



## Recipe for Life

*Mary Berry*

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## Recipe for Life Mary Berry

Mary Berry has shared her skills, experience and tips through a varied and fascinating career, yet few people know the professional and personal story behind her success. Now, in her inspiring, charming and life-affirming memoir, Mary tells us about her life - a life in some ways reassuringly ordinary, yet at the same time completely extraordinary.

## Recipe for Life Details

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Author : Mary Berry

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# From Reader Review Recipe for Life for online ebook

## Ann says

I only chose this book because I am doing the pop sugar reading challenge and I needed to read an autobiography and it was in the library! However, I have really enjoyed it. It is a very honest book, Mary tells it like it is but kindly! She is frank about herself and her lack of academic achievements at school, (this would probably be a good book for any one who has failed their exams, especially considering her fantastic career). Very honest about her children, they weren't angels (are any children angels? Some parents would have you think so).

I liked the recipes which are interspersed in the book, I also liked the additional excerpts by her friends, colleagues and family. I thought it showed her to be anxious to be fair to all concerned. Mary is full of common sense, I loved her thoughts on maternity wear, it is just what I always think!! Her attitude to cooking is also very refreshing, she wants to teach everyone how to make simple, tasty family meals. I really related to that as I think today's chefs don't really understand the busy working mum.

She must be a lovely lady.

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## Debby says

I can't believe it but I do have Hamlyn's All Colour cookbook.

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## Stephanie says

Note: I'm reading this as my bedtime book, for which it is absolutely perfect: charming, absorbing and low-tension. It's also SO distinctively written in her voice - I can practically hear her reading it out loud as I read my paperback copy.

And people who've read my own Renegade Magic/A Tangle of Magicks will completely understand why this is my favorite anecdote so far:

"Later we had a miniature dachshund that had back problems and lost the use of its hind legs, so Dad bandaged its legs in old socks to protect the skin as they dragged along the floor. He then came up with the bright idea of taking the dog swimming to try and develop its muscles. As he was Bath's Chairman of Planning at the time, Dad was very involved with the city and had free access to the Roman Baths. He gave Mum the keys to the Great Bath, the magnificent central pool that was the jewel of the ancient complex - now too precious for public use - and every day she smuggled in the dachshund when no one else was around, to give it swimming lessons. Under the gaze of the statues of Roman Emperors and Governors that lined the historic hot pool, our little dog would furiously paddle away in the warm water until gradually it regained use of its legs and started to walk again."

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## **Sophie Jones says**

I first discovered Mary back in 2014 when I watched 'The Great British Bake Off' for the very first time. She came across as the kindest and sweetest individual and I admire that she always holds herself with charm and grace. Ever since the Bake Off I have been captivated by Mary's baking skills and have consequently immersed myself in her cookery books and watched her programmes religiously. Over the past few years Mary has become one of my main inspirations. However, before reading her autobiography I knew little about her earlier life and you probably won't be surprised to hear that there is a lot more to Mary's story!

I stumbled upon 'Recipe for Life' on a routine trip to my local library and I was captivated after reading just a few pages. Mary's writing style is so personable and comforting that it feels as though she's speaking directly to you. Whilst reading her autobiography you will uncover many wonderful tales from her childhood, how she started her journey into baking (including her time at 'Le Cordon Bleu' in Paris) and much more! Mary's life is so fascinating that there's almost too much to share so I thought I would pick my favourite and most memorable parts of the book, leaving you with a taste of what is to come...

?I loved hearing about Mary's upbringing in the first few chapters. She was quite a mischievous child and struggled quite a bit in school. Nevertheless, horse-riding was something that she loved and brought her a lot of joy ??

?At the end of each chapter, Mary shares a recipe from a particular point in her life. Recipes from her younger years are for a ~ 'Ginger and Treacle Spiced Traybake', 'Bread and Butter Pudding' and 'Canterbury Tart.' Later, she introduces 'Apple Cake', 'Easter Simnel Cake' and 'Shortbread.' I couldn't resist jotting down these recipes and placing them in my recipe file ??

?Whilst reading about Mary's progression into baking I learnt that it wasn't always smooth sailing. This almost reassured me as she highlighted that not everything is perfect. I feel very inspired to continue with my own baking endeavours and hopefully enrol on a cookery course in the summer ?

?Mary has so many wondrous, unique stories to tell like the time she met the famous Hollywood Actor David Niven, on a skiing trip in Switzerland! ??

? Alongside this there are sweet anecdotes like the time Mary's husband surprised her with a duck egg he had found and Mary decided to look after it and monitor it until hatched into a baby duckling ???

? It was heartbreaking to read about the tragic loss of Mary's son William but her strength is so inspiring ???

?After the success of her Aga workshops and before Bake Off came fruition, Mary found comfort in gardening as a distraction from her grief. I particularly love this passage ~ "We now have 350 different types of rose bush in the garden and my favourite variety is Chandos Beauty which has a pinky-White bloom and wonderful scent... there was a wild meadow with all different sorts of cow-slips and daisies" ~ I loved this chapter on gardening ??????"

