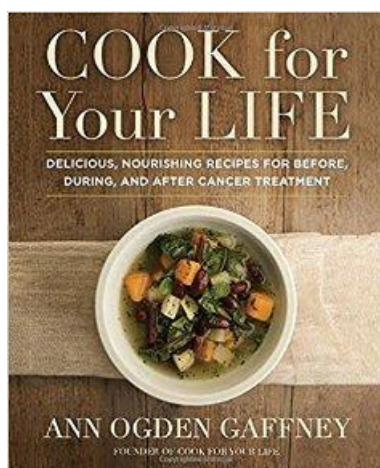


**MACMILLAN  
CANCER SUPPORT**

# BOOK REVIEWS

Read what people affected by cancer think about...



**Cook for your life: delicious,  
nourishing recipes for before,  
during, and after cancer treatment  
(2015)**

Gaffney AO.

Avery Publishing Group, 2015.

352pp.

ISBN 9781583335819.

**Average star rating 4.2 (out of 5)**

**Macmillan Cancer Support  
89 Albert Embankment  
London SE1 7UQ**

**These reviews were written by people affected by cancer and are not the views of Macmillan Cancer Support. These reviews, and the publications reviewed, should not be relied upon as a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. So far as is permitted by law, Macmillan does not accept liability in relation to the use of any information contained in this review or publication or third-party information or websites included or referred to in it. For more information about the review process and how to get involved, please go to the end of this document.**



This book is simple to follow and full of delightful recipes and is useful for all stages of cancer – a great tool for living and coping with cancer. It is also suitable for anyone to read and cook up the culinary delights.

It is organised into categories according to how the person is feeling. There is no jargon and everything is presented in a good order and easy language. It looks good and just the thought of some of the meals is appealing to all palettes. It's the simplest cookbook I've had the pleasure of using. Most ingredients can be bought from any supermarket, apart from the odd item and I skipped any that I couldn't obtain.

I like how it is simple to follow and uses many readily available ingredients; this made cooking the recipes an absolute delight. It is extremely helpful and will remain in my kitchen and continue to be used while I work through many of the other recipes.

**Friend and relative of people who have had, or currently have, cancer (breast, lung, prostate, mouth) (36-45) (January 2018)**

I wish I'd known about this book when I was having radiotherapy – it would have been really helpful. It's a brave attempt to produce recipes for a wide range of stages of treatment, and other health conditions. It includes low- and high-fibre, bland, spicy, high-calorie, easy to swallow, gluten-free, vegetarian, and vegan recipes, recipes for healthy survivorship, and for a neutropaenic diet. It is thought provoking as to what dishes may be suitable at different stages of treatment, although I smiled at the irony of the effort required to make some recipes when you're dealing with fatigue. It might make a terrific resource for carers who are struggling for ideas.

It is beautifully produced, with a lovely photo on the cover, and well laid out on good quality paper. The author writes in a chatty and friendly style, explaining about her experiences of treatment and how she struggled to find suitable recipes at different points on her journey. This makes the book seem approachable and sympathetic.

Many ingredients are widely available. Some are not mainstream – such as Kohlrabi (p. 105) – but there are enough substitutes to make it still useable. The recipes include current “trendy” foods such as Chai tea, Miso, or quinoa. There seem to be

lots of recipes for beans, so vegetarian and vegan tastes are catered for. The ingredients and instructions are clear and easy to follow. I dislike the use of cups, but that's personal. For example, "Vegetable Salad a la Nicoise" (p. 177) uses 1½ cups of tomatoes, and ½ pound of French beans; why aren't the tomatoes measured by weight as well? There are also odd combinations, such as "Chocolate-raspberry upside-down cake" (p. 251) (sounds delicious!), where ingredients include "1 cup plus 3 tablespoons granulated cane sugar".

I like the author's efforts to be inclusive of varied health situations; it means that it is more realistic about what it is like to live with treatment. There are times when you can't manage fibre or spicy foods, and she makes you feel okay about that, not guilty or anxious that you're not eating properly. She does a terrific job of making the times when eating is difficult a bit more palatable, by giving so many clear ideas about things to try. Overall, it's very useful.

### **Living with stage 4 tonsil cancer (56-65) (November 2017)**

This cookery book has lots of tips on what to try eating and what is easy on your system or taste buds during treatment and recovery. It is written in very straightforward language and is very encouraging, making you want to try the recipes. It uses very basic ingredients and shows you how to turn them into something special. It also offers alternatives for when produce is out of season.

