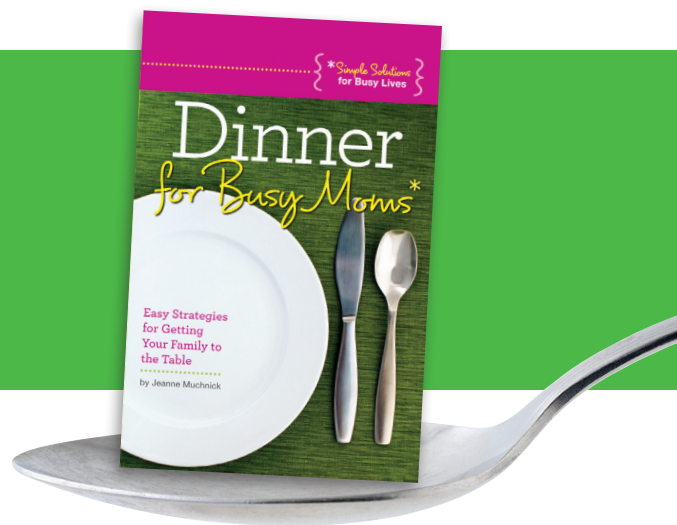


# Dinner for Busy Moms\*

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## Q and A with Author Jeanne Muchnick

### What inspired you to write *Dinner for Busy Moms*?

Guilt! I think I'm a good mom but I'm also never 'good enough' in certain areas: I'm certainly not a stellar cook, nor am I a great cleaner or organizer. Yet, I do think I am raising happy kids who know that life isn't about having a perfectly-in-order house or a gourmet meal on the table. It's about being together, having fun, communicating.

For years, I've written service-oriented features for national woman's magazines. I wanted other moms to know we're all in the same 'crazy, busy, hectic' boat — and that they should and could feel good about whatever it is they are doing — with a little 'push,' a little help and a lot of encouragement.

### A lot of research was put into your book. What was the most surprising fact you discovered?

I'd have to say it wasn't so much the research — most of us have heard the statistics about how important it is for us to spend quality time with our children, as well as all the scary numbers about our kids watching too much TV, eating too much junk food, being overscheduled, yada yada.

What really made an impact — though in hindsight it shouldn't really be such a surprise (as I'm all about girl power and

am continually amazed at how creative and innovative we moms are) — was the reams and reams of helpful tips and insider info I got from all the moms I interviewed. Who knew you could freeze rice and make an instant meal with 'rice pizza?' (go to page 110 if you want more info on that one: thanks, Theresa Gould of Chicago, IL) or that a salad spinner is the best place to store your salad mix in the fridge (page 111 with kudos to Amanda Loudon of Gold River, CA) or how adding a little pumpkin pie spice to carrots can get picky eaters to take a bite (page 123, with a shout out to Cornelia Zell of Mamaroneck, NY).

### What's the best "dinner" advice you'd give busy moms?

To give yourselves slack. Use paper utensils. Whatever it takes to make dinner easier for you. Chinese and pizza count. Just try to get everyone at table together as much as you can. And do NOT feel guilty if it doesn't work all the time.

### What's your favorite dish to cook?

My mustard chicken that is highlighted in the book. The perfect recipe for a non-cook like me. Basically you marinate chicken breasts in mustard with a little water, then coat with breadcrumbs and bake for 20 minutes.

### What does your ideal family dinner look like?

My family loves taco night. It makes me happy to see them happy. I love the fact that we're all sitting together, reaching for the lettuce, passing the bowls from one family member to another. It just feels like harmony. I also love summers when we can barbecue. Things seem a bit more leisurely at the dinner table — and easier when you can throw pretty much anything (including fruit!) on the grill.

### Writing a book is a huge task. Now that you've accomplished it, what's your favorite thing about your book?

The fact that I tried to put as much personal anecdotes in as possible — not only from me — but from other moms around the country. I'm big into moms being the experts. I believe we all learn from experience and learn from each other. I hope that reading this book, people will feel it's like listening to an old friend.

### What is the most difficult dinner obstacle you think most moms face?

Timing, planning and organizing. Dinner can feel like a real drag. But if you plan to plan — and put aside a pocket of time to figure out your week, or even a few days of meals, it's a lot easier than just winging it.

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