

*Carina's Kitchen:*  
From my table to yours

Carina Mercer

# Acknowledgements

To my wonderful husband Murray, your love, encouragement and steady presence have been the heart of this journey. Thank you for cheering me on through every long day in the kitchen, for your thoughtful feedback and always being there with patience and a sense of humour.

You have been my greatest supporter, my calm in the chaos and my most devoted taste tester. I am endlessly grateful for your belief in me and for sharing this adventure side by side.

To my boys, Richard and Daniel, your humour, curiosity and even those sceptical looks at some of my creations have kept me grounded and smiling throughout this process.

Watching you cook with your own families now fills me with pride and joy. You both inspire me more than you know.

To all my family and friends, thank you for your encouragement and support as I begin this exciting journey of creating my first cookbook. It has always been important to me that this book inspires people of all ages and backgrounds. I have written this cookbook with neurodiverse individuals in-mind, to encourage them to cook and create with love and passion, not just for today, but for the future as well.

To those who directly helped me bring this cookbook to life: your time, talents and generosity have been invaluable.

Vicky Labinger, thank you for giving me the push I needed to start.  
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You've each played a big part in turning my dream into reality.

With all my love, Carina

# What people have said

"In our house, like many homes, finding the time to cook nutritious, flavourful meals can feel impossible while juggling work, school, the house and activities. Carina's recipes are a game-changer! Offering quick, easy and delicious recipes designed for busy households and a variety of appetites."

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"As a vegetarian, with a meat-eating husband and kids that mainly eat beige, this was one of the biggest tests for the whole family. These recipes prioritise speed, taste and were easy to vary for meat eaters and vegetarians alike. Whether it's 30-minute dinners, one pan meals, or slow cooker options, every dish feels thoughtfully crafted to maximise flavour with minimal effort."

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"The ingredients were easy to find and the step-by-step instructions make cooking stress-free, even on the most hectic nights. One of the stand out features is the balance between convenience and home-cooked goodness. Unlike some quick meal recipes that rely on processed short cuts, Carina emphasises fresh, healthy ingredients and smart techniques to bring out bold, satisfying flavours. Dishes like Thai Green Curry and homemade cookies have become instant family favourites in our home."

# Welcome from Carina

Welcome to Carina's Kitchen, From My Table To Yours: Fresh, Fun, and Family Approved, where indulgence meets inspiration, every recipe is from the heart.

I am Carina Mercer, the founder of Cakefully Heaven and Catering by Carina, and I am thrilled to share with you the recipes that have shaped my lifelong passion for cooking and baking.

My love for food began when I was just three years old, perched on a stool in my grandmother's kitchen, rolling meatballs and sneaking tastes of sultana rolls fresh from the oven. Those early days ignited a fire in me – a love for creating dishes that bring people together and moments that linger long after the meal.

Fast-forward to my college training days and the exhilarating and, at times, terrifying world of professional catering I met extraordinary chefs who taught me invaluable lessons and inspired me to experiment, innovate, and trust my instincts in the kitchen. From those experiences came a deep understanding of food's power – not just to nourish but to comfort, excite, and celebrate life's moments, big and small.

In this cookbook, I have gathered a collection of recipes reflecting my culinary journey's diversity and joy. From hearty classics like Sausage and



Dumpling Casserole and Chilli Con Carne to comforting family favourites like Sweet Potato and Pepper Soup and Cheese and Onion Pancakes, you'll also find globally inspired dishes such as Moroccan Chicken with Couscous, Stuffed Parathas, and Thai Green Curry. And, of course, no meal is complete without dessert – whether it's rich, gooey Fudge Brownies or a Fruit-Topped Cheesecake.

Many include options to adapt to different dietary preferences or needs to make these recipes even more versatile. So everyone at the table can enjoy the same meal, whether they're vegetarian, gluten-free, or have other specific requirements.

This book has also been thoughtfully written to support a wide range of neurodiverse needs. It provides clear instructions, step-by-step guidance, and tips to make cooking approachable and enjoyable for everyone, no matter their experience level.

My objective is to help you create wholesome, delicious food using good-quality ingredients without additives. Every recipe has been crafted to be easy to follow, with ingredients you can find locally, so you can focus on enjoying the cooking process and the food.