The recipes are extremely easy to follow, with lots of nutritious ingredients. They include some very basic things, like poaching eggs, for those who have done little cooking, and more complex nutrient-full dishes. There is also a section on desserts. Throughout, the author writes humorous anecdotes and little tips to help with the recipes. Even if you had little or no cooking skills, they would still be easy to follow.

The cover is appealing and the quality of the book is very good. The typeface and font are easy to read and there is just about the right number of pictures. The author has a very funny and easy tone; I found the book very welcoming.

The author highlights what type of diet each recipe is good for. If any ingredients need checking with the doctor (e.g. if someone is neutropaenic) she highlights this and advises what recipes are good after chemo – some easy on the digestion, some better for the taste buds. All in all, it is a very well written and thought out book.

### **Carer for someone receiving chemotherapy and radiotherapy (56-65) (October 2017)**

"Cook for your life" offers recipes for all stages of cancer treatment and recovery. The recipes are designed to provide powerful relief for symptoms, such as fatigue and nausea and are organised into categories by how patients feels. There are "Simple recipes" when patients are fatigued, "Safe recipes" when their immune system is compromised, and "Spicy recipes" when they need to wake up their taste buds. Also included are recipes that meet special dietary requirements, for example for vegans, vegetarians, dairy and lactose intolerance, and coeliac.

It is a bright-coloured and engaging book filled with images of food. The author is a two-time cancer survivor. She shares her experience of cancer throughout, which gives the book more meaning. It is a recipe and a self-help book. Even when our body is upset, tired and in pain, this shows how food can still be fun and enjoyable. It would be more helpful and interesting if each recipe had a photograph.

### **Macmillan Professional (26-35) (October 2017)**

This is a cookery book for everyone, for those on the cancer treatment road and those who are just busy and tired from the challenges of life. It is divided into chapters that help organise cooking at different stages (for example chemotherapy, radiotherapy), or just when someone is not having a good day. The recipes are not too complicated or time-consuming but the results are tasty. Recipes are for 3-4 people but one meal could be frozen and used later or served to friends or family. Ann writes that cooking gave her control and directed her into a positive aspect of normal life. A good cookery book can be a fantastic help for patients wishing to stay independent and do something for themselves.

Ann's explanations and instructions are easy to read and understand, her tips are practical and great for everyone, not just someone having treatment. Even if you just read the book you can find some inspiration to introduce into your normal cooking routine. The presentation is very good; the pictures are clear and in real colour, which you can see later, after cooking, on your own plate.

I like the easy, quick recipes, and the advice that helped me be better organised and enjoy cooking even when exhausted after a long working day. It is simply a good book. Please use it; make "Apples Baked with Dates and Walnuts", maybe invite somebody to share it and just enjoy the moment and delicious taste. My advice is read a recipe first, check your ingredients (I made something without all ingredients and then again with them all and the effect was much better) and just do it!

### **Professional carer / Cancer Support Worker (46-55) (October 2017)**

The beauty of this book is that the author really considers cancer patients' differing needs and caters for all stages of the cancer journey. It will be useful for patients, carers, family and friends. Even if you are not affected by cancer, it offers excellent nutritional information.

It is very easy to understand and navigate, mostly due to the "how to use this book" section at the start. The author explains each heading for the recipes, so you can find the foods you prefer and recipes designed for how you are feeling at that time.

The recipes are very easy to follow with clear instructions. The book was written with an American audience in mind, so the odd ingredient may be elusive in the UK. The ingredients are also affordable and for those recipes that do have more expensive ingredients the author suggests cheaper alternatives. I didn't notice any mistakes and I can vouch that the few recipes I tried are accurate and true to the picture.

The quality is superb with lovely quality paper and beautiful photos of finished dishes. I would prefer a more appetizing picture on the front rather than a healthier one, but that's just me! The general layout is great; the excellent explanations at the beginning lead the way gracefully into the recipes, so that by the time you get to the recipes you are armed with information on what you will need to try them. The tone is soothing and laid back. Each recipe has a comment at the start and tips at the end; this makes you feel Ann is a friend trying to help you, not just another author selling a book.

It is so much more than a cookbook. It is a tool that empowers you to take control of your life at a time when it seems you have none. It makes you realise that there is something you can do for yourself – before, during, and after treatment – that will aid and promote your recovery. The advice at the beginning equips you to be prepared for the times when you are feeling nauseated and weak. So much thought and research has gone into this book, that it has a real sense of positivity and reading it is quite uplifting. It also provides a wealth of useful nutritional information.

