



how to bake your  
family  
cookbook

by jules clancy  
[www.thestonesoup.com](http://www.thestonesoup.com)

For families everywhere and my crazy family in particular.

I love that there's no such thing as a normal family.  
And I love that every family has their own unique food traditions - all the more reason to  
celebrate and preserve them with a special family cookbook.

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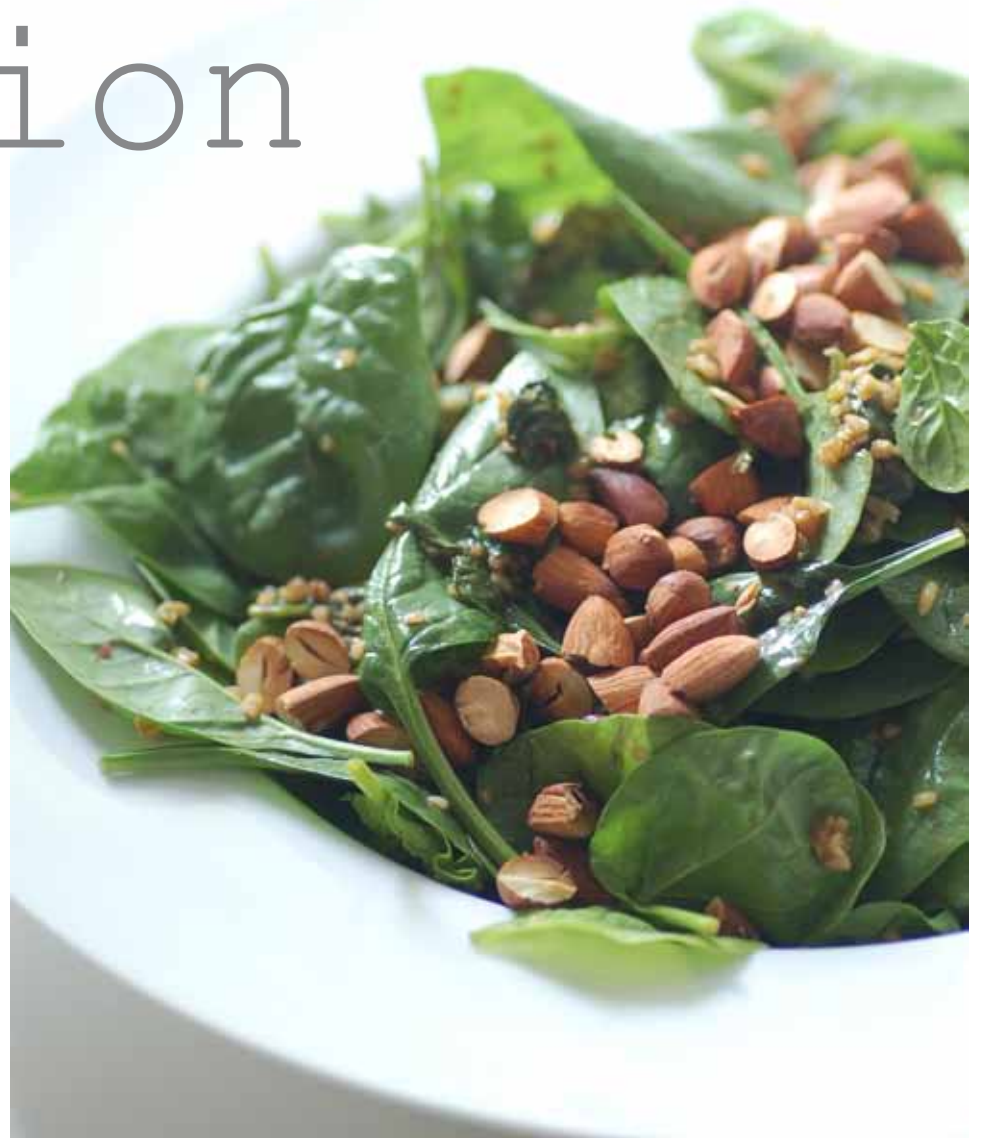
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introduction





After my Mum died suddenly in August 2007, I wanted to pull together a collection of her recipes. The results were too good to keep to myself so I decided to self publish the book to celebrate the beautiful life of my Mum and share our family's collection of simple, no-fuss Australian recipes.

While I'm still in the process of selling the 2500 books that I had printed, I am so so glad that I decided to take on this project, which gave me the courage to quit my day job as a chocolate biscuit designer in January 2010.

Apart from the joy of being a published author for the first time, and for making my Dad proud, one of the most rewarding parts of my Mum's book has been getting to hear the stories of so many families with Mums who are wonderful cooks.

I can't tell you the number of times someone has said to me

What a beautiful idea - I really should write a book for my mum (or children) .

Which got me thinking. Writing a cookbook takes time but it really isn't that difficult with modern technology. All you need is someone to point you in the right direction. And so I decided to do just that and bring it all together in this little ebook.

I hope you find something to inspire and help you here. If you do get your cookbook written, I'd love to hear about it. You can contact me at [jules@thestonesoup.com](mailto:jules@thestonesoup.com).

