



## **Real Food for Mother and Baby: The Fertility Diet, Eating for Two, and Baby's First Foods**

*Nina Planck*

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**Following the success of *Real Food*, Nina Planck's *Real Food for Mother and Baby* explains why real food is better for woman and child.**

Nina Planck, one of the great food activists, changed the way we view old-fashioned foods like butter with her groundbreaking *Real Food*. Then she got pregnant. Never one to accept conventional wisdom blindly, Nina found the usual advice about pregnancy and baby food riddled with myths and misunderstandings. In *Real Food for Mother and Baby*, Nina explains why many modern ideas about pregnancy and infant nutrition are wrongheaded and why traditional foods are best. While Nina can be controversial—her op-ed in the *New York Times* on vegan diets for infants was one of the paper's most e-mailed articles—she's no contrarian. Readers applaud her candor; they also trust her research and welcome her advice.

Nina's basic premise hasn't changed—whole foods are best—but some of the details are surprising. Pregnant women need meat and salt, not iron supplements. Nursing will be easier if you act like the mammal you are. Delaying the introduction of certain solid foods doesn't prevent allergies. Cereals are not the best foods for tiny eaters; meat and egg yolks are better. From conception to two years, the body's overwhelming needs are for quality fat and protein, not for carrots and low-fat dairy. Even as she casts a skeptical eye on the conventional wisdom, Nina is reassuring. She shows you how to keep your baby healthy on good, simple food. *Real Food for Mother and Baby* will be the new classic on eating for two.

## Real Food for Mother and Baby: The Fertility Diet, Eating for Two, and Baby's First Foods Details

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Author : Nina Planck

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# From Reader Review Real Food for Mother and Baby: The Fertility Diet, Eating for Two, and Baby's First Foods for online ebook

## Ngairé says

Mostly really good information and advice for people who want to try and have a Paleo/Traditional Foods-type pregnancy. Loved that Planck recommended not making baby food. She also has some great advice about good, easy baby foods, such as the traditional Italian favorite, grated Parmesan cheese and olive oil. I didn't agree with everything she said - I really don't think there's anything wrong with ultrasounds and think she might have benefited from one but that's just me.

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## Jdbaron says

This book was given to us as a gift from a friend. We share similar food values: we're locavores, subscribe to a CSA, primarily choose organic foods, very rarely purchase processed foods (cereals and crackers!) and make everything from scratch, so the philosophies ascribed to by the author should have been right up our alley. However, this author has absolutely no qualifications in terms of nutrition, and her choices are frequently against the writings and recommendations of those with appropriate education and qualification. I wouldn't object to this if she were to explain frequently that her ideas qualify as "fringe" and are considered to be dangerous by most pediatricians, nutritionists, etc., but she makes no such caveats.

Case in point: on one page in a section about feeding baby solid foods, she includes the following tidbits:

Whole milk is great after 6 months! EVERY pediatric journal, website, or physician most definitely disagrees with this. 95% say that one should wait until 1 year, others are a bit more lenient, but NEVER six months.

In one section, lightly cooked egg yolk is recommended if you start baby on foods before 6 months, and in another that whole eggs are good first foods! Again, most recommend that eggs be well cooked, and only yolks until the baby is a year old.

Several times, she suggests salting foods for baby! Salt is relatively high on the no-no list for first baby foods.

Elsewhere, a little honey is recommended in a section of first foods. HONEY! This is universal: all doctors strongly advise that honey be avoided for the first year of a child's life. Period. End of discussion.

She provides no evidence to support her philosophies - she truly seems to take the "well, it didn't hurt my kid so it must be good" attitude. Are there mothers out there who put their children to sleep on their tummies and suggest that it isn't such a bad thing to do because their child was ok? Yes - but did they WRITE A BOOK ABOUT IT AND PURPORT THEMSELVES TO BE AN EXPERT?!?!

Please, please look elsewhere for a book on nutrition for you and your baby. I truly believe that this charlatan should be ashamed of herself for suggesting she has any expertise on the matter. Since when does running a farmer's market qualify you to give medically sound, tested advice?

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## **Em says**

This book is divided into several sections for moms/moms-to-be. After an intro which gives some general background on the Real Food concept - basically to eat food as natural and close to the source as possible - Planck moves quickly into discussion fertility implications and benefits of a Real Food diet.