I like all the narrative, from how to use the book, the author's personal story, what items you need in your pantry to basic recipe essentials. The personal touch is evident throughout. One downside is that not all the recipes have pictures, which is essential for a cookbook. The recipes I made did come out looking exactly like the pictures. Another potential downside is that the book was compiled for the American market; as such, you need extra time to convert measurements from cups to ounces, for example. This wasn't a problem for me, but it may be for some readers.

I struggled between giving this book four or five stars because I do feel that having to convert measurements may genuinely put off some people. However, I believe it is worthy of five stars because of the whole tone of empowerment and positivity it conveys. Anyone going through the cancer journey needs to feel empowered and have a positive mindset and, for me, this book provides it.

I will admit that I won't try all the recipes because some do not appeal to me, however this book has provided me with the knowledge necessary to promote a healthy lifestyle – I know which foods will be beneficial for not just me (a cancer survivor), but for anyone post diagnosis and during treatment. It is for this reason, and the fact that the book inspires such positivity, that I highly recommend it for anyone going through their own journey or anyone caring for them.

### **Renal cell carcinoma survivor (46-55) (September 2017)**

This is an excellent resource. It answers questions before you even know you have them, and is full of useful things to know. The author has experience and understanding of how appetite, taste and smell change, and the difficulties in swallowing for those going through chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery.

Ann shares her story, before, during and after cancer. Part of the fashion community, her other passions were travel and food and she enjoyed cooking for friends. She was diagnosed with cancer after a routine check-up in 2001. It had overtaken a kidney; she had surgery, and returned to work. Three-and-a-half years later she was diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer requiring surgery, chemotherapy, and

radiation. She was not able to continue travelling nor go back to work during this time. She made lifestyle changes, and cooking allowed her to slow down.

Her book is not just any ordinary cookbook, nor a list of recipes for those having to deal with the hardships of cancer and recovery, it is so much more! It is beautifully written, full of information, and illustrated with colourful and tempting photos. Healthy and nutritious does not have to be bland and boring and Ann shows you how. It takes in various health considerations, such as the need for bland food, an antimicrobial diet, increasing calories, having radiotherapy or chemotherapy. Ann discusses fatigue, swallowing, nausea, high- or low-fibre, gluten-free, neutropenic diet, food preferences (e.g. vegan, vegetarian), and other useful tips. She lists staples, pantry essentials, herbs and spices, basic vegetable broth, chicken broth, and has tips on poaching fish and easy sauces, and many quick, fresh, nutritious recipes. The recipes are fairly easy, although they will depend on ability to source ingredients.

The recipes have Ann's tips – another way she reaches out and connects with the reader. I feel like I'm listening to a warm, friendly, sensitive person who genuinely wants to give you helpful advice and suggestions about not only how to cook and prepare food, but also the best way to store it. She suggests omitting certain ingredients if they may cause allergic reactions, suggesting substitutes where possible. I love that she wrote "If you can't make lemons into lemonade, make cherries into compote". I learned a lot and I will refer to it and carry on making some of the delicious meals and tempting treats!

This book was a sanity saver and life changer through a very difficult period. I like the insight into another patient's way of coping with ill health. The facility to choose recipes according to your needs is invaluable! I never knew that eating in a healthy, nourishing way could be so delicious and simple! I have recently made the shift from cancer patient to cancer survivor.

### **Living with non-Hodgkin lymphoma (66-75) (August 2017)**

This excellent book provides very exciting reviews as well as very useful recipes that can help those on a cancer journey. It can help from the very start of the cancer journey as well as after treatment, even when you are unable to eat much food.

It is very easy to follow. It simplifies the content so that anyone can understand it. The recipes are very easy, so very simple. I tried quite a few and not only were they tasty but also easy to prepare. It is very appealing; if I were to see it in a bookshop it would attract my attention.

I like everything about this book, from the cover and presentation to the content and layout. I found it very useful and very helpful. Everyone should read it as it gives an unbiased view as to how to give a balance diet.

### **Living with bowel and prostate cancer (56-65) (July 2017)**

There are few books like this for people who want to follow certain types of diets while on chemotherapy or radiotherapy, or living with cancer. It is very easy to read; the language is most helpful for patients. You can read and understand even more about how to feed yourself than you are advised in hospital. It is a very appealing hardback with an excellent cover; one can pop it on the table to follow a recipe.

This is a helpful cook for anyone living with cancer, coping with cancer treatments, for those who want to learn to cook healthy meals.

