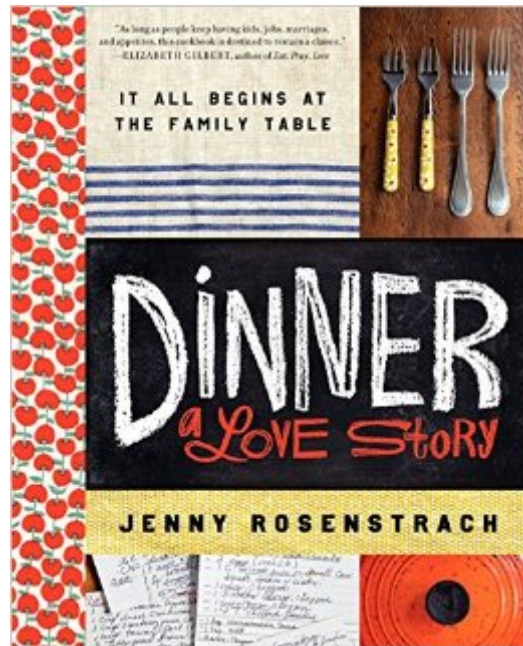


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Dinner: A Love Story: It All Begins At The Family Table



Synopsis

Inspired by her beloved blog, dinnerlovestory.com, Jenny Rosenstrach's *Dinner: A Love Story* is many wonderful things: a memoir, a love story, a practical how-to guide for strengthening family bonds by making the most of dinnertime, and a compendium of magnificent, palate-pleasing recipes. Fans of *Pioneer Woman* • Ree Drummond, Jessica Seinfeld, Amanda Hesser, *Real Simple*, and former readers of *Cookie* magazine will revel in these delectable dishes, and in the unforgettable story of Jenny's transformation from enthusiastic kitchen novice to family dinnertime doyenne.

Book Information

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: Ecco; 5.6.2012 edition edition (June 5, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0062080903

ISBN-13: 978-0062080905

Product Dimensions: 7.4 x 1.2 x 9.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.3 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (169 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #9,175 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in [Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Cooking Education & Reference > Essays](#) #22 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Culinary](#) #557 in [Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Memoirs](#)

Customer Reviews

When I first started reading this cookbook (because yes, there is lots of potential for reading here), I was in love. I like the blog that started it all, so decided to check out the cookbook. Reading it is a delight- so many stories that tell you that the author has really been in the trenches when trying to put dinner on the table for her family with two kids under two years old. She specifically mentions that she counted it as eating around the table if one spouse was walking around the table holding the baby and the other spouse is sitting at the table trying to get the toddler to eat. I definitely laughed in recognition and then made my husband read the "Two under Two" section. I easily made a whole week's meal plan using recipes from it. The book is mostly recipes for main dishes- if you are looking for lots of dessert recipes or sides, I think you will be disappointed. The recipes are organized into three sections: 1) recipes that are great when you don't have kids but have more time to craft a delicious meal 2) recipes that are suitable when you are just barely surviving with tiny kids

and the idea of organized dinner seems to be a laughable pipe dream³) recipes that are better when the kids are older and you have a little more time back, and the idea of everyone eating around the table seems doable. Each section has lots of stories and anecdotes that really add to the loveliness and warmth of this book. The third section also has lots of tips and strategies that the author has put into place to avoid being a short-order cook for her children (one of whom is very picky). None of these tips involve hiding vegetables.

This book reads like a novel and is pretty entertaining. The author's adventures in dinner prep and anecdotes about her daughters are fun and keep the book moving. The recipes integrate seamlessly into the text, which makes for a nice reading experience. And there are some family dining tips I really found useful - like how to get the non-cook involved with dinner preparation. However, it is not organized very efficiently for daily use in the kitchen. It is divided into 3 sections: life before kids, new parents, and family dinner, and I found it difficult to flip through to browse for recipes or meal plan efficiently. To me, the book is best for reading through, picking the recipes that are of interest to you, and then adding them to your collection. It's not the kind of book you go back to repeatedly. I got it from the library and feel like I got what I needed from it without purchasing it. Purely subjective, but...I was not a fan of her parenting advice or attitude. I was never a reader of her blog - if I was, perhaps I would have known whether I liked her style of writing. By the end of this book, the tone really started to irritate me. It may not be an issue for you, but you should know that this is a cookbook with a lot of the writer's voice and opinions in it. As other reviewers have mentioned, the family dining advice is sort of controversial. The author encourages families to serve two separate meals - one for the adults and one for the kids, until the youngest reaches the age of 3. Aside from the fact that for most people, this would not actually make dinnertime easier, this is pretty much counter to all childhood nutritional advice I've ever read.

The premise of this book was fantastic: Dinner is a love story, a way to connect with and strengthen your family. Like the author, I have a passion for the family dinner hour, and was excited to get a copy of the book. What I liked: *She enjoys food and cooking. This is not a "since-I-have-to-cook" book. *The food writing is crisp, clear, and inviting. *She cooks every night even during the years she worked a long day with a commute. Impressive! *She loves her husband and enjoys his input and company in the kitchen. This was HUGE for me. *The dishes range in complexity and price point and reflect the real-life kitchen of a foodie. I appreciated the recipes that were twists on standard family fare especially. *She is opinionated. I don't agree with some of her opinions, but I enjoy a writer that

that doesn't apologize, candy coat, or backpedal. What I didn't: Her parenting advice and anecdotes are as prominent as the recipes for much of the book. She portrays herself and her husband as a victim of her children's erratic sleep and eating habits and chronicles their various contortions to accommodate them. For a proactive parent, this was a frustrating read. Making dinner every night seemed to be her personal litmus test for being a good wife and mom. I realized about halfway through the book that a sit-down home cooked dinner is the end goal, not the means to an end. I would have loved a more extensive pantry list. Wow, there are a LOT of seafood recipes. Overall impression: This was a book I expected to love given the title and publisher blurbs. She kept her focus laser-sharp on family dinner.

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