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Leeann Lavin thought you would like this article found on [Examiner.com](http://Examiner.com/): [The Best Father's Day Gift: home-cooked meal made with local ingredients & love](http://link.examiner.com/4faa85e062047742c929d8ae539d0ea59dbcd43c4a00051c/U50OqsPotjqKyIx1A8920)

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Our book was reviewed for the examiner.

**Cookbook for Healthy Living, Father's Day**

Rating:

Star

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June 14, 2014

“It was with love for my father that I became obsessed with cooking and recipes,” wrote ***Alive & Cooking*** [cookbook](http://www.examiner.com/topic/cookbook) co-author Maryann De Leo.

It’s an era of unlimited gift possibilities For Dad, (close to 80 million hits via a Google Search for Father’s Day Gift Guides and what to buy for Dad)

There’s tech toys, manly BBQ equipment, and surfer dude shorts…

Tie jokes are a perennial Father’s Day gift cliché.

Why it’s portrayed as anything of a challenge to choose a gift to celebrate a Father – every child’s hero - is a complete mystery.

In fact, knowing that Dads will buy something on their own if they really want it – the best Father’s Day gift is an obvious one: your time and love.

And what better way to share some quality time than cooking for Dad?

Shared shopping, meal prep, cooking, enjoying some great local wine or craft beer all through to the dining and sit down meal, is a surefire way to bring together food, drink, and fun.

And kindle homegrown memories for a lifetime and generations to come.

Don’t have a clue what to cook?

The answer lies in a cookbook.

[***Alive & Cooking: An Easy Guide to Health for You and Your Parents***](http://www.examiner.com/goo.gl/G2tegJ)

This book is the perfect **Father’s Day gift** to be used as a lifestyle guide to good, [healthy living](http://www.examiner.com/topic/healthy-living-12) AND as a cookbook brimming with family heritage recipes.

Pick any of the hundreds of food and drink recipes to make together on Father’s Day.

Curated recipes from the authors’ family are so named for the mother, aunt, uncle, son or daughter who passed down or created the recipes.

These monogrammed recipes are charming and delicious: e.g. **Helen’s Grilled Salmon**, **Junia’s Beef Stroganoff**.

Who wouldn’t love **Grandma Violet Terranova’s Fried Chicken**?

Violet claims she invented “Shake and Bake!”

Then there’s **Amanda’s Mexican Salad** recipe and **Gibbons’ Guajillo Chili,** co-author Addison’s son - who developed this recipe while in law school.

All the recipes make the ***Alive & Cooking*** cookbook feel like a sophisticated and informed version of a traditional church or community cookbook.

Written with deep-felt love as an homage to the authors’ fathers and family, the book fairly percolates not only with valuable, expert nutrition information (why cinnamon is key, or how detox cleaning is good, and did you know plums support the liver because they are rich in Vitamin A, iron, copper, zinc and fiber and can lower cholesterol) but also offers delicious, good-for-you recipes and practical, hands on tips.

One can’t help feeling you’re listening to a grandmother or friend *describing* the recipes -- as in, “Do not frost until cake is cold”), as well as the family food stories that will inspire and reward the reader for a lifetime.

This Examiner challenges anyone to not get a tad weepy -- and cooking motivated - reading the chapter “The Manicotti Lesson” that, not surprisingly, reads like a screenplay - and is all about making artful, family food connections.

The Manicotti chapter boasts opera, the Beatles, Mother Dorothea singing, and her family’s culinary stories and cooking lessons on making manicotti with three cheeses inside shells. How pretty that pasta comes in so many nature-inspired shapes, no?!

If for no other reason, buy ***Alive & Cooking*** for Dotty’s Manicotti.

It is a classic example of what makes this cookbook extraordinary.

The recipe is a detailed, tour de force family heritage recipe the Food Network would promote like crazy. The food memoir head notes alone are fascinating.

But wait, there’s **Dotty’s Potatoes and Green Beans.**

And **Dotty’s Stuffed Artichokes**.

And more.

Clearly, most will agree, there needs to be a **Dotty Cookbook**.