Each recipe is crafted with love and designed to bring some magic to your table, whether you're cooking for family, friends, or yourself. I have included tips, anecdotes, and personal

touches throughout, so you will feel like we're cooking together in your kitchen.

So, grab your apron, gather your ingredients, and let's start a delicious journey. Together, we'll create food that comforts, delights, and transforms everyday meals into extraordinary memories.

Happy cooking!

*Carina Mercer*



# Groceries and cupboard essentials

Ever wondered what a good cook needs in their cupboard? These lists are great for you to build up your cupboard stocks.

## Fruit and Vegetables

Leeks

Red Onions

Spanish/White Onions

Mushrooms

Potatoes

Sweet Potatoes

Celery

Parsnips

Carrots

Courgettes

Spring Onions

Garlic

Cauliflower

Avocado

Cucumbers

Lemons

Aubergines

Broccoli

Spring Onions

Spinach

Large Flat Mushrooms

Tomatoes

Cherry Tomatoes

Red Peppers

Yellow Peppers

Orange Peppers

Green Beans

## Dairy and Frozen

Double Cream

Halloumi

Cheddar Cheese

Mozzarella

Cream Cheese

Milk Eggs

Coconut/Almond Milk

Feta

Butter

Margarine

Soured Cream

Filo Pastry

Puff Pastry

Butternut Squash

Mascarpone

Chilli Cheddar Cheese



## Fresh Meat and Fish

## Cod or Haddock

## Vegetarian

## Large Prawns

Mince

## Chicken Thighs

## Chicken

## Chicken Breasts

## Beef

## Salmon

Quorn

## Sausages

Bacon

## Beef

## Chicken Breasts



## Tinned

[Chopped Tomatoes](#)

[Red Kidney Beans](#)

[Coconut Milk](#)

[Chick Peas](#)

[Cannellini Beans](#)

[Jack Fruit](#)

[Butter Beans](#)

[Pumpkin Puree](#)

## Dried Groceries

[Split Peas](#)

[Green Lentils](#)

[Red Lentils](#)

[Pudding Rice](#)

[Couscous](#)

[Pasta](#)

[Long Grain Rice](#)

[Poppy Seeds](#)

[Sesame Seeds](#)

## Fresh Herbs

[Coriander](#)

[Parsley](#)

[Basil](#)

[Chives](#)

## Dried Herbs

[Parsley](#)

[Garlic Salt](#)

[Paprika](#)

[Black Pepper](#)

[Salt](#)

[Chilli Flakes](#)

[Fenugreek](#)

[Italian Herbs](#)

[Mixed Herbs](#)

[Celery Salt](#)

[Garlic Powder](#)

[Cayenne](#)

[Blackened Cajun](#)

[Cumin Seeds](#)

[Curry Leaves](#)

[Chives](#)

[Smoked Paprika](#)

[Turmeric](#)

[Mild Chilli Powder](#)

[Sumac](#)

[Ginger](#)

[Nutmeg](#)

[Garam Marsala](#)

[Cinnamon](#)

[Cumin](#)

[Basil](#)

## Sauces / Stock

[Chicken Stock Cubes](#)

[Vegetable Stock](#)

[Cubes](#)

[Mushroom Stock](#)

[Cubes](#)

[Beef Stock Cubes](#)

[Cartons of Passata](#)

[Olive Oil](#)

[Dry White Wine](#)

[Tomato Ketchup](#)

[Rice Wine Vinegar](#)

[Sherry Vinegar](#)

[White wine Vinegar](#)

[Balsamic Vinegar](#)

[Worcestershire Sauce](#)

[Soya Sauce](#)

[English Mustard](#)

[Pesto](#)

[Sweet and Sour Chilli](#)

[Sauce](#)

[Mustard Powder](#)

[Tomato Puree](#)

[Lemon Juice](#)

[Yeast Flakes](#)



## Baking Ingredients

[Plain Flour](#)

[Self Raising Flour](#)

[Corn Flour](#)

[Baking Powder](#)

[Bicarbonate of Soda](#)

[Granulated Sugar](#)

[Caster Sugar](#)

[Icing Sugar](#)

[Light Brown Sugar](#)

[Black Treacle](#)

[Honey](#)

[Golden Syrup](#)

[Maple Syrup](#)

[Ground Almonds](#)

