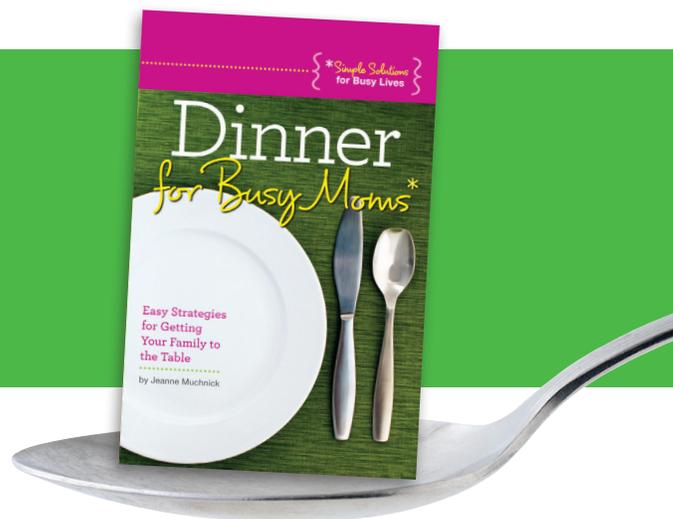


Dinner for Busy Moms*

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Press Release- Tips from *Dinner For Busy Moms*

Managing Mealtime Mayhem
A book by moms for moms
(meaning honest tips that work!)

WHITE PLAINS, NY
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It's no secret moms are stretched. Thinking about what's for dinner, let alone a starch, a vegetable, a fruit, a fiber, and an entrée is hard enough when you need a GPS navigational device to track every person's whereabouts thanks to soccer practice, piano lessons, tae kwon do or art class.

The pressure-cooker that is parenthood means the family dinner has virtually disappeared. Today, less than half of American families eat dinner together—despite the fact that 98% of moms say it's important. And when they do, most meals last less than 30 minutes and are often lacking in proper nutrition.

Study after study proves time spent gathered at the kitchen table is a significant way to strengthen family bonds. Counted among the benefits are higher quality of food, better nutrition and portion control, as well as emotional nurturing, sense of belonging, better grades, less delinquency, and overall family unity, not to mention cost savings. With the recession in full swing, there's a definite shift towards saving money and staying home, making the dinner hour more important than ever.

All of which sounds great in theory, but how does one make it work – and stick? The answer: Realistic mom-tested strategies from those who deal with mealtime mayhem on a daily basis, with a hefty dollop of chattiness, a portion of humor and cups full of honesty.

Jeanne Muchnick's new book *Dinner for Busy Moms* is all about:

- 1) Losing the guilt
- 2) Doing what works for YOUR family
- 3) Feeding your soul
- 4) Easy meals (think baked potatoes, breakfast for dinner, soup and sandwich nights)

Some tips:

- **Plan to plan.** Set aside two to three hours a week to cook, shop and plan. Mark it on your calendar with just as much importance as other things in your life. You can do this by deciding on your grocery days and family nights.
- **Keep your expectations realistic.** Take this dinner thing in baby steps. If it's the main course you get stuck on, then buy a rotisserie chicken and cook the side dishes. If it's prepping the vegetables that bog you down, buy frozen or pre-cut. If it's all of the above, fortify an ordered in pizza with pre-cut broccoli or ready-made chicken.
- **Keep your pantry well-stocked.** Staples such as pasta, pasta sauce, canned beans, rice, soups, etc. can make throw-

ing together something easy possible. An organized pantry also helps considerably with your shopping list and knowing your needs. To that end, stock up on ingredients for your tried and true meals.

- **Love your freezer.** Stockpile food in your freezer, either by buying frozen foods that your family likes (frozen pizzas are great as are frozen soups – you can always beef up with veggies or protein or any leftovers)...or take a Sunday to cook a bunch of things, and then freeze for later. That way, there's always something to defrost for dinner.

- **Plan for leftovers.** You've heard it before: cook once, plan twice. Making lasagna? Make two so one goes in freezer. Chicken cutlets? Prepare some with BBQ sauce, use others for stir-fry, salads or soups.

- **Think pre-packaged.** By purchasing pre-ready or pre-prepared meals or cut up veggies, you're saving yourself extra time (and cutting down on stress and headaches).

- **Delegate.** Involve your children with chores from a young age. Kids can learn how to set the dinner table, put groceries away, make their beds (within reason depending on ages) which makes YOUR life easier.

- **Use technology to your advantage.** Shop online. Keep your grocery list for favorite items online. Set up alerts for what you need.