### **Living with breast cancer (56-65) (July 2017)**

This is a good “down-to-earth” book, in colloquial language, but with clearly explained scientific information for those who might wish to research further. The recipes are clearly grouped into helping with different side effects, but also useful for someone who has never had cancer; anyone can experience fatigue or nausea. It will help someone with cancer, or someone caring for them, to select an appropriate recipe. It would have been helpful at the start of treatment, so recipes can be investigated and tried at each stage. However, having finished most of my treatment, I still plan to try some of the recipes that are said to help fatigue, as I suffer from that greatly.

It is an American book, so some terminology is different e.g. Confectioner's sugar = icing sugar. This can be overcome easily by using the internet. Also, the recipes are so simply written and easy to understand, it is feasible to guess correctly the UK equivalent terminology. It is quite common too these days to see measuring “cups” in bakeware shops and online. I have never come across “Kosher salt” though.

I would prefer a paperback – more portable, lighter, tends to take up less space – but it has only just been published, so a paperback might be available later. The cover has an appealing dish on the front and the design is composed of a simplistic colour scheme, not diverting the eye away from the main purpose. This has the effect of drawing the reader into the reason for the book (the food) and not hiding poor quality recipes with vibrant colours. The paper quality is good. The text is clear, concise and laid out in an easy to understand manner, including “Ann's Tips” for each recipe.

I like best its simple nature and the concise, basic explanations. It doesn't hide poor quality content with garish images and design, or by confusing and diverting the reader with unnecessary scientific terminology. It might possibly have been helped by a weights and measures conversion table. I looked it up online and was surprised at the price (£31.00)! Perhaps this will reduce with later editions, and it isn't British, which probably pushes up the price. Despite the cost, I have already recommended it to a friend who has been recently diagnosed with breast cancer and I intend to still use the recipes in this book, even though my main treatment has been completed.

### **Treated for primary stage 3 breast cancer in 2013 (chemo, mastectomy and radiotherapy). Reconstruction 2015, still taking Tamoxifen (46-55) (July 2017)**



This is a well-written book based on the author's experience and it is easy to understand and thoughtfully written.

Some ingredients have American terms, for example, Arugula is Rocket, Faro is spelt barley. Other ingredients are specific, such as Yukon Gold and Red bliss potatoes, and some people may be put off experimenting with similar ingredients if they are not confident cooks. In the UK, patients may sometimes be asked to follow a low-residue or low-fibre diet, and may not be aware that some of the recipes in the book described as bland or low-fibre would be suitable, as some are not, such as “Creamy winter squash soup”.

The book is nicely split into sections according to your stage of treatment, e.g., spicy foods for loss of taste, or recipes to help with nausea. It is quite easy to navigate, except for the American food terms, which need to be looked up and which may put off some people. All the photos are very appealing, and I think many people would feel confident knowing that the author is a cancer survivor.

However, American dietary advice appears to be slightly different from that in the UK, which may be confusing. Also, not all recipes have been identified as not suitable for a neutropenic diet. Whilst there is a section of recipes that are simple to cook, some such as the “Sweet potato and tomato soup”, are difficult when you are fatigued as it requires the ingredients to be sautéed for 20 minutes and simmered for a further 20 minutes. Many of the recipes require fresh ingredients, which may be difficult for some people if they can't shop regularly.

### **Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Manager (46-55) (March 2018)**

This is ideal for anyone really, at any stage. The author very clearly explains what each recipe is good for and includes tips. It is easy to use for a particular need, e.g. a meal to help combat fatigue, or an easy to swallow meal. It is great for helping find food that can be eaten during treatment but also for after treatment.

The author has thought carefully about what is needed for a cookbook and has included an explanation of how to use it. It is easy to follow and to understand and easy to pick a recipe from the index. The cover looks like any other cookbook and doesn't scream that it is aimed at cancer patients. I did find it a bit boring, but the pictures inside are lovely and give you an idea of what you are aiming at.

Each recipe is well thought through and the author has made it easy to choose a meal to suit a need. If you like fresh ingredient it is great but be prepared as you may not have all the items in your cupboard! The recipes are mainly vegetarian or vegan, with no red meat used, although there are a couple of chicken meals. I didn't like the look of a few of the meals – but that is personal. I am not keen on the title; it comes across as cooking for survival. Eating healthy food is necessary, but not a cure.



I like this book because it is so well written and thought out. It is mainly vegetarian, which won't appeal to everyone, but it is aimed at healthy eating. I tried a couple of recipes and the Roasted Chicken in Cider tasted lovely! I wish there had been more deserts and fruit; I couldn't get enough fresh fruit during chemotherapy, it was the one thing I wanted to eat. Overall, a good cookbook that I would recommend.