Happy writing.  
Jules x

planning



One of the first things you need to really decide is why you want to write your family cookbook. This may seem a little obvious, but unless you have a clear reason for your book project, you're going to struggle. It's going to take a LOT of time and there will be times when you ask yourself the question,

what am I doing? - I know I certainly did.

When things get tough, a clear reason for being will help to keep you motivated. It may also mean the difference between a finished book and another project put to the side that you feel annoyingly guilty about from time to time.

Stop and have a think. Why do you want to write this book?

For me, it was firstly to have a tribute to my Mum - a public acknowledgement of the inspiration she was for me. Secondly, I wanted to make sure all her recipes were kept together so her grandchildren would know what she was like.

Still with me? Excellent.

motivation &  
why you are  
taking on  
this project

# choosing your audience & the scope of your book



In the publishing business this is called defining your **target market** - which may sound a bit like marketing hype, but bear with me. It's important because it will help you make decisions about your book. It also helps with your writing.

For my book, I imagined I was writing to a friend of my sister who didn't really know my Mum. Writing with this girl in mind helped with the type of language I chose and how much detail I needed to go into with the stories.

A family cookbook has the habit of growing and growing. For me it was relatively easy because I had a clear scope of only including my Mum's recipes. Even so, Gran's green tomato pickles and Auntie Marge's scones did creep in.

So decide now and write down some criteria that a recipe must meet to be included in the book and who your target market is.

Great.

# the big decisions



## **publish or keep it private?**

This really comes down to why you're writing the book in the first place. For most people it will be a private project to be shared with family and friends.

## **self publish or use a publishing house?**

The biggest disadvantage of self-publishing is that you have to come up with all the cash to finance the project and it's all up to you to sell the book once it's printed - although in the modern age this isn't necessarily the case (see next point).

While a publisher can take care of all the tricky bits like design, sales, marketing and the financial risk, it can be fiendishly difficult to get a publisher to take on an unknown author.

The other downside to the world of publishing is that after the book store, distributor and publisher take their cuts, the artist is only left with 10% - if they're lucky.

## **book format?**

Think cookbook and most people instantly think traditional hard or soft covers. But these days there are a few alternatives.

Printing on demand (POD) allows anyone to print just one copy of a book at a time, or as many as they would like.

And then there are ebooks - which are just books in an electronic file. It could be a word document but more likely a pdf.

The pros and cons of these options are outlined on the following page.

TRADITIONAL  
PRINTING

THE PROS

easy to read  
concrete finished product  
author pride  
can sell in a book store

THE CONS

huge up front cost  
requires warehousing  
distribution costs  
long printing lead time

POD

no upfront cost  
printer manages distribution  
no warehousing  
can sell in a book store

unit cost highest  
quality can be low  
1-2 week lead time

eBOOKS

low cost  
no lead time  
automatic distribution  
instantly delivered

no physical product  
can't sell in a book store  
easy to pirate



traditional  
printing

v

printing  
on demand

v

ebooks

# how to organise your content

## **i. collect your family recipes.**

Contact anyone in your family who might be interested and ask them to contribute their favourite family recipes. Be sure to explain the criteria that a recipe must meet to be included in the book. And don't forget to let them know when you need the recipes. If you don't give a deadline, they may never get back to you.

I met a lady who had a brilliant idea. Every year her extended family gets together for a big celebration. Last year, she asked everyone to bring their three favourite recipes, which everyone did. They were then collated into a book and a copy sent to the whole family.

## **ii. look through any family notebooks or old cookbooks for hidden treasure.**

I was lucky that my Mum had a little spiral-bound recipe book that she wrote most of her favourite things into. It also had a heap of clippings and random scraps of paper. Recipe gold!

## **iii. figure out a way to file your recipes as they come in and use it.**

I had both written and electronic recipes - can be a nightmare to keep track. I strongly advise figuring out a system.

## **iv. choose your chapters.**

This can be tricky. I based mine mostly on the sections in my Mum's little recipe book, but yours will be different. There's no point in having a pasta chapter if you don't have any pasta recipes. If you get stuck, have a flick through your favourite cookbooks for inspiration.

## **v. fit your recipes to the chapters & identify holes.**

I quickly realised that while the sweet section was completely full, I had very few savoury recipes. It made our family look like a bunch of serious sweet teeth. This was because Mum knew instinctively how to make spag bol and things like that so she didn't write them down.

Don't stress if this happens to you as well. Just dig a little deeper and ask around. You can always do what I did and include your interpretations of whatever is missing.

# how to organise your content

## vi. **choose your size.**

If you're using traditional printing, your book can be pretty much any size you like. Have a look at your favourite cookbooks and take it from there.

For POD, they have a few different size options, so it's relatively easy to choose the one you like best.

For ebooks, again the size can be whatever you like. But if people are going to print it, best to keep it to standard printing paper size. I find that landscape is best for ebooks because you can easily view a whole page on your computer screen.

## vii. **estimate the number of pages.**

At this stage you just want to get an idea so you can figure out how much your book is going to cost. It's a great idea to get a quote now from a few different suppliers (printers for traditional books or different POD sites like lulu or blurb).