Biggest takehomes beyond the obvious "eat lots of fruits and veggies" - avoid skim milk and soy.

The next section is devoted to the 40 weeks of pregnancy and emphasizes the different nutrients that are essential and more or less vital in each trimester. Some of this advice diverges from the standard line of thinking - i.e., if you're at risk for preeclampsia/high blood pressure, eat more meat, not less and don't worry about salt.

The final section discusses breastfeeding and first foods. The latter is particularly interesting, as she essentially dismisses the need for anything defined as "baby food" and says just give your baby easy to gum portions of whatever is on your table.

Overall, this is a pretty down to earth volume that challenges some assumptions about "right" foods and which preaches a particular viewpoint without getting too new-agey about it. All in all, it was non-didactic enough that I could glean some good info without feeling judged or like throwing the thing across the room for the most part (which is more than I can say for some other diet and pregnancy books). My one major caveat would be that any major changes or diversions from a doctor/midwife's advice should be discussed with them prior to taking the suggestions of a non-medical professional.

A more minor complaint is that she makes this sort of eating sound really easy - which it might be if your husband owns a natural food related business and your parents own a farm and you live in a major city and make your living by writing at home about food choices. There were definitely moments where I thought, well, bully for you and your sources of raw milk and time to never give your child a bottle of anything. But for the most part, I did really like that she gave options and did acknowledge that not everyone has the resources that she does.

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## **Christine says**

I believe that ultimately, fertility is up to God, but we are also given the tools to help build a healthy baby by feeding our bodies the best way possible in preparation for hosting a human life. Nina is basically the poster mom for raw milk and has quite an in-your-face writing style, so be prepared. But the book has lots of great practical advice, including clear reasoning behind her nutrition advice and explanations of why each nutrient is critically important. I read this before I got pregnant, and I'm currently doing great in my second trimester drinking raw milk and eating real foods like grass-fed beef, pastured chicken, nuts, and fresh cheeses. And no, contrary to the advice of many traditional dietitians, I do not have high cholesterol.

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## **Rachel Svendsen says**

This book was packed with interesting and useful information. While I'm not certain I will completely adopt all of her advice for early foods for my child, it gave me a springboard for further research and discussion with our pediatrician. I liked her honest approach to natural healthy eating, and her openness about things she disagreed with. Even at the times I disagreed with her, I respected her honesty and openness about her methods of research. I personally think there is just as much something to be said for the wisdom of the elders as there is in the wisdom of modern science.

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## **Fiona Endsley says**

I really liked the nutritional info in this book, my favorite bit was the advice that if a food would not have been known before the industrialization of our food supply, it is not a real, whole, healthful food. It's a broken "food" with parts missing and/or other stuff added, it is not as nature intended, and therefore not what we are supposed to be eating, and it can't give us what we need (I am a steadfast believer that anytime we are not living as nature intended there will be a price to pay in mental and physical health). Though the author does a good job of explaining the how and why of this thought, it is so commonsensical an idea I am slapping my forehead at the fact that this needs to be pointed out, but any outing to the grocers or a meal out at a restaurant proves that it is so. This book does disappoint however in the author's attitude that you don't need to know a lot about birth to have the lovely natural childbirth you want for yourself and your baby, as it will all take care of itself. If we lived in a culture where the standard reading for women planning to have babies was the great books by Sheila Kitzinger, Ina May Gaskin, Sarah J. Buckley, Michel Odent, etc. instead of the "What to expect when you're expecting" dribble/medical propaganda, where a woman giving birth for the first time could be expected to have witnessed a good birth or two, and to understand what goes into getting that outcome, where homebirth with loved ones and/or midwives is the socially supported standard, where O.B.s are there only for rare problems (they are surgeons after all), well, then maybe that would be the case, but it is not. The author herself seemed woefully uninformed about her choices, listing nurse-midwives as apparently the only ones, and did indeed end up with a unplanned cesarean section. Whether her long and difficult labor would have gone any differently had she had different assistants, or made different choices, I can not say, but as with nutrition, the more information you have on this subject the better equipped you are to care for yourself and your family.