### **Breast cancer patient (46-55) (February 2018)**

This book could be used by anyone. It offers straightforward recipes as well as more complex ones. The contents are arranged to meet the needs of all stages of cancer and treatment. It allows people to consider their stage and circumstances, including side effects, and how best to meet their needs through nutrition. The recipes are very easy to understand and use a manageable number of ingredients that easy to find. The language is appropriate and I like that the recipes are clearly bullet pointed, straightforward and transparent. The photographs of recipes are accurate and achievable for home cooking.

This book offers something for all cooking abilities and allows people to focus on the areas of their health that concern them. I like the clear, basic recipes. It would benefit from a more detailed index that allows easier access to specific recipes. The titles of each section are not descriptive enough and this means that one needs to wade through the pages to discover the content of the book.

### **Caring for someone with stomach cancer (26-35) (January 2018)**

This cookery book would be helpful at different levels to most people – patients, carers, family, friends – at all stages. There are recipes for different stages of treatment and to help with their side effects. It could also be used beyond recovery.

It is very well presented with a colourful, appealing cover and on decent paper in a readable font and typeface. Lots of colour photos accompany a good number of the recipes. It is easy to understand. The author writes for a general audience and gives her advice and suggestions in a friendly tone. She seems to care passionately that patients have good, nutritious food during treatment and recovery.

I found the recipes easy to follow once I'd worked out the UK equivalent of cups and oven temperatures. The recipes use a mix of fresh ingredients and store-cupboard basics. A lot need only a few ingredients and I found most of the ingredients locally. Some recipes take very little preparation or cooking, which is a bonus when you're struggling with fatigue or just don't feel very well. Helpful explanations and notes help the user understand why and when a recipe could be used.

Overall, it is quite useful. It is easy to use with recipes to suit a wide range of tastes. I would recommend it to patients and to carers involved in cooking for them. However, it is expensive to buy (currently £20+ on Amazon) if you're on a limited income.

### **Womb cancer patient, completed treatment 2017. Currently no evidence of disease (56-65) (January 2018)**

This book could be useful at all stages of living with cancer and its treatment. I like the layout, the illustrations, and the text. It is easy to understand and the recipes are easy to make, although some are perhaps too simple.

### **Health professional (36-45) (December 2017)**

This will be useful during and after cancer, as it specifically addresses food issues for patients; for example, guidance on the right recipes for people who have difficulty swallowing, suffer from nausea, or must follow a bland, or a high- or low-fibre diet.

It is easy to understand. The recipes are simple to prepare, with mostly only three or four steps. Most ingredients are readily available and not too expensive, although some (poblano peppers, kimchee, tofu) are not readily available and may only be found in larger metropolitan areas or ethnic food stores. The author is American, so uses lbs, and American names for some ingredients, such as “cilantro” for coriander and “arugula” for rocket. Some ingredients may be unfamiliar to British readers.

It is an appealing book. There are many pictures, which is quite helpful for a cookbook so you can see what the finished product will look like. The book is a good size, and print. The author is friendly and approachable; her writing makes you feel like these recipes are doable, even if you're not the best or most experienced cook.

I like that the book addresses so many cancer-related food issues – the average cookbook doesn't take this into account at all. However, although it is supposed to be healthy food for cancer patients, some of it is so healthy that it may not appeal to people who have never eaten like this before. If they are used to takeaways and roast dinners, the food in here may be quite a shock.

This is an excellent cookbook with a commendable aim. The author had treatment for breast cancer, so she knows first-hand what it feels like to go through cancer. She loves cooking and “self-treated” through trial and error in her kitchen, and has decided to share her learning with others. It may help those with cancer or their loved ones to feel like there is something they can DO to improve how they feel and to contribute to better health. The author even specifies some recipes as “Simple” for when a patient is too tired to do a more involved recipe. Finally, these recipes are good for the whole family, and is not limited to food that cancer patients ought to eat.

### **Family members have prostate and breast cancer (46-55) (August 2017)**

The author is a two-times cancer survivor (kidney and breast) and connected to various associations and health programmes. The book is based on her “Cook for Your Life” approach, so she seems to have the credentials that a health professional would take seriously. Anyone affected by cancer will find this book beneficial. “What can I eat?” is one of the questions we all ask and any help is welcome. Some recipes will appeal to anyone, like the Creamy Mushroom Soup, Turkey Shepherd's Pie and the variety of cookies on offer, but some of the “Staples” will seem uninteresting (e.g. basic poached fish) as will some of the contents, “Sideline side effects” and the “Health considerations” section in “How to use this book”.

