, wheat, sugar and alcohol. Soz, hope that’s ok, don’t go to any trouble! :)’

OOOOOOOOOMMMMMMMMMMMGGGGGGGGGG. Don’t go to any trouble? I was more relaxed when I had my coil fitted. As I looked up from my phone in despair, the fire alarm sounded and screams of ‘The bread! The bread! It’s on fire!’ came from my now smoke-filled kitchen/diner. Some early, helpful guests threw their cardigans on the smouldering remains and assured me that crackers would be just as good.

Well, I now had 15 minutes to produce a meal for the guests of honour using only a tin of mung beans and some coconut water. Quickly I knocked up what I could, given the brief. Although I admit I did pass off the soup as vegetable-based when it actually had a chicken stock at its very core and was laced with dairy products (she was no vegetarian, just on a blinking diet, so I figured it was only a white lie). So I fussed and fettled all through a hideous night of stress-soaked dishes I wished I had never tried to reproduce in a domestic environment.

Then came the pavlova – in all its glory and on its tailor-made cardboard plate. Drum roll please. But do you know? She didn’t even glance up. She just flicked her hand into my face as though stopping traffic and said ‘Not for me’. ‘The hand.’ I was just about to tip the most glorious pudding I had ever made right on top of her blow-dried head when from my son’s baby monitor I heard the unmistakable sound of retching followed by a scream that only dogs and mums can hear.

I spent the rest of the night with buckets and sponges knowing that I had impressed no one, least of all myself. Oh, and by the way, she never even texted a thank you. Nothing I haven’t seen her since. I no longer have a girl crush on her and I fully intend to give her more than just ‘the hand’ when I do bump into her.

However, it was in the cold light of day that I pledged to follow some simple rules from then on. Rules to make life easier, to make life fun and rules that would mean you and I could enjoy sharing our food without beads of sweat dripping into the gravy. I no stack my pavlova in layers to great effect (see [here](#)) so there’s no need to customise the crockery, and although I do swig from the odd bottle every now and then, it’s usually not because dinner’s gone tits up.

So, the boxes that every recipe in this book must tick are:

- Not too many ingredients.
- You don’t have to source the ingredients from the foothills of the Himalayas.

- You don't have to faff about with fiddly bits.

- There must be a mouthwatering picture of the finished product for each and every recipe so you can see what the hell you are heading towards.
- Simple instructions that work every time.
- It has to look like it's taken you ages to prepare even though it didn't.
- Show-off value must be high.
- It must be absolutely, totally delicious.
- It's got to be as good for you to cook as them to eat.
- it must be stress free.
- (Oh, and never invite guests with no manners and/or who will only eat dishes made from water and lemon balm.)

My food always comes from my kitchen and my heart. I hope these recipes will solve a few problems and put smiles on faces, yours included. This is the food I eat and this is the food I love to share. It's about de-stressing, delicious grub and being able to enjoy sitting round a table with folk you want make memories with.

I'm working on making the rest of life easy ... you might have to bear with me on that one.

Fayt

by the way...

In all recipes I try to use:

- Free-range eggs & chicken
- British beef & pork
- Sustainable fish











'When you wake up in the morning, Pooh,' said Piglet at last, 'what's the first thing you say to yourself?'

'What's for breakfast?' said Pooh.
'What do you say, Piglet?'

'I say, I wonder what's going to happen exciting today?' said Piglet.

Pooh nodded thoughtfully. 'It's the same thing,' he said.

A. A. Milne

morning
glory

Seedy breakfast bars

Special birthday breakfast Swiss roll

Wholemeal French toast with maple syrup & blueberries

Brekky hangover sub

Idiot-proof peanut butter

Wild mushrooms on toast

Morning muffins

Lemon ricotta hotcakes

No-knead crusty sunflower loaf with cream cheese & blackberries

Fry-up breakfast pizza

Fay's Florentine me muffins

My Hollywood raspberry bircher muesli



Seedy breakfast bars

Breakfasts, lunch boxes, snacks or with ice cream, these feel good enough to eat without too much guilt. If, like me, you are comfortable with a little guilt, melt dark chocolate and, once the bars have cooled, drizzle it all over them. Lick the bowl and pray for forgiveness.

For 16

Prep time... 15 mins

Cook time... 35 mins (plus cooling and setting)

All you need is...

150g butter, cubed
80g (4 tbsp) golden syrup
100g (2 heaped tbsp) apricot jam
250g oats
200g currants
100g pumpkin seeds
50g sesame seeds
50g sunflower seeds

All you do is...

- 1** Preheat the oven to 160°C (fan), 180°C, gas mark 4. Line a brownie tin or baking tray, around 20 × 30cm, with baking paper.
- 2** In a large pan, gently melt the butter, golden syrup and jam, then stir in all the other ingredients to evenly coat.
- 3** Scrape the lot into your lined tin and with the back of a large spoon firmly smooth the mixture down as flat as you can, moulding the mixture right to the edges of the tin.
- 4** Bake for 30 minutes till golden on top. Cool at room temperature for 30 minutes then pop in the fridge to set for at least 1 hour before cutting into 16 bars.

✓ De-stress

These keep brilliantly in an airtight container in the fridge for 3–4 days.



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