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## **Melinda Elizabeth says**

How can anyone give Mary Berry a bad book review? Having watched many a series of "Bake Off", I've come to love her pithy comments and excitement when she's digging in to a piece of cake – a trait I can

certainly relate to! So it's with much curiosity that I picked up Mary Berry's biography to find out more about her chosen food path.

Mary is self deprecating and humble throughout, and with every chapter to read, a more whole, charming picture is created of what a human dynamo Mary is. From contracting polio as a young child to losing a loved one, Mary exhibits her "carry on" mentality and just gets on with it. An admirable trait that we can all attempt to put more of in our day to day!

The best part of the book for me, however, was reading her recipes throughout the book, as she talks about their origin and why they are special to her. Mary's recipes have long been go-to's for me, as it's pretty much idiot proof. And as she says, why make recipe difficult? Create something with what you've most likely got in the pantry. No need for that fancy hard to get ingredients! So the recipes in the book hold a special place in her story, and feels all the more special that she is sharing them with us.

A delightful insight into a pioneer into the world of celebrity chefs. Imagine Jamie Oliver having thousands of people in his house every year for intensive cooking sessions!

The bits on "Bake Off" are small, but the rest of the book more than makes up for the lack of gossip from the set. Mary Berry is certainly an extraordinary woman!

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## **Wallace says**

I first 'met' Mary Berry when Pamela, my wife, give me a copy of her Complete Cookbook as a Christmas present in 2011. I had been advised by both my GP and my employers' medical advisor to take up a hobby, and I chose cooking! Since then I have purchased 2 further Mary Berry cookbooks and 2 cookbooks where she has collaborated with Lucy Young.

Now why do I tell you this? Simply because the Mary Berry I 'met' professionally in her cookbooks, is the self-same Mary Berry I have now 'met' personally in her autobiography!

Recipe for Life is simply authentic Mary Berry! Honest, forthright, open, self-effacing, modest, fun, intriguing and downright delightful! Her personal encounter with polio and her dealing with the untimely and sudden death of her son are dealt with in the book quite matter-of-factly but empathetically. Pure Mary Berry!

Being a Christian and follower of Jesus Christ myself, I was pleased to see that on at least two occasions in the book she referred to both her own and her son's and daughter-in-law's Christian faith. It is warming to know that faith in Jesus Christ is important to Mary Berry.

Only one comment that I would like to make, and perhaps could be considered for future editions ... perhaps a final page 'life recipe', would make a fitting epilogue to what is a most gratifying read!

A truly 5-star read and heartedly recommended to all!

PS. And if I had one wish, it would be to meet Mary Berry in person and enjoy a cup of tea with her!

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## Jan Fisher says

Great book. I thought it would be similar to the tv programme about her life, but it was much more, very enjoyable, at times I laughed and at times I could have cried. An amazing woman!

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## Matt says

First and foremost, HAPPY BIRTHDAY EVE, MARY BERRY!

No journey, especially one of biographies, is complete without some light fare along the way, which is amply provided with this memoir by Mary Berry. For those who are not familiar with this most splendid woman, she has come to be known as the Queen of Cookery in Britain, though her journey to that pedestal was highly entertaining and captivating in a life filled with twists. Born into a modest family, Berry was the middle of three children and the only girl. With a father who served as the Mayor of Bath, Berry was often left to the fought and tumble ways of her brothers, admitting that she was a tomboy for the early years of her life. A close knit family home provided Berry with the love she needed to succeed, though she was a horrible student and failed most every class she took in school, save Domestic Science. With an aptitude for all things cooking, she was able to study a little at a local college, soon leading to a number of interesting jobs and the chance to study for a month at the Cordon Bleu in Paris, a story that will both shock and entertain the reader. Berry soon married Paul Hunnings, a rugby star who made an honest woman out of her at the ripe age of thirty-one. Still working and setting up house after her marriage, Berry entertains the readers with many vignettes, including making her own wedding cake and a cold honeymoon spent fishing before announcing the expansion of her family, both with children and interesting pets. Thomas, William, and Annabelle would soon be mini-Marys in the kitchen to help their mum before growing up and branching off into their own careers. From there it was moving to television cookery and a slew of cookbooks to accompany her weekly shows, having learned it is best to be an independent freelancer than being stuck to any one job. Berry excelled and laid the groundwork for her future as a television star on all things cookery. Her personal advice is to keep things simple enough that the viewer can relate to what is being prepared. The reader is taken on a wonderful journey as Berry explores her numerous shows, workshops, and the eventual arrival of her celebrity chef status when she agreed to judge on The Great British Bake Off, surprised by its complete success. Anyone who has not seen the original Bake Off will have to tune in, as it is a marvel how a quaint woman can stand amongst Jamie Oliver and Gordon Ramsay while holding her own. Brilliant in its delivery and warm nature, Mary Berry captures the reader with her honesty and motherliness.

