



## Synopsis

The first 40 days after the birth of a child offer an essential and fleeting period of rest and recovery for the new mother. Based on author Heng Ou's own postpartum experience with *zuo yuezi*, a set period of "confinement" in which a woman remains at home focusing on healing and bonding with her baby, *The First Forty Days* revives the lost art of caring for the mother after birth. As modern mothers are pushed to prematurely "bounce back" after delivering their babies, and are often left alone to face the physical and emotional challenges of this new stage of their lives, the first forty days provide a lifeline—a source of connection, nourishment, and guidance. The book includes 60 simple recipes for healing soups; replenishing meals and snacks; and calming and lactation-boosting teas, all formulated to support the unique needs of the new mother. In addition to the recipes, this warm and encouraging guide offers advice on arranging a system of help during the postpartum period, navigating relationship challenges, and honoring the significance of pregnancy and birth. *The First Forty Days*, fully illustrated to feel both inspiring and soothing, is a practical guide and inspirational read for all new mothers and mothers-to-be—the perfect ally during the first weeks with a new baby.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I absolutely love it, and I'm buying this book for all my pregnant friends. I couldn't put it down. This book is like the loving, nurturing mother I wish I had. There is sooo much out there about birth, and almost nothing to help prepare you for how big a deal it is to adjust to being "Mom." It's a huge job,

and the shifts are 24/7. This book is a gentle reminder of the many ways to make motherhood yours, set boundaries, celebrate, nurture yourself, and stay sane amidst the endless demands of the tiny new person who suddenly needs so much from you. As a new mom, I hit a wall of isolation, struggled with breastfeeding, and really could have used some great, healing food. Released when my daughter was eight months old, I bought it because, as a postpartum doula, I'm constantly learning more about motherhood. It was far better than I imagined: it's a guide to preparing for a new baby that's ideal for pregnancy because so little out there prepares you for what life is really like post-birth. All the childbirth prep classes, newborn care classes, and parenting books in the world couldn't capture the potent, nourishing sweetness of this toolkit for empowered, nurtured new mothering. It's gorgeous, inspired, and full of mouth-watering recipes I can't wait to cook for myself and my baby.

this book is not just for women. This is a great guide with wonderful recipes that husbands like me can easily make to ensure the mother of our children is healthy and recovers fully after giving birth. Highly recommend for new parents!

I'm buying this for all my friends who are (or will be) expecting. The western tradition of birth focuses on the event itself (in a very medicalized way) and mothers are given little information or support in the postpartum period, which is such an important time in women's lives. This book goes a long way towards correcting that!

What a book! Loved this book is an understatement! Often I peruse a book when I first receive it, glancing through the images and chapter titles. With this one, however, I was captured by chapter one and could not put it down. The voice of this book is that of a mother—of many mothers—in the language of intimate kitchen table conversation. My expectation of this book was that it would be a beautiful cookbook, and it is! But it is so much more. Emerging from the institution of postpartum care that dates back centuries with global grandmotherly wisdom from China, South America, India, Korea and the Native American traditions, this wonderful book is not a book ahead of its time; rather, it is a long-awaited gift that has finally arrived for mothers everywhere. The subtitle, *The Essential Art of Nourishing the New Mother*, expertly describes the delicious food recipes (visual works of art) offered to replenish a mother's body after pregnancy and birth. It also includes recipes for nourishing her body from the outside, through homemade products; for nourishing her body in labor, with nutrient-rich labor drinks; and for nourishing her spirit, with wise

words about rest, retreat and ritual. Ten wisdom pages are interspersed throughout offering wise words about placenta power, transitions, basic wisdom about new baby visitors, when to utilize professionals in your support system, and more. Book lovers especially will delight in the look and feel of this book....the Yin and Yang of its texture and smooth spaces. Perfect pregnancy gift for mothers as there is much to ponder in advance that our fast moving culture has no clue about. Buy this book as soon as possible. It is a treasure.

Bought this book a few weeks before I gave birth to my baby girl for myself and my mother who was coming to help me and thought it was wonderful. I loved the message and the recipes. I prepped a bunch of food and smoothies in advance and they have helped so much in my recovery from a c-section. The coconut, avocado, lime smoothie is delicious and the chicken, red date and ginger soup is one of the best I've ever had. A great read for the momma to be.

I believe this book is a must read for every mom-to-be and mom-to-be again (as well as for extended family members). In America, the postpartum period is completely overlooked and yet its importance cannot be overstated - both for recovery of mom and baby. The book itself is beautiful. It's words encouraging, practical, and wise. It's message needed so badly. Don't pass this book up!

I read this entire book in one week during my third trimester of pregnancy with my first child and I loved it! I'm a health coach and own a juicery & organic cafe and in Jackson Hole, WY, and much of my life is about wellness and healthy food, but I didn't know some of the key concepts in this book - like that all major health traditions around the world from Chinese medicine to ayurveda say new mothers need to boost internal heat and eat soothing and digestible foods after birth to conserve energy because they are so open and are giving so much energy (and milk) to their baby. That is exactly how I feel right now! (I'm in the middle of my first forty days with my baby boy.) I followed many of the guidelines of preparing the postpartum pantry, like making broths for my freezer, and also asked a friend to organize a meal train per the authors advice, which proved so helpful. One of the things that struck me the most was how the book invites you to create boundaries around your world and set expectations for how available you will be to guests and visitors when baby comes. I really took that to heart and found it so comforting to know I could take my time to recover and bond with my child quietly and shouldn't feel guilty about it. Postpartum so far is amazing and magical and also scary and challenging at times but we're figuring it all out day by day, and I dip into this book in the few seconds I have here and there, for support. I'll

definitely suggest this book and recommend it's concepts to every expecting mama I meet from here forward. These concepts have been vital in nourishing my recovery and supporting my baby boys healthy start in life.

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NPR: The First Forty Years  
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