

THE COOKBOOK



From Mother to Mother
By Lisa Faulkner (£20; Simon & Schuster), out 9 March
TESTED BY Susan Low



Actor Lisa Faulkner has taken to her role of cook and cookbook author in a manner that could earn her an Oscar. This is the fourth cookbook the former *Spooks*

and *Holby City* star has written since winning *Celebrity MasterChef* in 2010, and she returns to a theme: family recipes that are meant for sharing. Lisa's food-loving mother died of cancer aged 44 when Lisa was just 16. In her first book, *Recipes From My Mother to My Daughter* (2013), written for her adopted daughter Billie, she aimed to keep food memories alive through the generations.

This book has a similar hand-me-down ethic but this time round Lisa has brought in family members and friends who are mothers, asking them "what they like to cook and eat; what their favourite fallbacks are, their comfort dishes, the meals they make for their families when time is short". It helps the book's appeal, perhaps, that Lisa's friends include celeb mothers such as Myleene Klass, TV exec Jay Hunt, Natalie Appleton, Tamzin Outhwaite and more.

Given the book's ethos, it's no surprise the recipes run a pretty wide gamut, from Vietnamese beef salad and paneer curry skewers to lebkuchen and Spanish lamb casserole, divided up into chapters for poultry, meat, fish, veggies and sweets. There's a strong unifying thread, though – they're family-friendly, easy to make and have stood the test of time.

QUALITY OF THE RECIPES I wanted to try out one of Lisa's own recipes and I'm something of a spice addict, so first up were her spicy sunshine prawns with feta flatbreads. Flavoured with typically Indian mustard seeds, cumin, chilli, turmeric and ground coriander, and augmented with more Euro-centric feta cheese and smoked paprika, the dish promised not to be a wallflower – and it wasn't. Mine didn't quite look like the one in the photograph – the 250g spinach called for gave a much



CELEB MOTHERS DO 'AVE 'EM Greek custard tart and, inset, sunshine prawns and feta flatbreads

greener hue – and it was less saucy. I was also left with a sad little pile of grated lemon zest that was in the ingredients but not in the instructions (I sprinkled it over the top). The flatbreads needed more than a 30-second flash in the pan to cook through too. The taste made up for the inconsistencies, though – it was complex, not too spicy and very moreish. One guest even asked for the recipe, so that's the book's mission accomplished.

From the Sweet chapter, I tried out Greek custard tart (galaktoboureko), a recipe from Lisa's sister's friend Maria. It's made with layers of filo pastry enclosing a thick vanilla custard, then soaked with a lemon-spiked syrup. It's a dish I've eaten in Greece but had never attempted to cook. The recipe was clearly one that had been made again and again and worked perfectly. The finished dish looked exactly like the picture and tasted like a Greek holiday.



PHOTOGRAPHY Chris Terry's photos hit the right balance of sophisticated and homey. Readers won't (often) be left guessing what the finished dish should look like.

WHO IS IT SUITABLE FOR? If you're the kind of cook who insists on authenticity, recipes that include romesco sauce made with tinned tomatoes and ready-ground almonds may upset you, and you may want to skip the 'cheat's' moussaka and crispy duck. That said, dishes such as fish tacos made with homemade fish fingers are certain to please children, and this is very much a family recipe book.

STAR RATING ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

Find the recipes I tested from this book online at deliciousmagazine.co.uk/lisafaulknerbook