For most printers, the price per number of pages goes up in multiples of 32 or 16. It's related to the way they print on a large sheet then fold and cut.



writing  
your book





The actual writing part can be as involved or as brief as you like. I prefer to bring each recipe to life with a little story - but then, I like to write. There's nothing wrong with presenting the recipes on their own and letting each ingredient list and method speak for themselves.

There are plenty of lovely family cookbooks that have a mish-mash of recipes written in various styles with contributions as individual as each family member. I've even seen a book where someone just scanned in all the handwritten recipes and presented them as is - quite a lovely idea - there's something about handwritten recipes.

If you'd prefer something a little more professional feeling - a bit of judicious editing to give the book a consistent style can make the world of difference.

### **copyrighting considerations**

I'm often asked what the copyright situation is with recipes. I haven't ever sought professional counsel, nor am I qualified to advise. So please get your own professional advice on this matter.

The way I look at it is that as long as your method is written in your own words, then you are not in breach of copyright.

Personally, if I have used a particular recipe and only changed a few ingredients, I prefer to reference my sources. If it feels like you should be giving acknowledgement, then do the right thing.

Think of it as recipe karma.

1. **List the ingredients in the order they need to be used.** This makes it easier for the cook to see what is needed when. It's also helpful when checking that nothing's been omitted.
2. **List the amounts required in the ingredient list.** Saves reading through the method when it's time to write a shopping list.
3. **Include measurements by weight as well as volume.** Some people live by their kitchen scales and others by their cups. It helps to keep both camps happy if you include both. There is an online recipe converter at [www.cuisinedumonde.com/convert.html](http://www.cuisinedumonde.com/convert.html).
4. **Be consistent with measurement types.** Use either metric or imperial or both, but don't switch between mid recipe - it's too confusing and likely to cause problems.
5. **List the ingredients in the state that they are to be used in.** It's much easier to scan the ingredient list to see if you need the onions peeled and diced or the herb leaves picked, than trawl through the method. Makes for simpler method writing as well.
6. **Write the method in a logical sequence.** Think through what needs to be done first and move on from there.
7. **Use point form or short sentences with well spaced out paragraphs for the method.** Remember that usually people will be reading in a hurry while they're trying to figure out what to do next. Make your method as simple and as scannable as possible.
8. **Give more details than just times and temperatures.** Every kitchen and cook is different. Just saying to cook the onions for 5 minutes doesn't tell the full story. The cook needs to know how to tell when things are done or when they are ready to move on to the next step. A little explanation as to what they're looking for can make the world of difference. Best expand a little such as 'cook the onions for 5 minutes or until soft, but not browned'.
9. **Include the number of servings or yield.**
10. **Proofread.** It's easy to make mistakes, proofreading is critical to make sure your typing error doesn't end up a big mess in someone's kitchen.

# 10 tips for foolproof recipe writing

# a simple method for testing recipes



Following a recipe to the letter can be an incredibly difficult task if you're anything like me and can't resist the urge to improvise and experiment.

While it might be fine to skip testing if you're pulling together an informal family recipe collection, it's really a good idea to test the recipes if you think that anyone may actually try and cook them.

I mean - you don't want to be responsible for a kitchen catastrophe do you?

## step 1. **Proofread the recipe.**

Read through as a final sense check to make sure everything sounds reasonable. Check that there is a logical flow to the method.

Make sure that all the ingredients listed are acted upon in the method. There's nothing more frustrating than buying ingredients and then having them left over after you've finished cooking. This is also a good time to make any measurement conversions so you are testing the final recipe.

## step 2. **Gather the ingredients and measure them out.**

Think about the types and quantities of ingredients called for. Do they sound reasonable?

## step 3. **Act out the method.**

Follow the steps as written, resisting the urge to deviate. Of course, if something clearly isn't working, make the appropriate changes, but be sure to note this and update the recipe.

## step 4. **Taste & judge.**

The fun part of recipe testing. It's a good idea to taste or at least get someone else to sample the fruits of your labour. Then it's about deciding whether the recipe is good enough to include in the book or if it needs some tweaking.

# general writing tips



While writing recipes takes a specific skill, it's still important for your writing to appeal to your audience.

Here are a few general writing tips I've picked up over the years.

- \*Use short sentences.

- \*Use simple, but descriptive words.

- \*Use positive language where possible. It's better to talk about what something is rather than what it isn't.

