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[**Martha Stewart Biography**](http://www.biography.com/people/martha-stewart-9542234)

(1941–)

* **67**

**QUICK FACTS**

**NAME**

Martha Stewart

**BIRTH DATE**

[August 3](http://www.biography.com/people/groups/born-on-august-03), [1941](http://www.biography.com/people/groups/born-1941) (age 72)

**EDUCATION**

[Barnard College](http://www.biography.com/people/groups/famous-alumni-of-barnard-college), [Nutley High School](http://www.biography.com/people/groups/famous-alumni-of-nutley-high-school)

**PLACE OF BIRTH**

[Jersey City](http://www.biography.com/people/groups/birth-city-jersey-city), [New Jersey](http://www.biography.com/people/groups/born-in-new-jersey)

**ZODIAC SIGN**

[Leo](http://www.biography.com/people/groups/leo)

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* [LIFESTYLE GURU](http://www.biography.com/)
* [INSIDER TRADING SCANDAL](http://www.biography.com/)
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Martha Stewart is an American media mogul best known for her television show and magazine, Martha Stewart Living.

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* [FAMOUS PEOPLE BORN IN UNITED STATES](http://www.biography.com/people/groups/born-in-united-states)
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1 of 2

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**QUOTES**

“I invented 'It's a good thing' before you were even born.”

—Martha Stewart

**Synopsis**

Martha Stewart was born on August 3, 1941, in Jersey City, New Jersey. Stewart rose to prominence as the author of books on cooking, entertaining and decorating. She then expanded her brand to include a magazine and television program, serving as CEO of Martha Stewart Omnimedia. Stewart resigned her post in 2002, following charges of insider trading of which she was subsequently convicted.

**Lifestyle Guru**

Lifestyle guru and businesswoman Martha Stewart was born Martha Kostyra, on August 3, 1941, in New Jersey. The second of six children, Stewart grew up in Nutley, New Jersey, a working-class community near New York City. She worked as a model from the age of 13, appearing in fashion shows as well as television and print advertisements.

Stewart attended Barnard College in Manhattan, where she earned a degree in European and architectural history in 1962. While at Barnard, she met Andy Stewart, a Yale law student, and the two married in 1961. Six years later, after the birth of their daughter, Alexis, Stewart went to work as a stockbroker for the boutique firm of Monness, Williams, and Sidel. She worked on Wall Street until 1972, when the family moved to Westport, Connecticut.

After the Stewarts restored the 19th century farmhouse they had bought, Martha decided to focus her energy on gourmet cooking, having trained herself by reading Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. She started a catering business in the late 1970s, and soon became known for her gourmet menus and unique, creative presentation. Within a decade, Martha Stewart, Inc., had grown into a $1 million business serving a number of corporate and celebrity clients.

Stewart expanded into the world of publishing with her first book,*Entertaining*, which became a bestseller and was followed in quick succession by such publications as *Martha Stewart's Quick Cook Menus*,*Martha Stewart's Hors d'Oeuvres*, *Martha Stewart's Christmas* and *Martha Stewart's Wedding Planner*. Her newfound fame took its toll on her personal life, as her marriage to Andy Stewart ended in divorce in 1990, after a bitter three-year separation.

In 1991, Martha Stewart, Inc., became Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, Inc., with the release of her magazine, *Martha Stewart Living*. Stewart's lifestyle empire soon grew to include two magazines, a checkout-size recipe publication, a popular cable television show, a syndicated newspaper column, a series of how-to books, a radio show, an Internet site and $763 million in annual retail sales.

On October 19, 1999, America's most famous homemaker returned to Wall Street to see her company through its initial public offering on the New York Stock Exchange. At the end of the day, the price of each of 72 million shares in Martha Stewart Living Omnimedia, Inc. had jumped more than 95 percent and raised almost $130 million. Stewart herself controls 96 percent of the voting shares in her company and is worth $1.2 billion.

**Insider Trading Scandal**

In June 2002, Stewart again made financial headlines, this time for rumors of insider trading. Stewart was under investigation for selling hundreds of shares of ImClone Systems just prior to the Food and Drug Administration's refusal to approve the company's new cancer drug. The value of the stock dropped markedly after the FDA's announcement. Due to the investigation, Stewart resigned from the board of directors of the New York Stock Exchange in October, just four months after she had joined.

In June 2003, a 41-page indictment charged Stewart with securities fraud, obstruction of justice, conspiracy and making false statements to prosecutors and the FBI. She pleaded innocent to all charges and stepped down as chair and CEO of her Omnimedia empire. In February 2004, a judge dismissed the securities fraud charge, but a jury found her guilty of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and two counts of making false statements. Martha Stewart was sentenced to five months in prison and fined $30,000 that July. She served the first part of her sentence at a minimum-security prison in Alderson, West Virginia, in October 2004.

**Later Career**

Stewart was released from prison on March 4, 2005, just after NBC announced she would host two new shows: a daytime talk and how-to show and a spin-off of the reality show *The Apprentice* produced by Mark Burnett and Donald Trump. Stewart finished her sentence by serving five months of house arrest at her home in Bedford, New York.

While Martha Stewart's version of *The Apprentice* failed to attract enough viewers, her self-titled syndicated daytime program has been on the air since 2005. The company she established, Martha Stewart Omnimedia, continued to grow in new directions. The business added several non-Martha Stewart publications, including *Everyday Food* and *Body + Soul*.

**Professional Woes**

Stewart's syndicated show moved to the Hallmark Channel in 2010, but it failed to develop enough of an audience to sustain the expensive-to-produce program. Hallmark canceled the show in 2012 because of low ratings. That fall, Stewart launched a new series on PBS called *Martha Stewart's Cooking School*.

In 2013, Stewart found herself inside a courtroom once again. Her company was engaged in a lawsuit with the department store chain Macy's over a contract dispute. Macy's sued Stewart and its retail rival J.C. Penney over Stewart's plan to open Martha Stewart brand boutiques inside Penney's stores.

**Fact Check**

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