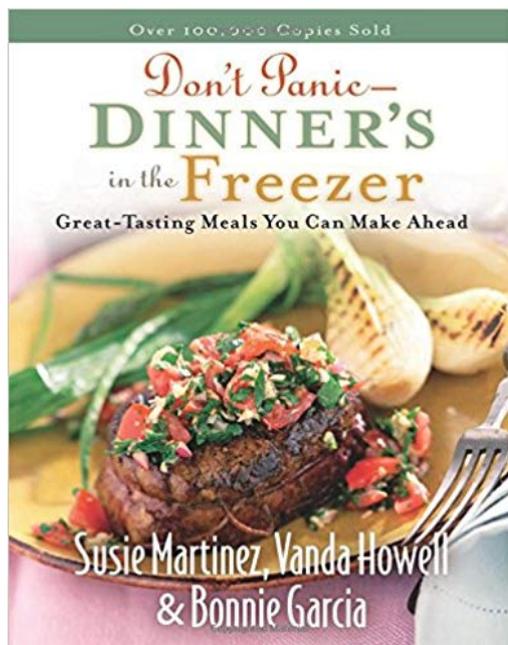


Don't Panic - Dinner's in the Freezer: Great-Tasting Meals You Can Make Ahead *by* Susie Martinez



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Hectic lifestyles and over-full schedules make traditional cooking methods nearly obsolete in many families. The results are poor nutrition and budgets strained by the high cost of fast food or commercially prepared meals. Don't Panic-Dinner's in the Freezer offers a simple and economical alternative, featuring dozens of recipes designed to be prepared and frozen for future use. With 100,000 copies sold, this book gives practical tips for planning, organizing, and shopping for meals, as well as unique ways to freeze and reheat prepared foods. Every recipe includes measurements for cooking alone or as a joint venture with one or two friends. Families, singles, retirees-everyone who needs to eat-will find fast and easy answers to the question, "What's for dinner?"



Reviews of the **Don't Panic - Dinner's in the Freezer: Great-Tasting Meals You Can Make Ahead** *by* Susie Martinez

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Perhaps my expectations were too high. The recipes look good and they will probably be ones that my family will like. But why do I hesitate to spend a weekend making and preparing meals to freeze? Because most of them are covered with sauce and require defrosting. When I saw the title of this book I thought it would be a big timesaver--going from freezer to the oven. But my thinking is: if I have to plan time for defrosting...I might as well make it the same day and eat it right away. Why waste another day preparing (not to mention extra time bagging and/or finding containers for food)when it will only take as much time (or more) to defrost it as it did to prepare it???

greed style

Say goodbye to boring recipes. This book has an amazing variety of entrees, and many have a gourmet taste and appearance without bizarre, hard-to-find ingredients.

The best things about this book:

1) A very practical freezer method using bags instead of baking dishes or plastic containers. By using the freezer bags and "flash freezing" the food into various, stackable shapes, you can maximize your freezer space and make cooking or reheating the food easier later.

2)The majority of the dishes aren't cooked at all until after you defrost them. This makes them taste incredibly fresh on the day you serve them. You simply assemble them before hand, then freeze them in order to cook them later.

3) This method of cooking definitely saves time. By preparing multiple meals at once, you dramatically reduce your overall preparation time. Furthermore, you've got the convenience of getting a meal out of your freezer the night before, letting it defrost in your fridge, and then simply letting the oven do the cooking or reheating while you tend to your children, chores, or work.

4) Buying "loss leaders" on sale at the grocery store and cooking them in bulk really does save money!

5) The variety of recipes.

6) The flexibility. The author encourages you to change up the recipes according to your family's tastes and package them according to your family's size.

The worst things about this book:

1) It should be spiral bound so it can lie flat.

2) I'm a lover of free-range, grass-fed, antibiotic-free, hormone-free meats. Finding my type of meat on sale is rare, and buying it already cut (i.e. chicken breasts) is usually never cheap. Most of the chicken recipes call for breasts. A few can be adapted to use shredded chicken (what I've got if I buy the chicken whole from farmers), but most cannot. Perhaps I should just learn how to properly butcher a chicken.

Kalv

- No nutritional data. Quite a few recipes contain significant amounts of high fat dairy (cream, sour cream, whole milk, cheese). Anyone watching his or her weight or cholesterol would be dismayed by a cookbook that purports to be an every day cookbook.

- Very inconsistent style of cooking. While some recipes contain fresh ingredients there are others that rely on highly processed foods such as cream of mushroom soup and bottled salad dressings.

- There are at least a couple of recipes that aren't freezer recipes at all, so why are they in this cookbook?

- If you've ever used Dream Dinners and you were hoping to learn how to prepare your own freezer meals (and maybe even kick the quality up a notch) this cookbook is a step backwards.

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After purchasing this book, I stopped using it after the first few months I owned it because:

1) Most of the recipes were beef or chicken-based (no fish, rice, or vegetable dishes), and all the beef recipes call for some form of steak or roast (no ground beef, for those of us on a budget) and all of the chicken recipes are for boneless, skinless chicken breasts ONLY (no split breasts, wings, thighs, drumsticks, etc)

2) The meals didn't taste very good (with the exception of their YUMMY Hawaiian Chicken recipe, and two others that require you to let the chicken marinate for an hour before freezing. All others tasted bland, perhaps because frozen right away).

Also, the pasta section was skimpy, with two of the pasta recipes stating that "this dish should NOT be frozen." Huh?

But I am still enamored of the freezer meals concept because I am a busy mother with a career. I have heard a lot of good things about another book called "Fix, Freeze, Feast," which does offer meatless dish recipes. I will order it next, then let everyone know what we think of it, too. I am determined to find a freezer cookbook that has enough variety and deliciousness to work for our family!

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