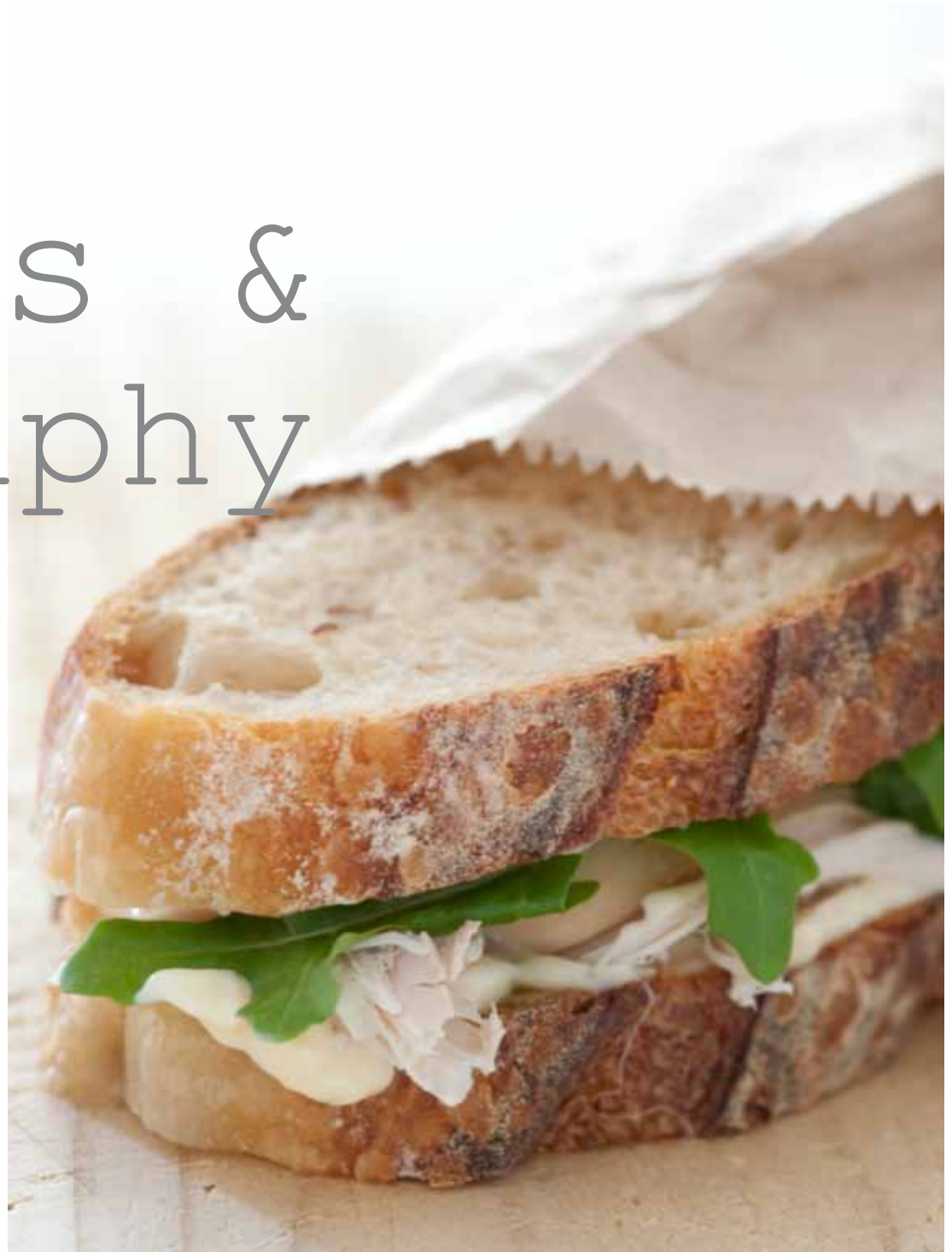
- \*Put yourself in the moment and try to write from that place so the reader feels like they're there with you.

- \*Get something - anything - down at first then go through and edit.

- \*Omit needless words.

- \*Read as much as possible and take note of what you like and why.

pictures &  
photography



# the options pictures & photography

## **family photos**

Old and even current family photos are an easy way to make your family cookbook more personal. I found it was also a lovely resource to have all your favourite family shots in the one document.

Most modern printers have a scanning option in case you have pre-digital photos or have lost the digital files to any photos you wish to use. Your local library or post office should have scanning equipment.

## **self photography**

Taking your own food photography is the best way to get a proper representation of each recipe and may even kickstart a new hobby. All you need is a half decent digital camera. The next few pages give tips to get you started with food photography.

## **stock photography**

If the thought of taking your own photos is a little too scary or time consuming, there are plenty of websites that allow you to download and use photos for a small fee, such as istockphoto, shutterstock and fotolia.

A free option is to search for pics on flickr that have a creative commons license - this means you are free to use the photo as long as you give credit back to the photographer.

## **professional photography**

If money is no object, you may like to hire a professional photographer, but this will be beyond the budget of most.



ten  
tips  
for  
tasty  
food  
styling

Food styling is all about making the food look its best for your photographs.

- 1. Look for inspiration.** It's a great excuse to trawl through your favourite magazines and cookbooks searching for ideas. Develop the habit of taking note of what you like about a particular photo as you notice it.
- 2. Less is more.** There's nothing worse than a heap of food stuffed on a plate. For photography, I tend to only plate up about half the food I would normally serve someone for dinner.
- 3. Natural is best.** Forget everything you've heard about evil food styling tricks involving glue and other inedible substances. Never do anything in the name of food styling that would render the food unfit for consumption.
- 4. See the beauty in imperfection.** To me, perfect food has an element of the unreal. I prefer to look for the beauty in the strawberry in my hand, rather than searching through truckloads to find the 'perfect' strawberry for my shot.
- 5. Rethink difficult subjects.** Monochrome and dull food can be difficult to photograph attractively, even for seasoned professionals. Think about alternative options for visual representation. A photograph of a whole, fresh leek is a lot more beautiful than a bowl of boring leek and potato soup.
- 6. Don't be obsessed with the final finished shot.** An extension of point 5 is to think beyond the final plated up food. Often work in progress and ingredient shots can be more appetising than the finished product.
- 7. Plan the background.** I tend to prefer a clean, white, minimalist background, but sometimes it's fun to mix it up. Look for different surfaces like tables, a marble block, chopping boards or place mats that can add to the overall visual interest in your shot.
- 8. Don't overdo the props.** For me a lot of modern food photography is more focused on the props than the actual food. By all means embellish with a beautiful serving spoon or plate or a glass of wine, but make sure that the overall focus of your eye is still on the main dish.