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## **Shauna says**

Great for new moms

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## **Tiffany says**

Let me start by saying that I am not pregnant. Did you know that you can receive free, pre-release books through Goodreads.com? Just be careful which books you request because you may end up with ones like this.

That being said, I did find some of the information in this book to be useful. Nina Planck writes about the

importance of eating what she dubs "real food" as opposed to the new age of industrial, processed goodies. However, what I can definitely do without is her "I'm the best mother because I feed my son..." attitude. It seems that EVERY mother has advice to share, Planck just has the means to do so through a book deal.

She cites many dependable sources, so I'll give her credit for that. However, much of what she writes about is her opinion. It's a good reference, but not the best book to read if you're looking to educate yourself on improving your diet. And I'd be a little wary of recommending this book to pregnant friends.

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### **Jocelyn says**

Planck's idea for this book is solid, but her advice is sketchy. Real food is a must for mother and baby, but I don't think I'm comfortable feeding raw meat to babies. I'm glad it worked for her family, and everything else she mentioned I can at least write off as safe-enough, but she went too far at times.

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### **Molly says**

After hearing Nina Planck give a talk a couple weeks back, and finding her to be sensible and passionate about food, I picked up this book. It's her second; her first, 'Real Food,' probably lays more of the groundwork. Regardless, I didn't feel adrift. I like Planck's argument for cutting through so much of the hysteria about what we feed our children when. I don't know that I'm going to do everything she says, but she's certainly influenced me, and I'm glad for it.

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### **Sarah says**

A lot of this book made sense to me. Eat real foods.

However, I was turned off by how nonchalant the author was when addresses drinking during pregnancy. It is only 9 months! It is not that big of a deal to simply stop drinking for nine months. Sure research is inconclusive on the impact of small amounts of alcohol on the infant but why risk it. We know alcohol can have devastating long term impacts on brain development. I won't be the parent who makes life harder for my child because mom wanted a glass of wine.

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### **Becca says**

First, I recommend this book to anyone who 1. is thinking of having kids but hasn't done any research yet or 2. people who don't have strong opinions about food or parenting (so, non-parents). When my little sisters or cousins decide to have a baby, I will send this to them.

Planck expresses, in 230 pages or less, her philosophy on food, pregnancy, childbirth, baby-feeding and baby care. And I am-- mostly-- in lockstep with her. Planck sketches in broad strokes why I eat grass-fed beef and drink whole milk, why I had my babies without drugs with midwives, why they sleep with me and nurse

forever and delay some vaccines and eat table food rather than baby good... and you'd think that with all that philosophical harmony, reading this book would have been fun.

It wasn't. Not nearly as fun as her other book-- her REAL book, "Real Food." Why? 1. The sloppy writing/editing. This book read like an editor's red-headed stepchild. Like Micheal Pollan's "Food Rules." As if there is an impatient publishing company calling and you've gotta crank SOMETHING out and, meh, here ya go. 2. She makes some dangerous suggestions: give your kid whole grapes and gobs of peanut butter and raw milk! He'll be fine! And of course, she's right. Most kids, most of the time, will be fine. Ditto all those diseases we've got vaccines for. MOST kids won't choke on grapes or die of diphtheria or get TB from raw milk. But some will. Why sign your kid up for the tragic-death lottery just because it's annoying to have to cut food up into small pieces or because shots are owie? and 3. At writing, Planck's kid is ONLY TWO. That's right. This is a parenting book about the experiences of one mother with ONE two year old. And the stuff she describes, how you should be calm about your kid's weight gain and food choices, but how she screamed and cried when her kid wouldn't eat-- just seemed like classic first-time-mom stuff. And books about first-time-moms are fine-- it's good for pre-moms to get a peek inside the intense neurotic experience that is parenting. But having one little kid shouldn't make her an expert on childhood nutrition. I felt mean reading it and snorting-- just wait till she has her next kid-- that'll deflate her advise to pregnant moms to go out to eat and take long naps and go jogging. And when her next kid won't eat any of the same foods her first kid did, in spite of her expertise...

So to sum up. Good introduction to the science of real food, good background for pregnancy nutrition (i.e. the benefits of eating fish outweigh the risks of mercury poisoning, ditto raw milk), and useful (for first-time-parents) general info about baby care.

