

KATE RITCHIE

Everyday Play





I once had a beautiful garden that for a long time I missed very much, but I have come to believe that it isn't the garden itself I missed – it was the nature of the experiences I enjoyed there.

This book is a collection of ideas inspired by my time in that garden and the happiness it brought. The activities I have shared take you from the indoors to your forever-expanding outdoor world; they don't necessarily need a garden but rather a sense of adventure and a willingness to explore. The rewards will be endless!

The journey of putting these pages together has been a truly lovely – and long overdue – exercise in being present. Of pausing to really be in the moment. Of reflecting alone and also enjoying the company of the people I love. My monkey mind was forced to slow down for a change, to stroll through days rather than rush.

Creating this book also gifted me time with my seven-year-old daughter, Mae, and our very naughty but very adorable puppy, Annie (meet her on page 73). Observing what naturally lights the fire inside Mae jogged my childhood memory and served as a gentle nudge to re-create the joys of those days and appreciate the importance of play. For children and adults alike, play means we can do anything or be anyone regardless of who we are in our everyday lives. The beauty of seeing unencumbered, unselfconscious play and unlimited imagination has inspired me to move forward in a similar fashion whenever I can in this busy world.

To bring all of this together for you, we tested recipes, pulled out our pencils and paints to create self-portraits, threw together a summer dance party, headed out to explore our neighbourhood on our bikes and simply reflected on what fills our days and rewards our hearts. We plan to continue this love of everyday play, every day.

I wrote this book reflecting on nature, and the ideas are arranged by season. But you don't have to limit yourself to exploring them in any particular order. That's the thing about ideas – they're just ideas, sparks of inspiration, and it's up to you to action them. Turn to the index at the back to find the page number for the recipes and activities that can brighten your day.

My hope is that this book encourages joy in your home and in your heart. I want it to remind you that simple is best, your imagination is a gift and time with family and friends (whether that be getting busy at the beach, making mess in your kitchen or silently snuggling on the couch) is to be treasured.

kate

RASPBERRY JAM

When you look at all the excellent varieties of jam in your local grocery store or weekend farmers' market, it's easy to ask, 'Why would I make my own?' But what if I told you that this recipe for raspberry jam is super simple and super tasty – and you'll need just a little help from a grown-up?

Spread your jam on toast, add a large dollop to scones or let it be the star of your next culinary creation.





INGREDIENTS

2 cups mashed raspberries

2 cups caster sugar

2 teaspoons lemon juice

Sterilised jars

HOW DO I STERILISE JARS?

Try one of the following options.

- Submerge in boiling water for 10 minutes.
- Bake in the oven for 15 minutes at 180°C.
- Wash thoroughly in hot, soapy water.
- Run through a hot cycle in your dishwasher.

METHOD

1. Place your raspberries in a heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat. Bring to the boil and cook for 3 minutes – be careful not to burn the berries! – then remove from the heat.
2. Add the caster sugar and lemon juice, and stir well. Bring the mixture back to the boil, stirring constantly, and cook for another 3 minutes or until the sugar has dissolved and your mixture has thickened. Remove from the heat.
3. Pour the jam into your sterilised jars. Seal the lids immediately, and store in a cool place. When you have opened your jam, be sure to keep it in the fridge.



RASPBERRY AND COCONUT SLICE

Want to put your raspberry jam to work right away?

INGREDIENTS

½ cup icing sugar

1 cup plain flour

¾ cup desiccated coconut

115 grams butter, melted

¾ cup homemade
raspberry jam (you'll find
the recipe on page 3)

1 large egg

¼ cup caster sugar

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

1½ cups shredded coconut

METHOD

1. Preheat your oven to 180°C. Grease and line a 20-centimetre square tin with baking paper.
2. In a large bowl, combine the icing sugar, flour and desiccated coconut. Add the melted butter and stir until the mixture resembles wet sand.
3. Use the back of a spoon to press the mixture into your lined baking tin until it forms an even layer. Pop this in the oven and bake for 10–12 minutes or until the edges are slightly golden.
4. Remove from the oven and, while the base is still warm, spread evenly with jam.
5. In another mixing bowl, whisk together the egg, caster sugar and vanilla extract until well combined, then stir in the shredded coconut. Carefully spread this coconut meringue over the jam. It might look a bit rough and patchy, but that's okay!
6. Pop it back in the oven and bake for 12–15 minutes or until the top turns golden brown.
7. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely in the pan, then cut into squares to serve.