[Breadcrumbs](#)

[Wholemeal Flour](#)

[Flaked Almonds](#)

[Glacé Cherries](#)

[Cream Coconut](#)

[Cocoa Powder](#)

[Coffee Powder](#)

[Marshmallows](#)

[Milk Chocolate](#)

[White Chocolate](#)

[Plain Chocolate](#)

[Apricot Jam](#)

[Strawberry Jam](#)

[Sultanas](#)

[Crunchies](#)

[Sponge Fingers](#)

[Soya Cream](#)

[Custard Powder](#)

[Carton Custard](#)

[Biscoff Spread](#)

[Caramel Flavouring](#)

[Vanilla Essence](#)

[Digestive Biscuits](#)

[Dried Apricots](#)

[Tea Bags](#)

[Orange Juice](#)

[Tortilla Wraps](#)

[Suet](#)

[Vegetarian Suet](#)

[Coconut Milk](#)

[Almond Milk](#)

[Almond Flour](#)

[Coconut Flour](#)

[Xylitol](#)

[Sugar Free Icing Sugar](#)

[Walnuts](#)

[Gluten Free Self Raising Flour](#)

[Gluten Free Plain Flour](#)

[Xylitol](#)

[Chocolate Chips](#)

# Utensils

Over the years, I have collected a wide range of utensils and tools to help me in the kitchen. Truth be told, I love buying them! Here is a selection from my cupboard that every kitchen should have.





**1.** Casserole dish

**2.** Blender

**3.** Mixer

**4.** Hand blender

**5.** Electric hand whisk

**6.** Oven gloves

**7.** Baking tray

**8.** Saucepan, frying  
pan and lid

**9.** Collander  
(plastic or metal)

**10.** Measuring jugs  
(plastic or metal)

**11.** Grater

**12.** Cake tin round

**13.** Plastic glass bowls

**14.** Rolling pin

**15.** Loaf tin and  
parchment paper

**16.** Measuring cups

**17.** Cookie cutters

**18.** Chopping boards

**19.** Wooden spoon

**20.** Small hand whisk

**21.** Knives

**22.** Spatula

**23.** Can opener

**24.** Small grater

**25.** Measuring spoons

**26.** Vegetable peeler

**27.** Weighing scales

**28.** Potato masher

**29.** Slotted spoon

**30.** Ladle

**31.** Fish slice

**32.** Tongs

**33.** Juicer

## *Soups*

Sweet Potato and Pepper .....	16
Parsnip and Courgette .....	18
Chilli Pumpkin .....	20
Roasted Cauliflower .....	22
Tomato.....	24
Cream of Mushroom.....	26
Creamy Leek Sauce .....	28
White Sauce.....	29
BBQ Sauce.....	30
Salsa .....	31
Salad Dressing .....	32
Hummus .....	34

## *Mains*

Sausage Casserole & Dumplings .....	40
Chilli Con Carne.....	44
The Extra Mac & Cheese.....	46
Vegetable Pasta.....	48
Filo Parcels Vegetable or Meat.....	52
Hunter's Chicken.....	56
Nut Roast.....	58
Puff Pastry Nut Roast.....	60
Cheese & Onion Pancakes.....	62
Moroccan Chicken with Couscous.....	64
Spicy Pasta Bake .....	67
Homemade Ravioli.....	70
Sauces & Mixtures for Ravioli.....	72

Thai Green Curry .....	74
Vegan Lentil Burger .....	78
Stuffed Mushrooms.....	80
Frittata .....	83
Homemade Tortillas.....	86
Garlic Bread .....	87
Stuffed Parathas .....	88
Baked Halloumi with Vegetables.....	90

## *Desserts*

Rice Croquettes .....	94
Shortcrust Strudel.....	96
Decadent Chocolate Fudge Cake .....	98
Honeycomb Chocolate Pots .....	100
Biscoff Tiramisu .....	102
Fruit Topped Cheesecake .....	104
Sultana and Cherry Cake .....	106
Butter Crunchie Biscuits .....	107
Tea Loaf .....	108
Fudge Brownies.....	110
Chocolate Chip Cookies .....	112

## *Keto*

Lemon Drizzle Cake .....	116
Coffee and Walnut Cake.....	118
Almond Flour Pancakes .....	120