

From the bestselling  
author of *The Contented  
Little Baby* books



‘For an  
astonishing  
number of mothers  
she has proved  
a saviour.’

*Daily Telegraph*

# The Gina Ford

## Baby and Toddler Cook Book

Over 100 easy recipes for all the family to enjoy

# Contents



Cover



List of Recipes



About the Book



About the Author



Introduction



Using This Book



How Your Child Develops



Soups



Lunch



Finger Foods



Teatime Treats



Vegetables on the Side/Accompaniments



Puddings



Birthday Party Ideas



Batch Cooking



Copyright



# List of Recipes

Il-in-one braised lamb and veg  
pple snowballs

estest Brussels  
olognese sauce  
read and cheese fritters  
ubble and squeak potato cakes  
uff's crunchy biscuits

ajun salmon with cherry tomatoes  
arrot and parsnip purée  
heese and ham  
heese toasties with cherry tomatoes and ham  
heesy chicken gratin  
heesy garlic bread  
heesy peasy rice  
heesy tomato sauce  
hicken and butternut squash pie  
hicken and leek lasagne  
hicken and mushroom gratin  
hicken and Parmesan fingers  
hicken and pea pilaf  
hicken and sweet potato casserole  
hicken and sweetcorn casserole  
hicken and vegetable broth  
hicken drumsticks in a marinade  
hicken Marengo  
hicken stock  
hicken with cream cheese and Parma ham

hicken with tagliatelle

hive omelette with ham, cheese and tomato

hocolate crunchies

hocolate dominoes

od with cheese sauce and broccoli

ream of chicken and sweetcorn soup

ream of tomato soup

reamy beef and pasta bake

reamy spinach and cheese

roque monsieur

runchy fish sticks

ay-after Sunday lunch

efinitive cheese sauce

asy lamb and fruit couscous

asy roast beef

asy roast lamb

asy roast pork

gg and potato cake

rench pea purée

ruity chicken salad

ruity lamb tagine

arllicky square potatoes

ina's fish pie

ina's mixed fruit crumble

ranny Sallie's old-fashioned chocolate cake

reen beans in garlic

omemade apple sauce

omemade crêpes with ham and cheese

oneyed carrots  
oneyed sausages  
ummus

alian fish stew

acket potatoes  
unior Eton mess

iddies' mixed grill

eftover roast chicken in a pie  
eftover roast lamb or beef with a mashed potato topping

lashed potato with pesto and Parmesan

lediterranean chicken

lediterranean fish casserole

lini fishcakes

lini quiches

liniature toads in the hole

neapolis macaroni

asta with broccoli and sausages

asta with cream cheese and spinach

enne in a creamy sauce

laice fillet with peas and potato

ork and beef meatballs

rawn or chicken stir-fry

rovençal string beans

uick and tasty hamburgers

uick pilaf

uick salmon fishcakes

quick spaghetti Bolognese

risotto with pasta sauce

roast poussin

roasted new potatoes

roasted root vegetables

stock broth

crumbed egg surprise

shepherd's pie

shepherd's pie

simple fairy cakes

simple pasta dish

smoked fish pie

smoked haddock and mashed potato in parsley sauce

spaghetti carbonara

spaghetti with prawns and peas

steak and kidney pie

sweet red cabbage

starchy pasta

roast lamb in a pot

tomato sauce with bacon and mushrooms

tomato sauce

tomato, egg and cheese bake

corn and sweetcorn

vegetable dippers

vegetable purée

vegetable purée

vegetable stock

Welsh rarebit

/inter vegetable and lentil soup

## About the Book

The importance of good childhood nutrition has never been more topical. Parents are constantly being reminded of the need to offer their children healthy, home cooking and cut down on the number of fat, salt and sugar-laden ready-prepared meals they feed them instead. Yet busy lifestyles dictate that family time is in short-supply and it is often hard to balance this need with the practicality of cooking for every family member. Gina Ford is here to help, providing the solution to this common parental dilemma in this highly accessible family recipe book.

Picking up from where *The Contented Little Baby Book of Weaning* left off, *The Gina Ford Baby and Toddler Cook Book* addresses the next stage in childhood nutrition, from the age of nine months. Simplicity is the key to Gina's advice and her realistic approach to the demands of modern-day parenting account for the time restrictions of parents who want to provide good nutrition fast. This invaluable feeding manual includes chapters on:

- juggling the needs of all the family: recipes for mothers and babies; recipes for mothers, babies and toddlers
- ideas on batch cooking: how to make twelve meals for the freezer at one cooking session
- quick and tasty breakfasts
- how to make vegetables appealing

and much more!

