



The Questions

I barely thought about how having kids would affect my career. I just assumed it would all work out. What about you? How much did you think about your professional future when you started thinking about having kids?

What have you given up or sacrificed in order to commit to something that's as important to you as family dinner is to me?

One of my readers wrote me a note that made me so happy. She said "I like the balance you struck between looking forward to 'someday' [presumably when kids are not so exhausting] and feeling lucky to be right where you are." I struggle with this all the time. I'll be rushing around or not fully engaged in what my kids are saying or doing and then realize that this period is going to be over before we know it. Do you catch yourself beating yourself up for this?

I heard from a lot of people that the chapter called "It All Started with an Egg" about transitioning from processed foods to wholesome ones was comforting because our transition happened in manageable, affordable stages and not overnight. Is this an overwhelming topic for you? How do you shop?

In many ways, I wanted this book to communicate how satisfying the rituals surrounding dinner can be. Not just the dining part of dinner, but hanging out while we make dinner, summer evening walks after dinner, going to a special restaurant for birthday dinners, etc. What rituals do you have around dinner or otherwise? What rituals do you want to start?

I was shocked by how my professional ambition didn't evaporate when I became a mother, but a large part of this was because I felt like I had finally found something I truly loved to do. I often wonder how I would've felt if I wasn't enjoying myself at work. Would the pull of home been too strong without an equal and opposite pull? What happened with you guys?

We stopped doing a lot of things when we had kids – traveling on long flights, going to drinks after work with friends, sleeping – but we never really stopped cooking because we have always loved to cook. In this way, I feel as though having kids was

very clarifying: It became very obvious to me what needed to be prioritized. You always make time to do the things you enjoy. Do you agree?

One reader wrote that until she read my book she felt guilty looking forward to her 9-month-old going to sleep so she could have a quiet dinner with her husband. When do you feel irrationally guilty? When do you feel like a bad mom or dad?

When I was teaching myself how to cook, I took the instruction “reduce sauce by a third” to mean “pour a third of the sauce down the drain.” My babysitter told me she didn’t have a Dutch oven – only an American one. What were some of your laughable learning-curve mistakes?

When I put Phoebe to sleep on our first night home from the hospital, I asked Andy if he thought we should set an alarm to wake her up to nurse. (Little did I know I wouldn’t have to set an alarm for eight years.) What did you do as a first-time parent that you laugh about today?

I’ve kept odd journals all my life – the dinner diary was just one of the more practical ones. What kind of journals do you keep? Why do you think we write things down?

What would your dinner diary look like if you kept one over the past seven days? Remember: We’re all friends here!

email jenny@dinnerlovestory with the subject “Book Club Question” if your group discussed anything you think should be on this guide. Or email me anyway!

The Menu

Ginger-Peach Galette

I used Martha's pate brisee for the crust – in my mind, summer peaches demand perfection of all who surround them – but if you only have time for storebought crust, that'll work too. This is an all-purpose galette recipe, so if peaches are not in season, replace them with whatever is. Ginger might have to be replaced with cinnamon or nutmeg in that case.

1 9-inch pie crust (see note above)
6-8 peaches, peeled and sliced
3/4 teaspoon freshly grated ginger
juice from 1/2 lemon
1/4 cup sugar
6-8 dots of butter
1 egg, beaten

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place pie dough on a cookie sheet. In a large bowl, toss together the rest of the ingredients. Pile this mixture in the center of dough and, working in a circle, fold edges of dough on top of peaches. (Rule: The more artless you are about this, the more artisanal it looks.) Dot the peaches with butter and, using a pastry brush, brush the crust with egg wash. (You won't use the entire egg.)

Bake for 20 minutes. Turn down the heat to 350°F and bake another 15-20 minutes until crust is golden and peaches are a little bubbly. Keep an eye on them -- if the crust is looking golden before the fruit looks bubbly, cover with foil.

Wine

Dr. Konstantin Frank Gewurtztraminer (\$15)
Trimbach Riesling (\$18-22)
Hugel Gewurtztraminer or Riesling (\$20-25)
Bott Geyl Riesling (\$20)

Crowd-pleasing Cheeses

La Tur - A blend of sheep, goat and cow's milk
Pyrenees Brebis – from France, made from sheep's milk
Aged Manchego – you at least one with some bite

All available at Whole Foods