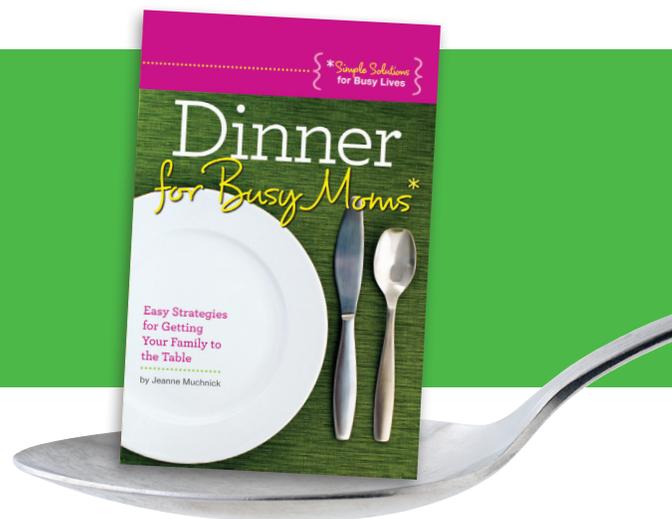
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*Serving up
Simple Solutions
for Families

Dinner for Busy Moms*

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Press Release- Tips from *Dinner For Busy Moms*- cont.

● **Make friends with your crockpot.**

Toss food in in the morning and by 5 p.m. you have a hot-home-cooked meal. Throw in chicken with veggies and some marinade (even salad dressing!) or mushroom soup - even non cooks can do!

● **Eat the right “mood foods.”** The right foods can help you relax/make you feel better physically and emotionally: i.e. oranges (vitamin C support your immune system); pistachios (a handful can lower your blood pressure); chocolate (a little piece - and not just the dark stuff - can make you happier); salmon (is rich in omega 3 fatty acids which are crucial to brain function); tea (a cup of chamomile or peppermint soothes your anxieties); and red wine (a glass of day is good for your heart - and helps relax you; just don't overdo it!)

● **Keep healthy snacks around.** Boil a few eggs and refrigerate them so you have a quick protein on hand for a salad topper, to go snack, humus and carrots, peanut butter.

● **Don't stress over dinner.** Breakfast for dinner is always a great alternative. I love eggs! Or a frittata. A baked potato also works - top with cheese, broccoli, chili and it's a meal. Same with soup. Soup and a sandwich are another easy solution...simply make it “fun” by setting up a sandwich buffet. Not a lot of effort to put out bread, cheeses, sliced

meats and let kids pick and choose.

● **Schedule time for you.** I'm big into putting a warm washcloth over my eyes with a dab of lavender or eucalyptus just to give me a brief pick me up. Even a warm heating pad on my back and shoulders helps while watching mindless TV (for a little bit).

● **Accept “the best you can do.”** It's a mantra I'm always saying to my kids, my hubby, myself. Good enough is OK.

Muchnick admits she's no Martha Stewart. She has a messy house, a car full of snack wrappers, a huge stack of books and magazines by her bed, and a crazed, multi-tasking life she calls “controlled chaos.” What she is diligent, about, however, is mealtimes...especially after her youngest daughter confessed that going to her aunt's house - where Muchnick's sister makes dinner and the family eats together - was better than being home. “It struck a chord,” says the Westchester, NY mom of two of the conversation that occurred years ago, “And made me realize I needed to be better about the needs of my family, rather than my work deadlines. I was - and actually still am - often so busy with work and errands and life in general that dinner became something that fell by the wayside.”

And so: This book from a writer who's been contributing to local and national

publications for more than 20 years. A graduate of Syracuse University's Newhouse School, Muchnick landed her first job as an editorial assistant at *Seventeen Magazine* and from there went on to *Good Housekeeping*, *Woman's World*, *BaBY Magazine*, and *Woman's Day Special Interest Publications*, with stints in between in the housewares and travel trade press. Her work has appeared in countless newspapers and magazines including *Woman's Day*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Parents*, *Parenting*, *Pregnancy*, *Woman's Health & Fitness*, *Bride's*, *Modern Bride*, *Endless Vacation*, *The Daily News*, *The New York Times*, *The Journal News*, *InTown Westchester*, *Sprout.com*, *MomCentral.com*, *FamilyFun.com* and *Westchester Magazine*.

She lives in Larchmont, NY with the suburban “angst” (and joy!) that is her life: husband, Mark, two teenage girls, a dog who sheds, a stack of bills, and a coffee machine set to brew by 6:30 a.m. so she can “deal.” (In fact, she promises if you buy her book - or promote it - she'll brew YOU coffee. Or at the very least, bring dinner.) Go to JeanneMuchnick.com or DinnerForBusyMoms.com for more information.

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