ten  
tips  
for  
tasty  
food  
styling

9. **Edit the plate.** After you take a few shots, have a look at how the food looks on the plate. Feel free to move things around a little until you are happy with the look.

10. **Dig in and reshoot.** Once you have a shot of the whole food that you love, eat or serve some out and then take another shot. Often a half finished plate is more appetizing than the original whole.

BEFORE



AFTER



**Natural light.** If there's only one thing that you take away from this chapter, it should be to always use natural light for food photography and NEVER EVER use a flash. Best is to get close to a large window and start experimenting from there.

If you have too many shadows, either move a little away from the window or set up a 'bounce' to reflect the light back into the shot. This is getting a little technical. If you're interested in learning more, have a look at the wonderful food photography blog [still life with](#).

**Use a tripod.** To get sharp clear photos you need to have the camera super still while you take the shot. Professionals use a tripod. If you don't feel like investing, resting your elbows on something like a table to steady them can help. The other option is to prop the camera up on a stack of books.

**Get up close.** I use a special macro lense that is designed for super close-up photos. Some point and shoot cameras have a macro function which can work well. Otherwise go for maximum zoom and get up-close and personal with the food.

**Choose the most attractive angle.** Just like people, food can have a good side. While some things like pizza look best directly overhead, other like a sponge cake are much better from the side so you can see the layers of cake, jam and cream. A slice taken out and put in the foreground with the whole cake in the background can work really well.

**Focus on the food.** While I love to have my backgrounds blurry, I try to make sure that the main subject is in focus.

**Maximise the YUM factor.** Think about what makes the food you're photographing delicious and do whatever you need to do to maximise this. A scoop of ice cream melting over a warm tart can be much more appealing than a solid frozen lump.

**Take LOTS of shots.** One of the beauties of digital photography is that it doesn't cost extra to take more pictures. The best way to learn is trial and error. The more photos you take, the more likely it is that you'll have a few that you love.

# how to take delicious food photos

**Plan with backups for temperature sensitive food.** Most things look best when fresh and bright on the plate and tend to start losing their appeal as time goes on. Think about how forgiving your subject is and plan accordingly. Things like ice cream and souffles require that you work quickly. To take the pressure off, have the ingredients on hand to easily make more if you need to.

**Play around with composition.** While sometimes it's great to have your main plate right in the centre of the shot, it can also be interesting to have it in the bottom third with the top mostly blank. A whole cake can be great, but sometimes it looks more striking to crop through so you only see two thirds of the cake.

**Upload and review on screen.** It can be very difficult to tell if your photo is good on those tiny screens. If you have time, upload and check that you are happy before you clean up. Professional photographers connect their cameras directly to their computer and use software so the image automatically shows up on the screen as it is taken.

# how to take delicious food photos



# food photography blogs & resources

## resources

Wrightfood: [compact camera food photography](#).

Still Life With: [food photography tricks](#).

Digital Photography School: [food photography - an introduction](#).

101 Cookbooks: lovely food blog: [food photography tips](#).

## inspirational blogs

Sovlaki for the Soul: [beautifully photographed food blog](#).

Cook & Eat: [the food blog of the girl behind Still Life With](#).

The Traveler s Lunchbox: [gorgeous food & travel blog](#).

Delicious Days: [stunning Munich based food blog](#).



# layout & design



# layout & design options

There are a heap of different ways to do the layout of your book. At the most basic, Word or your favourite word processor can be all you need. If you're going with POD printing, lulu.com and blurb.com both have their own software which you download for free. These are pretty straight forward to use and have different templates that you can choose from.

For professionals, the Adobe program InDesign is the industry standard and allows you to control the whole look of your book. It comes at a heavy price though and is not the most user friendly.

# recipe conventions

**Use a consistent measurement system.** If most of your recipes are in metric, convert the ones that aren't so you have consistency. A quick Google search will point you in the direction of hundreds of online cooking converters.

**Use different fonts, sizes or indents for the title, any introductory text, the list of ingredients and the method.** This makes it easier for the reader to quickly identify which is which on the page.

**Write the ingredients list in the order that they are used.**

**Use concise language for the method.** Short words and sentences are much better than complicated, difficult to follow, prose.

**Write the method in the order that things need to be done.** Always proofread your method and cross check that all the ingredients in the list have been mentioned at least once. There's nothing worse than having to guess when to add the broccoli or whatever has been omitted.