As the title says, it will be useful before, during and after treatment; it has different recipes for different stages. However, when I was first diagnosed, a cookbook did not feature in my thoughts; there was no room in my head with everything else that was going on. During treatment, I had no interest or energy to cook but it does offer good advice and some simple meals, and will suit a partner or family member who wants to create good, healthy, and nutritious normal meals to help with recovery.

It is organised into chapters relating to treatment. Near the beginning is a list of "Pantry essentials" and, except for a few items, most are in my store cupboard, easily available, everyday ingredients (I am not sure about Kosher salt). The recipes cover a wide variety of groups, for example vegetarian or gluten free. The majority sound interesting and tasty, and from the pictures look it. There are a few American names, such as eggplant, scallions, but this isn't a problem and it is written in plain, easy to follow language and instructions. I was unsure about a few ingredients, e.g. asafoetida, Yukon potatoes, confectioner's sugar, cilantro, but you can work out from the recipe what they are and use a similar product. The instructions are clear, simple, and as easy to follow as any typical cookbook with product preparation, measures (cups are different), "how to" and cooking times. I don't like the measurement in cups.

Each section starts with a useful list of recipes and a comprehensive description, for example, Spicy for loss of taste due to chemotherapy. The colour-coded information is useful. Beneath each recipe in blue are the "Health considerations, such as "In treatment", "Easy to swallow", "Fatigue", and "Food preferences", such as "Dairy free" or "Vegan". In red is a description of the meal and cooking and storage suggestions. In yellow are Anna's tips, substitutions, cut of meat, what part to freeze, how to blend hot liquids. Green denotes cooking times, serving sizes and preparation times.

The index, as in most books, is in a smaller font. I didn't find it straightforward to find "Comfy Cod and Potato Gratin" from the "Soothing" section again. Recipes are not in alphabetical order, but in subsections, and "Soothing" is not one of them. I found it under "Bland", "In Treatment" and "Easy to Swallow" under "Cod, potato gratin" and in "Gluten Free" under "Gratin, Comfy Cod"; not consistent or user friendly. The resources are American, which is to be expected and not an issue.

When I first saw it, I thought it looked brown, dull, and unattractive; it didn't give off a positive feeling. The hardback is quite heavy; depending on your stage of treatment or fatigue levels, it may be too much of an effort to handle. The book under the dust cover is plain but quite nice. The inside is more appealing, the pages are not in monochrome so are pleasant to look at, with some attractive pictures of the meals. The typeface is plain and easy on the eye and the different colours on each page maintain interest. The description on the front draws you in, "before, during and after treatment", and at the same time anyone not connected with cancer might back off.

I like this book because it comes from personal experience and has helpful advice and tips. Because of what she has been through and done, the author gives you confidence in the meals and the information she gives. She is an accomplished cook who offers a way of life and cooking classes. The recipes are healthy, nutritional, and written by someone who has been through it and come out the other end, passing on her experience and advice as a cook turned author.

Overall, it has a lot to offer the reader; it has good guidelines and instructions, it can be used to meet the needs of different stages, and all recipes are healthy, nutritional, and tasty. The ingredients can be found in any supermarket and there are many welcome and useful tips and suggestions. It is worth a look, but quite expensive to buy. It would suit as a library book.

### **Breast cancer patient (56-65) (June 2017)**



The author writes from personal experience and uses nourishing food with important qualities needed for someone with cancer, for example, easy to swallow, easy to cook, wholesome unprocessed ingredients, high in fibre. It could be used at any stage as the ingredients are chosen for their nourishing properties but I can imagine that someone suffering from nausea might find some of the dishes too complicated or fancy, which is why it might be more useful for carers, family or friends.

Each recipe has an introduction that explains any ingredient substitutes or the benefit of some ingredients. I found it easy to understand and the methods easy enough to follow but I do a lot of cooking; it might be too advanced or overwhelming for a beginner. It doesn't seem to specify the level of experience needed. The measurements are in cups, which is not helpful, and some of the ingredients are in American, e.g. eggplants – some people might not know the English name. Many recipes call for fresh herbs and this could be costly over time; perhaps there should be more variations with dried herbs.

It looks rather old fashioned and dated compared to other cookbooks on the market. The cover is a bit "beige" and lacking in colour, apart from a few carrots in the recipe on the front. It seems more colourful inside, but again seems outdated. The typeface is easy to read and understand.

I have found other cancer cookbooks more appealing for several reasons. Some of the recipes could be expensive and I don't like the sound of many; they seem overcomplicated for someone struggling to eat. Also, the whole look of the book could be "jazzed up" – it might be overlooked for something more colourful. However, I like that the author writes from personal experience and passes on tips that have worked for her. There are different categories e.g. "Scrumptious", "Sweet", "Spicy" and "Safe", depending how adventurous your appetite is feeling.