For anyone who fails to see how the rather prickly, pointed artichoke could possibly be anything more than still art, (not to put too fine a point on it but ***art*** IS part of this edible beauty’s moniker), there is Dotty’s easy to make, delicious artichoke recipe.

**Dotty’s Stuffed Artichoke** recipe will reward an eager and discriminating palate.

**Ingredients:**

4 large artichokes

2 c. Italian bread crumbs

1/3 c. tablespoons Locatelli cheese, grated

3 cloves garlic, minced

½ c. fresh parsley, washed well, dried, and chopped

1 8-oz. can plum tomatoes

**Directions:**

1. Cut off any brown parts from artichokes

2. Wash artichokes and dry well

3. Trim artichokes so that they sit flat in pot

4. Mix breadcrumbs, cheese, garlic, parsley, and enough tomato to moisten the stuffing so that holds together.

5. Gently separate and pull apart artichoke. (Don’t break off the leaves. The artichoke will be whole when it’s cooking.)

6. Stuff each artichoke leaf with approximately 1 T. stuffing

7. Site artichokes in the pot with a little water and a little tomato to steam

8. Steam approximately 45 minutes

**Variations**: Use any grated cheese, Maryann’s family likes Locatelli. She writes: (My parents had an ongoing debate about whether Locatelli was a region, a brand name, or a type of cheese. I don't remember if there was a winner.

**Note**: The tomatoes make the stuffing moist and hold it together.

**Serving size**: 4 servings.

This cookbook is a food “hat trick” (sorry, Ranger fans) that combines food stories and health and nutrition recommendations, along with recipes and tips.

For example, the Recipe chapter launches with this wise admonishment: “One of the most important instructions for preparing food is to taste it as you are cooking. Adjust salt, pepper, spices, herbs, liquids, and ingredients as needed.”

Cooks and bakers note: Be fearless. Be bold.

And break some rules. Recipes and menus are not tied to the clock.

De Leo writes: “Lunch can be the main meal of the day. Often at mid-day my father had the best appetite and he could eat a big meal.”

In an excerpt from the ***Alive & Cooking*** cookbook. De Leo offers a love note / head note for this sweet recipe that clearly delighted her father who was then battling emphysema.

**Recipe for Brie And Chocolate Sandwich**

*To make this easier for my (Maryann’s) Dad to eat, I cut it with scissors into small pieces. When I went to see if he liked it, there were hints of chocolate at the corners of his mouth and the plate was empty*

***Ingredients:***

*2 slices bread, whole grain, baguette or sourdough*

*Sliced Brie cheese (enough to cover a piece of bread*

*2 T. bittersweet chocolate chips*

***Directions:***

*1.Toast bread lightly in a pan (No butter is necessary)*

*2.Place slices of Brie on one side of the bread.*

*3.Sprinkle chocolate chips on top.*

*4.Place the other bread slice on top, and place the sandwich in a pan.*

*5.Grill, pressing down and cooking until brown on both sides.*

Serving size: 1

What makes this a special Father’s Day gift is the spirit of fatherly adoration and love that fills the book.

In the Acknowledgements, De Leo sets the table for the reader: "Inspiration has come from my father many times… This cookbook, too, was inspired by my father. I wrote it for him and to him and I know he’d be happy to have me share what I learned with many others.”

Cooking is empowering.

With subtle authority, the book seamlessly and joyfully makes the connections to cooking, nutrition, health, food and family, especially to our revered elders: parents and caregivers.

The two authors are passionate about those connections and the forces that circle out to family, community, and beyond.

De Leo is an Academy Award–winning filmmaker for ***The Chernobyl Heart***.

Her latest film was nominated for a Golden Bear at the Berlinale in Berlin, Germany. She is a teacher at the School of Visual Arts, a UN representative for the Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom, and a home cook.

Nancy Gibbons Addison is the author of [How to Be a Healthy Vegetarian](http://www.examiner.com/goo.gl/0SwBSZ)

A Board–Certified health practitioner with the American Association of Drugless Practitioner, certified by eCornell University in plant-based nutrition and is certified for Basic Intensive n Health-Supportive Cooking at the Natural Gourmet Institute for Food and Health in NYC, among many other accreditations.