1. **Imitate the best.** Look at your favourite cookbooks and take note of the things you like about different designs.
2. **Don't forget about readability.** There are few things more frustrating than a book that is gorgeous to look at, but hard work to understand. Always look at things through the eyes of your audience.
3. **Use images.** One of the biggest pleasures in cookbooks is the pictures. Wherever possible, try and incorporate a visual representation.
4. **Fewer bigger images** are better than many smaller ones.
5. **Don't cover** your images with text or other images.
6. **Use colour** where appropriate.
7. **Consistency is key.** An easy trick to make sure your book looks as professional as possible is to use a style guide. This is where you make a note of the different fonts and settings you use for each section and then apply these across the book.
8. **Spend the most amount of time on the cover.** It may be a cliché about books and their covers, but it really is important. This is the one thing that I'm not 100% happy about from my first book. The cover will be the main focus of my creative energies for this and all my future publications.
8. **Simplicity** is always best.
9. **Use white space wisely.** Less is always more - there's nothing worse than a crowded page layout or cover.
10. **Keep in mind the message** you want to convey - traditional or modern?
11. Keep **your audience** in mind and think about what will appeal to them.

# 11 tips for stunning layout & design

printing &  
publishing





With professional publishing, your publisher will look after the details, so we won't go through them here.

In Chapter 2 - Planning, we discussed the pros and cons of the different printing and publishing options.

Here we'll discuss how each works.

### **publishing**

If you're planning to sell your book through book stores, you need a barcode and an ISBN.

In Australia, you also need to lodge two copies of your book with the national library.

Some printers will arrange this for you or you can obtain your own. The [national library website](#) has information about how to go about getting your ISBN and a barcode as well as their own requirements.

## **ebooks**

While not technically printing, ebooks need to be converted to a file type that can easily be emailed or stored online and downloaded. While a Word document will work, most people convert their files to pdf so that they can be read by anyone. It also makes it more difficult for people to edit or steal the content in your book.

There are free pdf converters online such as [www.freepdfconvert.com](http://www.freepdfconvert.com).

## **printing on demand (POD)**

The printer keeps an electronic copy of your book on file and then when someone orders one or more copies, they print and dispatch.

Each POD business has free software that you can use to design the layout of your book. The most user friendly that I've come across are [www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com) and [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com). They will also accept your book in pdf form if you prefer to use your own software. The professionals use InDesign.

## **traditional printing**

Most printers will do the layout and typesetting for you for a fee, but will also accept the book and cover as a pdf file if you prefer to do your own. Best to consult your printer for any special requirements.

The lead time for traditional printing can be anywhere from 6 weeks to 4 months.

# printing options



# distribution options



## **self distribution - ebooks**

One of the beauties of ebooks is that they are super simple and cheap to distribute. You just need to set up a website or blog with a sales page that tells people all about the book. I recommend using ejunkie ([www.e-junkie.com](http://www.e-junkie.com)) for handling the ebook storage, shopping cart and downloading. PayPal ([www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com)) is best for payment processing.

## **self distribution - online**

For *and the love is free*, I chose this option to sell exclusively through my blog. I set up a sales page on my blog. To manage the shopping cart part of things I set up an account with ejunkie which charges about \$5 a month. For payment processing PayPal works.

## **self distribution - book stores**

This can be lots of work and involves approaching bookstores directly for them to take on and sell your books. Matthew Riley famously took this approach with his first novel and it wasn't until it sold like hotcakes that he got the attention of a publisher.

## **self distribution - printing on demand**

POD sites like [www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com) and [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) also come with online bookstores. You can sell your book through their stores. You just choose the markup that you wish to receive and they pretty much do everything from taking orders to printing and shipping and paying you the markup. This is particularly useful if you have family members in different countries that may be interested in buying your family cookbook.

## **professional distributors**

A professional distributor will look after everything it takes to get your books ordered and delivered to book stores. You will need to look after all the printing costs and it's not until the books are actually sold in the store that you'll receive any money for them. Distributors typically take 10-15% margin and book stores around 40-50%

# promoting your book

Even if you have a publisher, self promotion is one of the most important parts for making your book a success.

These days both traditional and online media should be considered to help get the word out about your book.



# how to build your media contacts list

The first step is to gather a list of media outlets (magazines, newspapers, blogs, TV & radio stations) that your target market are most likely to respond to. Next, you need to find a key contact for each of these outlets. You refer after the editor for print publications and blogs or the producer for TV & radio.

**free online media directories** - tend not to have specific key contact details

media bay - [www.mediabay.com.au](http://www.mediabay.com.au)

media biZ net - [www.mediabiznet.com.au](http://www.mediabiznet.com.au)

media UK - [www.mediauk.com](http://www.mediauk.com)

media on twitter - [www.mediaontwitter.com](http://www.mediaontwitter.com)

internet public library (US based) - [www.ipl.org](http://www.ipl.org)

alltop - blog directory - [www.food.alltop.com](http://www.food.alltop.com)

regator - another blog directory - [www.regator.com](http://www.regator.com)

**online media directories that charge**

media lists online - [www.medialistsonline.com](http://www.medialistsonline.com)

handle your own PR - [www.handleyourownpr.com.au](http://www.handleyourownpr.com.au)

**media directory books** -

Margaret Gee's media guide - available from the state library or online [www.crowncontent.com.au](http://www.crowncontent.com.au). At about \$600, it's expensive, but the most comprehensive guide in Australia with key contact details for most media.