## About the Author

**Gina Ford** is Britain's bestselling childcare author. Her first publication, *The Contented Little Baby Book*, has sold over a million copies and continues to be a bestseller. Gina's wise counsel and extensive experience has enabled her to guide countless families through the early years of parenthood. She runs a hugely popular website, [www.contentedbaby.com](http://www.contentedbaby.com), and offers a consultation service for parents wanting specialist help with their babies and toddlers. She has published over twenty parenting books.

**The** Gina Ford  
Baby and Toddler Cook Book  
Over 100 easy recipes for all the family to enjoy

Gina Ford

Photography by Clive Bozzard-Hill

 **vermilion**



# INTRODUCTION

There are many different views on the various aspects of raising children, but the one area in which all parents are united is the need for their child to eat well. I was inspired to write this book partly in response to the hugely positive feedback to my earlier books *The New Contented Little Baby Book* and *The Contented Little Baby Book of Weaning*, but mainly because I truly believe that establishing good feeding habits in babies and young children contributes enormously to healthy, happy childhoods, and leads to a sensible and healthy approach to food in adulthood.

You don't have to be a wonderful cook or have a great love of cooking to be successful at creating delicious family meals. Family time is often limited and the different demands of babies, toddlers and older children are not always easy to meet. This aims to be a practical, fun recipe book, with the emphasis on cutting corners while not cutting nutritional value. Simplicity, good ingredients and tips for catering for the whole family are the key to my recipes.

My approach to feeding children has evolved over many years. I have been fortunate enough to have helped many families during my career. Making food preparation fun, and an imaginative approach to cooking do not require special training – just a little helpful advice, good ideas and an understanding of food and its nutritional content. I hope you find something to appeal to all the family in this book.

Gina Ford

# USING THIS BOOK

## Salt

You will notice that I have not included salt in any of my recipes. This is because young babies should not have salt added to any of their meals as it can be harmful to their immature kidneys. Salt is naturally present in many foods and so young children will get all they need from this source. If you wish to add salt to any of the recipes for older children given in this book, first set aside the portion for your baby or toddler before seasoning the dish for the rest of the family. Consult the UK Food Standards Agency guide for the daily recommended maximum salt intake for children.

With this in mind, I have specified unsalted butter throughout the book. In addition, it is important to check the labels on any of the commercially prepared foods that you buy, as these can contain high levels of salt. As a guide, 0.1g sodium or less per 100g is considered a little; 0.5g or more is considered a lot.

## Milk and buying organic food

Young children require full-fat milk, and this is what I have specified in the recipes. Try to buy organic milk, if possible – similarly for all foods, if you can. It is particularly important to buy eggs and meat (organic too, ideally) from a reputable source.

## Measurements

Most recipes in this book use precise measurements. A few, however, suggest using a cup to measure out the ingredients because there is no need to be so exact. I just use a normal teacup; although the size isn't important as long as you use the same sized cup throughout a recipe.

## Serving sizes

The number of servings recipes make will vary depending on whether you are feeding babies, toddlers or older children. The servings given all relate to an average child's portion; if you are making these recipes for adults, I suggest you work on the basis that two child portions are equivalent to one adult serving.

## Freezing

Nearly all the recipes in this book are suitable for freezing. You will see I have indicated on each which are, or are not suitable for storing in the freezer. You don't need any special equipment. In the early days just a couple of ice-cube trays, yoghurt-pot-size lidded containers and plastic bags should suffice. As his appetite increases or when you are cooking for more than the baby, some larger pots, or freezer boxes, will come in handy.

- Always freeze food cold, not when it is still warm. So chill and freeze as soon after preparing the recipe as you can.
- Ice-cube trays are great for freezing purées, soup, or sauces but these will dry out if left exposed. Once the food is solid, press out into freezer bags to store.
- It is advisable to defrost foods for children under 2 years in the fridge. For adults and older children you can do so at

room temperature (unless it is a hot sunny day).

- Reheat thawed food for babies under 1 year in a heatproof bowl over a pan of bubbling water. Microwave ovens can cause hot spots in the food with the risk of scalding.
- Throw away any uneaten food, never refreeze.

For more tips, turn to Batch Cooking ([here](#)).



# 1

How Your Child Develops



# HOW YOUR CHILD DEVELOPS

## From 6–12 months

All the recipes in this book are intended for babies who have been gently introduced to different foods and new flavours during their first stage of weaning. If you have followed my advice and that of your health visitor for stage one of weaning, then between six and seven months your baby's digestive system will be ready for food that is more textured than the purées of the early weeks of weaning. At this stage foods can be mashed or grated, although babies vary in their readiness for different textures so a patient introduction to new consistencies is the best approach. If, however, you have not yet weaned your six-month-old baby, you will need to follow an appropriate weaning guide before these recipes will be suitable for him.