### **Daughter of deceased mother with metastatic breast cancer (26-35) (January 2018)**

This cookery book would be of interest to anyone who enjoys browsing and trying out new healthy recipes. In the introduction, it refers to our primordial attachment to food and focuses on foods that are simple, comforting and safe, rather than attempting to highlight the science behind what we eat.

It is designed to offer recipes that are tailored to meet the changing needs of a person living with cancer; for example, recipes that boost the immune system alongside recipes that are simple, comforting and adapted to counteract the effects of treatments. The author has deliberately kept preparation time and ease of cooking a significant factor in the creation of recipes and the simplicity of many of the recipes would, I imagine, be appealing to people who are undergoing treatment for cancer.

Each recipe gives information about health considerations e.g. vegan, gluten free, easy to swallow, which is helpful in choosing what to cook during times of fatigue or nausea. Most are reasonably straightforward and simple to follow. However, some ingredients aren't necessarily store cupboard essentials or easily available in the local supermarket and rely on the reader having the resources, and energy, to track them down. I was eager to try out the Smoky Black Bean Chilli with Farro, but two of my local shops didn't stock Farro and, like me, didn't know what it was. I had to research it on the internet. That said, once I had the ingredients, the recipe was delicious, so much so that I have made it two or three times. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the book is written by an American author and, in some instances, it is not immediately obvious what some of the terms or indeed some of the ingredients are, for example, "seltzer water" or "whole wheat pastry flour" and "Argula" (rocket); I ended up guessing at what they might be.

I found the index frustrating and not easy to follow. Rather than listing the recipes in alphabetical order, the index lists them under subheadings, e.g. "Bland diet" or "Easy to follow." This didn't help me when I wanted to remake the Spanish Style Cod with Chickpeas and Peppers; I eventually discovered it under the subheading "Peppers".

As an enthusiastic but amateur cook, I was eager to receive a copy of this book. My initial response was disappointment. The cover appears drab and lack lustre and the unappealing photography continues throughout. The photographs of meals looked flat and unappetising and didn't do the recipes justice. I wonder if the tones of brown and anaemic colours used in the photography were deliberate in trying to portray a sense of wholesome food. The cover and photographs throughout didn't make me feel positive or enthusiastic and in some cases (as in the photograph of "Vegan Caldo Verde" on page 55) acted as a deterrent to making the recipe.

### **Survivor of bowel cancer 2001 (56-65) (October 2017)**



As this book is aimed at the US market, I thought that many of the ingredients would not be freely available in the UK. However, this was not the case. The recipes use a lot of fresh food that is readily available in the UK. If anything, I was hoping to see more of the regional cuisines, e.g. Mexican influence, southern spices, etc.

First impressions are that it has an appealing cover. A flick through indicates that there are plenty of pictures so you can see what the finished recipe should look like. The order takes some getting used to. Most indices list foods index in alphabetical order so you can find recipes containing that food. This has subheadings, e.g. easy

to swallow, healthy survivorship. I can see why this will be useful in some cases, but it does make it difficult to find recipes using a particular ingredient, e.g. chicken. The chapters are also ordered according to the author's perception of that food's place in the diet, e.g. simple, bland, soothing. How easily you can find a recipe that appeals to you will depend on whether you agree with the author's arrangement. Some terminology is specific to the US, e.g. zucchinis, scallions, eggplants, but. It is easy to check these on the internet. There is a mistake on pages 37 and 38: "Prep time: 10 hours plus 6 to 8 hours....". This should be 10 hours including 6 to 8 hours.

If you are a novice to healthy cooking and eating, then this book may be helpful to you. However, if you are familiar with healthy eating basics then you may find it disappointing. I flicked through it several times with the aim of picking out a recipe and trying it. However, I found that either the recipe I picked was so basic that I could already make it myself better and using my own version of the herbs and spices, or that the recipe included ingredients that I did not wish to include, i.e. sugar or sweet products. Some of the recipes don't work. I tried a roasted savoy cabbage exactly as described in the recipe and it was awful. Roasted red cabbage did work well though, so you can tweak the recipes if you want.

I have another recipe book aimed at people with cancer that I use a lot and had high expectations that other cancer-specific recipe books would have recipes that I would enjoy making and eating. It was therefore disappointing to find that this book includes a lot recipes with sugar (sugar is included in the "basic vinaigrette" and it is a mystery to me why anyone would include sugar in a salad dressing). There is a whole section on sweets, few of which have an appropriate alternative to sugar. Saying that, most of the recipes throughout the book do use fresh food and there is a comment that the sugar-based recipes should be a treat only.