**email lists connecting journalists with expert sources**

HARO (help a reporter out) - [www.helpareporter.com](http://www.helpareporter.com)

Source Bottle - [www.sourcebottle.com.au](http://www.sourcebottle.com.au)

**your own online research** - get busy with google

**buy the publication or watch the show** - be familiar with a publication before you approach them.

**LinkedIn** - search for professional journalists & producers [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

# recipe for a winning media release

A media (or press) release is a document that has all the details about your book and the story behind it. It is a tool you use to sell your story.

The most important part of writing a successful media release is approaching it **from the perspective of a journalist**. You need to give them something that they will be dying to share with their audience.

## **the ingredients:**

a catchy headline

a fascinating story - preferably one that solves a problem for readers

detailed 1st paragraph - must tell who, what, where, why and when.

a call to action - tell the recipient of the media release exactly what it is that you want them to do

contact details

book statistics & details in point form

eye catching layout with some relevant graphics

## **the method:**

Keep it brief - one page or less

Keep it current

Make it memorable

Make it easy to read - paste it into the body of an email - busy journalists

don't have time to open attachments

Make it easy to share - attach as a pdf as well.



# promoting your book through online media

Online media or social media includes tools like facebook, linked in, my space, google buzz, youtube, blogs and twitter. The mind boggles. While you can try and cover all forms, I prefer to pick a couple to focus on. For me blogging, twitter and a little bit of facebook are key.

If I were a musician I d probably be also using MySpace. LinkedIn is great for serious corporate types. It s up to you to choose your battle(s) really.

## **Blogs**

A blog is just an online diary or journal. The name comes from the contraction of web log . It is one of the easiest ways to get a regular online presence. The downside is that it will need to be updated regularly. If you re not interested in contributing on an ongoing basis, DON T start a blog. There s nothing sadder than a neglected blog. It has the potential to turn people off and can suck a lot of your time.

On the other hand, if you like the idea of having a regular writing commitment, a blog is perfect. I like to think of my blog as the home base for my online presence that attracts readers on its own, but also via other social media tools like twitter and facebook.

To set up your own blog it is easy to start with a wordpress blog first. Just head to [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com) and sign up. This will mean your blog website will be [www.yourname.wordpress.com](http://www.yourname.wordpress.com). If you prefer to have your own name ie. [www.yourname.com](http://www.yourname.com), you can. It s a bit trickier though, so best to go with a free wordpress blog first and then if you like blogging, you can buy your own domain and get a web hoster and convert it over.

## **Twitter**

Twitter can seem like a big waste of time. The good thing is that it s easy to sign up for an account. The bad news is that it can be difficult to find interesting people to follow. I find I keep an eye out when I m web surfing and if I kinda like a blog, I follow them on twitter to keep up to date without committing to subscribing. You can also search for topics that interest you and find people that way. When I find someone I like, I often look at their list of followers for inspiration.

Twitter can be a great way to connect with people who are interested in the same things as you. Just go to [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) and set yourself up an account and start experimenting. It s free. I use the program Tweetdeck (free from [www.tweetdeck.com](http://www.tweetdeck.com)) to manage my twitter and Facebook.

# promoting your book through online media

## **Facebook**

If you don't already have a facebook account, it's probably not for you. If you are on facebook, it's not a bad idea to set up a fan page for your blog or book website so you can encourage people to follow you. You can then setup twitter to automatically update the fan page if you wish.

## **Newsire Services**

Rather than sending your media release to your targeted contacts, newswire services allow you to publish your media release and then interested journalists or producers will contact you.

### **Free Newswire Services:**

[www.prwire.com.au](http://www.prwire.com.au)

[www.pr.com](http://www.pr.com) - paid and free

[www.newsmaker.com.au](http://www.newsmaker.com.au) - 1 free release then paid

[www.nationalprwire.com](http://www.nationalprwire.com)

[www.onlineprnews.com](http://www.onlineprnews.com)

[www.newswiretoday.com](http://www.newswiretoday.com)

### **Cost Based Newswire Services**

[www.prnewswire.co.uk](http://www.prnewswire.co.uk)

[www.seekingmedia.com.au](http://www.seekingmedia.com.au)

[www.prleap.com](http://www.prleap.com)

[www.prnewswire.com](http://www.prnewswire.com)



1. **Decide on a theme.** It's really about letting the style of your book dictate the vibe of your launch. Given that my book is a collection of my Mum's recipes, a cosy afternoon tea that would enable me to showcase a few of her treasures was an easy choice.

2. **Choose a date & time.**

3. **Find a venue.** You'll need to take into consideration your theme and the approximate number of guests for this one. The local cafe in the town where I grew up worked for me.

4. **Design & send out invitations to everyone you know.** Don't underestimate the power of an individual invitation, rather than a notice in the local paper. Over 80% of the people who attended my launch came from a direct invitation from me or a forwarded one from people I had targeted.