The most recent information from the Department of Health is based on advice from the World Health Organization (WHO), which recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months; the WHO advice applies to different countries and cultures around the world. In Britain, the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN), which informs the Department of Health on policy, has confirmed that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that exclusive breastfeeding for six months is nutritionally adequate. All babies are different, however, and mothers' circumstances vary enormously which, when supported by the appropriate medical guidance, might lead to weaning before six months.

If your baby has reached 17 weeks, and you and your health visitor or GP feel your baby is ready to wean, then do consult my weaning advice in *The New Contented Little Baby Book* and *The Contented Little Baby Book of Weaning*. I hope both books will help you to introduce the right foods in the right order. Remember that during the first stage of weaning, breast or formula milk still provides babies with all the nutrients they need.



**At between six and nine months** it is important that your baby continues to receive 530–600ml (18–20fl oz) of breast or formula milk a day, divided between three milk feeds and inclusive of milk used in food. To ensure that your baby gets the right balance of milk and solids aim for a 180–240ml (6–8fl oz) milk feed first thing in the morning and one last thing in the evening.

To supplement the early weaning foods (cooked vegetables, fruit and baby rice) chicken, fish and meat can all be introduced at this stage, along with dairy products and wheat. Full-fat cow's milk can be used in cooking, but should not be given as a drink until one year. Pieces of soft fruit and cooked vegetables may also be given, but again, all of these foods should be introduced gradually and careful notes made of any reactions.

**Between six and seven months** babies will begin to put food in their mouths, and allowing babies to feed themselves is important. First finger foods include toast fingers and soft, cooked diced vegetables. Small amounts should be offered at every meal. I also recommend trying your baby on mini pasta shapes and thick soups at this stage.

**At nine to twelve months**, food can be chopped or diced, although meat should still be pulsed or very finely chopped. Further finger foods should be encouraged, such as raw vegetables, and breast or formula milk consumption will continue to fall gradually. You can also encourage your baby to eat with a spoon. This is an important step in

encouraging independence, dexterity and enthusiastic eating. If you feel that your baby's milk consumption falls too quickly and you are concerned about a low milk intake, additional dairy foods such as fromage frais and milk sauces can be introduced into the diet.

**From one year** it is important that large volumes of milk are discouraged, as this can reduce a baby's appetite for solid food. At this age, your baby needs a minimum milk intake of 350ml (12fl oz) a day, and no more than 600ml (20fl oz), inclusive of milk used in food. Try to abandon the bottle, and offer all drinks in a beaker from now on. Do encourage your child to keep up their fluid intake with water and diluted unsweetened fruit juice although drinking too much before a meal may considerably reduce a baby's appetite, so offer solids first to avoid this happening. I do believe that those babies who enjoy a wide variety of tastes and textures at this stage invariably grow up to be good, unfussy eaters.

## **From 12 months to 2 years**

By this stage, your baby should be enjoying three well-balanced meals a day and eating a wide variety of foods, although it is still important to limit foods that are high in sugar and salt. Your contented baby will start to become a confident child and you may notice a change in his eating habits. The happy baby, who would eat anything, suddenly becomes more selective about food. Favourite meals are inexplicably refused, and some days your toddler will appear to eat virtually nothing. This type of behaviour is normal and it is all part of a toddler asserting his independence. It is disheartening when your child rejects a nutritious meal, but

do keep offering him a variety of foods. Continue to try to make the meals interesting and colourful, and if your child is being fussy, keep the portions small so they are not overwhelmed by the amount of food. Sometimes, toddlers simply want to recognise what they are eating, and one way of doing this is to encourage their involvement with food preparation and cooking. The main thing is to try to stay relaxed so that mealtimes are enjoyable, and do not become an area of conflict.

## From 2 years

Eating with children is an excellent opportunity to talk, encourage good table manners and tempt your children to eat foods they may not have tried before. I love the Italian attitude to food, where family meals are the most important part of the day!

**During the second year** the eating habits of toddlers and young children become much more affected by outside influences, such as television advertisements, attending nursery or eating at the homes of friends and relatives. By establishing good eating habits at home, you will help to prepare children for their inevitable exposure to junk food and hopefully prevent them succumbing to unhealthy eating choices.

At this age, children expend a lot of energy; they will get hungry between meals so snacks will become an important part of their diet. Fruit, raw vegetables, yoghurt, wholemeal bread or cheese should make up their regular choices but