It was a great friend of mine who introduced me to Mary Berry, at least through the television. The Great British Bake Off has been a deeply-rooted staple of BBC programming for a handful of years. She is affable and, like the grandmother we all wished we had, proves approachable as long as she is impressed. Peeling back some of the upper crust nature for which she is so well known, Berry offers up a wonderful insight into her life. Told in a frank and humorous manner, without the need to 'tell all' or smear anyone (she goes so far as to refuse to discuss past relationship, as some of these men are still alive!), Berry shows how she carved her niche as a working woman in the early 1960s and used a passion she developed when academics did nothing to support her. Berry is insightful throughout, commenting on the lack of foundation in the education system (where some subjects remain mandatory and yet are never used while the basics of cooking and sewing are glossed over). With straightforward chapters that include a number of personal asides by people

about whom she refers. Perhaps the most 'Mary Berry' aspect of the memoir is the collection of simple recipes for the reader to attempt at the end of each chapter, in which Berry seeks to instil her love of cookery and its simplicity in the busy grinds of the everyday. Even if that includes using something as peculiar as the AGA oven (I know... I am still baffled!), Berry wants the reader and anyone who comes across something with which she is associated to feel comfortable in the kitchen and their own apron. I know I will be the next time I try a cake, pudding, or pie!

Kudos, Lady Berry! You have such a way with words and sentiments, perfectly baked and crisp, which just the right amount of ebullient topping to keep me hooked. How I will miss you on Bake Off!

Love/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at:  
<http://pecheyponderings.wordpress.com/>

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### **Laura says**

Loved this book. Mary Berry is so positive and up-beat, so genuinely nice. Her hard work and love of cooking and baking are admirable, and her recipes are ones I will be trying out for my family.

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### **Ruby says**

A true pleasure, I haven't enjoyed a book this much in a long time. I cannot recommend this book enough, everyone should read it at some point - even if GBBO isn't your cup of tea. Even better listen to Patricia Hodge's flawless narration. The most comforting, soothing and heart warming read I've probably ever had. Honestly, read this book and let Mary Berry into your heart.

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### **Jane Ostler says**

I loved this book because her positive mental attitude suffuses every page. A book to chase away the gremlins, it is a perfect 'Mum knows best' sort of read. Faced with difficulties and tribulations Mary picks herself up, keeps calm and carries on. If you are in need of a pick me up then read this. Shedding light on the '60s from her point of view, allowing us into her beautiful homes, and clearly outlining her moral codes of conduct, she has an unashamed way of celebrating her talent and those of her family in a way that lets us all join in. Well done Mary!

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### **Kerrie O'Neill says**

I am glad I read this book and enjoyed learning more about Mary and her life. Being a fan of hers and Bake Off I expected to enjoy it. I was surprised at some of her attitudes but it's important to remember she is a product of her generation and I appreciate her honesty! This one stands out as an example of her attitude "I find it incredible that people will go to their GP's surgery for the most minor things; they seem to think it is part of their rights, but it's a waste of everyone's time" (Oh Mary!)

I really liked the inclusion of recipies too. I would say it they could have done a better job of proof reading as there were quite a few errors.

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### **Elizabeth says**

I think I love Mary Berry just a little bit more now. She's wonderful :)

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### **Redfox5 says**

While I am aware of who Mary Berry is, I've never watched her in The Great British Bake Off, or seen her in anything else. I've not even come across one of her cookbooks. The latter maybe not so much of a surprise, as cooking is not really my thing.

This was one of those books that was given to me and I'm glad it was, as I would never have picked this up in a shop. I often find autobiographies about people I don't really know, much better than those I do. This was no exception and I loved reading about Mary's life.

It got very emotional when she talks about her son dying. I had no idea she lost a son when he was only 18. But it's also heartwarming when she talks about all the good and happy things that have happened to her. Based on reading this, I feel like Mary Berry would be lovely to know in real life.

This book also has recipes at the end of every chapter for people who are aspiring bakers! The good thing about this book is you don't need to be interested in cooking to read this. It's just a good read!

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### **Hannah Polley says**

I loved Mary Berry on Bake Off so was interested to read her autobiography. She certainly had the best start in life - her childhood home is huge! - but she has worked so hard to get to where she is. Starting out as the person that came to your home and demo'd your electric oven, to working on a magazine, to Bake Off, she has done so well. I didn't know much about Mary Berry before Bake Off so it was lovely to read about the career she had before the programme as well.

I didn't know that she had polio as a child or that she tragically lost her son. I was in bits reading about her son, that must have been so awful to go through. Mary is clearly a wonderful cook, wife and mother and loves her family deeply.

I did feel sad reading the end when she was saying how much she loves Bake Off and that she would be on it until they sack her as she didn't go when the programme moved channels. I do still enjoy Bake Off and now I feel less of a traitor knowing that her and Prue are friends!

A great read.

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