5. **Put an ad in the local newsletter / paper.** Local media can be such a great way to target people whose contact details you may not have.

6. **Write a media release & send to the local press.** This may or may not get you some publicity but the bonus I found was that there were many requests for a short article and some photos to publish after the event.

7. **Bribe** your friends and family to help

8. **Pickup your books.** I like to work on 'just in time' for most things in life and I thought I was being incredibly organised asking for my books to be delivered the Monday before the event. If only the printer had understood my request, life would have been much calmer and saved me a Friday afternoon trip to Wetherill Park to pick up the books en route. Next time I'll allow some more fat.

9. **Bake some treats.** There's nothing like delicious, edible samples to bring a recipe book to life.

10. **Greet your guests and have some fun.**

and don't forget to get out your best book signing pen.

# how to host a book launch in 10 easy steps

selling  
your book



# selling in bookstores



If you have a publisher, this isn't something you need to worry about.

If you get signed on with a distributor, as discussed in Chapter 7 - printing & publishing, they will look after getting your book into book stores.

If you prefer to do things yourself, you can approach bookstores individually. I don't have a lot of experience in this, but it's probably best to start by talking to whoever does the buying for your local bookstore

# selling online



You have 2 options to sell online:

## 1. **create your own sales page**

You can create a sales page on any type of website, but the easiest is to use a blog. Then you can create a page for your blog to sell the book. I've detailed how to write a convincing sales page in the next section, but you need to have a system for processing orders.

I've found that ejunkie ([www.e-junkie.com](http://www.e-junkie.com)) has the most user friendly shopping cart systems which have maximum flexibility to offer discounts or pretty much sell any combination of products both ebook and tangible books. They also manage affiliate programs for you, if you choose to get other people to sell your book for you.

You'll also need a method to take payments. While I think they're expensive, Paypal ([www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com)) are pretty much the standard online service. You'll need to sign up for an account.

## 2. **use an existing online bookstore**

If you choose to print on demand, most providers like blurb and lulu will give you access to their online bookstore. You just need to choose your mark up and agree to make the book available for sale and that's it.

To sell via amazon.com or ebooks.com you will need to get in touch with them to determine whether they will take on your book. Although if you are travelling down the print on demand path, lulu's free distribution package includes access to amazon.com.

If you are planning to sell your book online, your sales page is the only tool you have to convince people to buy your book.

It should include the following elements:

1. an **introduction** to the story
2. **present a problem** (that will be solved by the book)
3. a **description of the book including the benefits**, who should buy it, who shouldn't buy it, what's included (or a list of the contents)
4. **the price** and any special offers (eg. free postage anywhere in Australia)
5. **contact details** (email / telephone) for people who prefer not to order online
6. **testimonials** - quotes from people who have enjoyed the book
7. **a guarantee**. I offer a money back guarantee if someone is unsatisfied with the book and am yet to have someone request a refund.
8. **media links** to any articles discussing the book
9. a **'buy now'** button
10. **about the author** - people prefer to buy from someone they know and like.
11. a downloadable **free preview** or sample recipes

# how to write a convincing sales page

what  
now?

## 1. get started

Life is short. It's time to start planning and gathering recipes for your own family cookbook.

## 2. share this ebook with your friends

Know someone just dying to write their own family recipe collection? Well please email them a copy of this ebook - it might be just the thing to spur them into action and save their precious family recipes. Don't worry about copyright - I give you my permission to share.

## 3. subscribe

If you're looking for some fresh ideas for simple recipes - many that use only 5 ingredients and take just 10 minutes to make - hop on over to my blog, stonesoup | minimalist home cooking ([www.thestonesoup.com](http://www.thestonesoup.com)) and [subscribe](#) for twice weekly email updates. If you haven't read my book *And the love is free*, you can pick up a copy as well or at least download my 8 free sample recipes from the book.

## 4. share your story

I love hearing stories about family recipes and cookbooks. If you do have the courage to take on a family cookbook project, please drop me a line and tell me about your family's cooking. [jules@thestonesoup.com](mailto:jules@thestonesoup.com)

# about the author

The author of this ebook is Jules Clancy.

I'm a food scientist, photographer, writer, runner and aspiring minimalist. I live in Sydney.

In January 2010, I packed in my day job as a chocolate biscuit designer for Australia's largest biscuit company to become a full-time blogger. I write *stonesoup* | minimalist home cooking ([www.thestonesoup.com](http://www.thestonesoup.com)), a blog that helps people become better home cooks by using a minimalist approach to cooking.

After snagging a reservation, I was lucky enough to dine at *elBulli* - the best restaurant in the world. It was truly the most amazing food experience of my life and inspired me to start a restaurant review blog called *breadshoes* ([www.breadshoes.com](http://www.breadshoes.com)).

Last year, I self-published my first cookbook, *'and the love is free - mum a life with recipes'* to celebrate the beautiful life and cooking of my Mum who died from cancer in 2007.

When I'm not cooking, writing about food or taking photographs [of food], I can be found indulging my passions for long boozy lunches, travel, running, sweaty bikram yoga, cookbooks, boating on Sydney harbour, cheese and red shoes. [OK. all shoes].

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