The two expert co-authors write a column for Celebration Magazine: [www.celebrationmagazine.com](http://www.celebrationmagazine.com/).

This month their recipe for kale chips is featured.

The authors’ personal stories and narratives are love stories – for their fathers – for their family, and their love of food

“It was the love for my father that I became obsessed with cooking and recipes,” wrote De Leo.

She describes how she and her family changed his recipes and the quality of food and her father’s health problems disappeared. He was able to regain ten pounds; his doctor calling him “miracle man.”

Readers will learn how the authors came by their passion for delicious, healthy food, fueled by homegrown ingredients.

Not surprisingly, Maryann’s father, Dominic tended a garden. Her mother, Dorothea, tended the heart of the home – the kitchen.

Who needs anything else to build a happy, healthy home?

“Highest quality food is the best”, notes Addison.

Grandmother De Leo passed this on to future generations long before it became trendy with today’s locavore chefs: “Cook with the best quality ingredients you can find; that is what makes the best dish.”

Take Dad to shop ingredients at a local farmers market.

Karen Sieger’s [Markets Of New York Father's Day Picks](http://goo.gl/bzIZDO) recommends fabulous, curated markets and maker finds.

This Examiner was honored to have been asked to write the Foreword for ***Alive & Cooking: An Easy Guide t Health for You and Your Parents.***

Here is the tribute to the book’s mission to feed our bodies, our souls, and our families. The Foreword captures the essence of this important book.

*Food is love.*

*Embraced by the earth, caressed by the sun, and kissed by the rain, nature respectfully shares her passions with us.*

*Food is art*

*The art of food fuels our imagination and creativity. We create homes, traditions, culinary triumphs and comfort through our interpretation of food’s ingredients, preparation and presentation. There is the saying, “The eyes eat first” with the food beguiling our sense of sight – flirting with us before seducing our other senses of smell, touch and ultimately, taste. What other art form takes hold of us so? Food is powerful. But it is also markedly tender, nurturing and sincere.*

*Food is a metaphor.*

*It is a tool, a weapon, a constant garden where love is growing, waiting to be shared. To be served, given away with abandon.*

*Food is a journey.*

*It takes us to distant countries and far-away places. It takes us across time and generations. Food penetrates our hearts. And our memories. It is a passport to other cultures; a portal to our own unique past.*

*This book is transporting.*

*It reveals -- or rips back the cover on the extraordinary connection to our families; our selves.*

*You could say the food stories and nutritious recipes are lessons.*

*Reading them, it’s almost as if our lives depended on it.*

*It does.*

*The food chronicles here reveal an intimacy that can only be found in family heritage cuisines that are deeply and genuinely experienced: over generations, over the dinner table, over a lifetime of cheers’, salutes’, and amen’s. Our happiest, fondest memories are over celebrations of food and family. Big holidays and achievements. Romantic interludes. And quiet, tender, heartbreaking, private tributes.*

*My series’ of Homegrown books and writings explores the connection of master chefs to their inspired growers: the vegetable, duck and honey farmers, oyster growers and fishermen. My talented, sensitive artist cousin, Maryann – and her co-author Nancy - have taken this concept of eating inspired local food to the next level. Naturally. While the concept of the book was sparked out of heartbreak and loss, let there be no doubt the book is one of enduring hope and love.*

*What could be more intimate and inspired than preparing nutritious, delicious food for family? Time spent talking and working in the kitchen. Meals shared. Traditions and heritage passed on in the glow of serving home cooked meals with full plates and brimming glasses.*

*The recipes here are natural, healthy, organic and prepared with sustainable ingredients. of course.*

*You will be inspired to cook them because each of the family recipes – our family – have been tested by time – and love. And in the end, they are truly the best ingredients.*

*Enjoy. Cheers to family – and food!*

In addition to purchasing the Alive & Cooking Cookbook from Amazon's website, one can purchase the book directly from: [www.aliveandcookingbook.com](http://www.aliveandcookingbook.com/)

http://www.examiner.com/review/the-best-father-s-day-gift-home-cooked-meal-made-with-local-ingredients-love