My notes:

p38: the dirty dozen (make sure you buy organic for these:) peach, apple, bell pepper, celery, nectarine, strawberry, chery, letuce, grape, pear, spinach, potato. The cleanest twelve (organic not so vital): onion, avocado, froz. sweet corn, pineapple, mango, froz. peas, asparagus, kiwi, banana, cabbage, broccoli, eggplant.

p213: This debate (vegan vs. meat) comes down to one thing: reproduction. An otherwise healthy adult may follow a vegan diet and do fine for a while, perhaps even for his whole life. But in traditional societies, the vegan diet is unheard of. It's just not good enough for babies and children. "When women avoid all animal foods, their babies are born small, they grow very slowly, and they are developmentally retarded," says Lindsay Allen, director of the US human nutrition research center. "It's unethical for parents to bring up their children as strict vegans."... Malnutrition is cumulative. Key nutrients lacking on a vegan diet, such as dha and vitam b12, are depleted with each pregnancy and each generation. That's why you don't find generations of vegans in traditional groups."

p153: take cod liver oil for baby brain growth!

47-- four fertility rules: 1. be an omnivore 2. eat fat: butter, eggs, liver, crab 3. Eat seafood (and sea salt) for iodine and omega 3 fat dha 4. 'don't eat carbage'

53: fertility food for women:

folate---liver, leaves, lentils, nuts, chicken (sub. brewer's yeast) iodine---fish, roe, kelp, sea salt (kelp tablets), iron---red meat, liver (brewer's yeast, floradix)

vitamin a--- butter, eggs (cod liver oil)

vitamin b12--- meat, poultry, fish, clams, milk, eggs (vitamin b12)



vitamin D--- milk, pork, seafood (cod liver oil)  
vitamin E--- olive oil, nuts (Dr. Ron's vitamin E).  
Vitamin K2--- Goose liver, cheese, natto, butter, eggs (dr. ron's butter oil)  
Zinc--- oysters, beef, shrimp (Brewer's yeast)

62: aid fertility and prevent birth defects  
Folate: leafy greens, liver, lentils, nuts chicken  
B6: raw milk, lightly cooked liver and tuna, banana (heat sensitive)  
B12: meat, fish, dairy, eggs. (Doesn't exist in plants)  
Choline: Egg yolks, beef, wheat germ, whole grains, liver, fish  
Betaine: wheat germ, whole grains, spinach, beets

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## **Diana Thomsen says**

### **Heartfelt, kind, and forgiving**

This book made me cry. Repeatedly. The author has such a way with words and her stories moved me deeply. She gives scientifically grounded advice on food, but doesn't overwhelm the reader with recipes or rules. She breaks things down into simple, but never condescending, basics that are easy for even a new mom's hormone saturated brain to remember. She's honest, forgiving, and sounds like a wonderful, loving mother. Highly recommended.

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## **Amy says**

As promised, I picked this back up after Holden starting eating solid foods, and by the end, I had to drop it a star in my rating. Planck gets super self-righteous about what to feed your baby, although she does admit to feeding her baby chocolate and sugar at times. Otherwise, she just feeds her kid whatever real food she's eating--regardless of how allergenic they are supposed to be, etc--so I felt a little more confident expanding Holden's menu after reading. The attitude is annoying, though...

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I love anyone who tells me to eat real butter rather than margarine (i.e., "REAL food"), and who thinks it's great that I eat meat :)

I'll pick this back up after the baby is born to read the "Baby's First Food" section.

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## **Lianne says**

I won this through a Goodreads giveaway.

I had a hard time rating this book, and I think the reason comes down to this: I agree with much of Planck's substance, but disagree with her style. I agree that "real" food (not industrialized) is best for everyone, including pregnant women and babies; that vitamins, calcium, protein, and fat are needed for a healthy pregnancy and baby; and that breastfeeding is best in most cases. Planck is clear and straightforward in

laying out these points.

The downfall, for me, was the writing style -- her tone, while clear, seemed haughty and know-it-all, as if a pregnant woman or mother chose to feed herself or her baby something other than what Planck recommended, they would surely be wrong. I also found her use of citations inconsistent: some sections would be cited (sometimes heavily), while others would have no support. I understand her desire to provide understandable, common-sense knowledge to pregnant women and new mothers, but some of the book just felt sloppy to me.

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