If it were the only cancer cookbook available and someone had no idea at all about healthy eating, I would suggest they try it for some basics. However, there are other better books available, so I would recommend something other than this every time.

### **Living with ovarian cancer (36-45) (December 2017)**

This book would better suit a carer as there is a lot of information that patients might not bother to read or be able to take in. For carers, it could be used straight away at diagnosis.

The book is aimed at an American market. I am sure UK cancer patients reading the recipes might soon give up. A carer might be more bothered to convert the recipes to metric, buy unbleached flour, or think of UK alternative brands/varieties, e.g. chocolate, potatoes. Recipes with eggs or chicken that tell you to use hormone- or antibiotic-free types could worry people unnecessarily as in the UK this is standard anyway. I might be wrong, and I would not like to try as it seems a waste, but the recipe for Apricot and Pecan Cookies requires  $\frac{3}{4}$  tablespoon of baking soda, which seems far too much. The shepherd's pie recipe might confuse UK readers as it uses turkey, not the traditional lamb (so it's not shepherd's pie?).

There are some nice, unusual recipes and the author has structured the book in a way that worked for her, but I don't think it does for others; it isn't in a good order. The language seems fine. A ribbon to mark pages would be useful, like so many cookbooks have these days. Some of the pictures are not of the item cooked and the photography is quite poor in some cases.

The author has put a lot of thought into this book to try to come up with a format of recipes that are nutritious and good for cancer patients but her experience has led to the book being more suitable for carers, or very competent and capable recovering patients. I also think it is aimed at the American market. The measurements are not metric, and the cooking temperature or ovens are different. There are references to using antibiotic-free chicken and hormone-free eggs, which may cause unnecessary worry. The varieties of potatoes, apples and chocolate used are not common in our supermarkets. The same applies to the use of unbleached flour. There are also many references to organic food; in an ideal world where everyone could afford it, that would be perfect but it not realistic for your average person.

This does not make it an easy book to use. It's ok if you have time, or a carer cooking for you, but to be honest, if you have just done a round or two of chemotherapy you could not be bothered. I am normally a keen cook but my treatment has made me constantly sick and fatigued. I would not have wanted to use this book at my worst as it is too difficult to use when you feel bad. However, there are some good tips and I am sure this book will appeal greatly to the American market.

**Breast cancer patient (46-55) (September 2017)**

# Further information

## Why does Macmillan Cancer Support review books?

We use reviews to help us compile a list of suggested cancer books, the [Macmillan Core Book List](#). Cancer information centres and public libraries can use this list to select appropriate and relevant books for people affected by cancer.

We add reviews to the [Directory of information materials for people affected by cancer](#) so that people affected by cancer can see what others in a similar situation think about a book. You can also see details of all the books reviewed in the [Book reviews listing](#), which also has links to all the reviews.

We recruit most of our reviewers through the [Volunteering Village](#) and the [Cancer Voices Network](#), people affected by cancer who have signed up to help Macmillan Cancer Support in a number of ways. Volunteers are a vital part of our book review process; since 2007, over 1,500 Macmillan volunteers have written more than 6,000 reviews of over 500 different books.

If you are a health professional who would like to review books for us, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.

## Information and support for people affected by cancer

If you are looking for support to help you live life with cancer, you may wish to contact one of [Macmillan's cancer information and support services](#). Or you can call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00** (Mon-Fri 9am–8pm). We have an interpreting service in over 200 languages. Just state, in English, the language you wish to use. If you are deaf or hard of hearing you can use textphone no 0808 808 0121 or Text Relay.

You can also email us using the [website enquiry form](#). Alternatively, [visit our website](#).

## Feedback

If you have any comments, please [email Sue Hawkins](#), Information Materials Researcher, Macmillan Cancer Support.



**Being told ‘you have cancer’ can affect so much more than your health – it can also affect your family, your job, even your ability to pay the bills. But you’re still you. We get that. And, after over 100 years of helping people through cancer, we get what’s most important: that you’re treated as a person, not just a patient.**

**It’s why we’ll take the time to understand you and all that matters to you, so we can help you get the support you need to take care of your health, protect your personal relationships and deal with money and work worries.**

**We’re here to help you find your best way through from the moment of diagnosis, so you’re able to live life as fully as you can. For information, support or just someone to talk to, call 0808 808 00 00 or visit [macmillan.org.uk](http://macmillan.org.uk)**

**© Macmillan Cancer Support, September 2018**

**Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017), Scotland (SCO39907) and the Isle of Man (604).**