

A rustic wooden surface with fresh ingredients: tomatoes, parsley, onions, lemons, and a salt shaker.

Dining with Dysphagia

A Cookbook

 NYU | STEINHARDT

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Food is something everyone should be able to enjoy.

So when it comes to food that is both appetizing and accessible, good eating shouldn't be limited to highbrow foodies. Now, "Dining with Dysphagia: A Cookbook" makes the winning recipes from [NYU Steinhardt's Iron Chef Dysphagia Challenge](#) accessible to all. The cookbook outlines eight diverse recipes — all easy to follow and easy to swallow:

1. [Rosemary Mashed Potatoes](#)
2. [Pumpkin Soup](#)
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During this cooking competition hosted by [NYU Steinhardt](#), contestants prepare food for judges to identify recipes that maximize nutrition, texture, and taste for people with [dysphagia](#) — the medical term for chewing and swallowing difficulties. The recipe book provides a meticulously crafted compilation of foods to be truly enjoyed.

While the recipes were evaluated for the overall joy of eating good food, the judges also took into consideration that dysphagia clients come from different cultural backgrounds. Diversity in ingredients and balanced tastes should be enjoyed by everyone.

Each year, the simple act of eating becomes a serious challenge for millions. Older adults are disproportionately affected, but dysphagia can become a challenge for just about anyone — including those with diseases such as Parkinson's, head and neck cancers, AIDS, and many more. Caregivers, hospitals, and families caring for those with dysphagia prepare pureed foods in order to meet nutritional and medical needs. Unfortunately, they all too often find that the food is unappetizing and doesn't take into account cultural food preferences. Likewise, a minimal focus is placed on aesthetics; these foods are often presented as a mushy mess.

The recipes presented in this cookbook take things up a notch, elevating pureed food to a higher standard. By focusing on all of the values foodies appreciate — enhancing flavor, texture, aroma, and, of course, deliciousness — these recipes make the joy of eating simple for everyone. Rosemary mashed potatoes are blended to perfection while tomatoes, olives, and raisins are combined for a scrumptious Picadillo ground beef. And for dessert? Chia seeds, full of omega nutrients and fiber, come together with chocolate perfection for a chocolate chia pudding.

"Food should always nourish the body and soul," says [Lisa Sasson](#), clinical associate professor in the [NYU Steinhardt Department of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health](#). "We should never assume that because a patient has swallowing problems that their food choices will be limited to pureed mush."

Note: You should consult with your doctor regarding your dietary or medical requirements based on your condition prior to using these recipes. They represent only suggestions to improve flavor and eating experience not a medical opinion.

Rosemary Mashed Potatoes



Start to Finish

45 minutes (20 active)

Servings

12

Ingredients

8 large russet potatoes
(approximately 4 pounds)

1½ teaspoons salt, divided

¾ cup heavy whipping cream

¼ cup butter

½ teaspoon fresh rosemary

¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg

¼ teaspoon black pepper

Method

Prepare ingredients: Wash, peel, and quarter the potatoes. Mince the rosemary leaves. Cube the butter and set aside to bring it down to room temperature.

1. Place potatoes in a large pot and cover with water. Add 1 teaspoon of salt and bring to a boil.
2. Reduce heat. Cover and simmer the potatoes for 15-20 minutes until fork-tender. Drain.
3. Place potatoes in a large bowl. Add cream, butter, rosemary, nutmeg, pepper, and remaining salt. Use an electric mixer to beat until smooth and creamy.
4. Divide the potatoes between bowls and serve with additional butter and a few sprigs of rosemary if desired.





Rosemary Mashed Potatoes

Pumpkin Soup



Start to Finish

55 minutes (35 active)

Servings

8-10

Ingredients

2 tablespoons onion powder

2 tablespoons butter

2 teaspoons garlic

¼ teaspoon freshly grated ginger

2 teaspoons cumin

1 teaspoon black pepper

⅛ teaspoon cardamom

1 teaspoon coriander

15-ounce can of pure pumpkin

2 sweet potatoes

2 cups of water

14.5-ounce can of chicken or vegetable broth

14.5-ounce can of coconut milk

¼ cup heavy cream and extra virgin olive oil, for serving

Method

Prepare ingredients: Peel and grate the ginger. Peel and quarter the sweet potatoes.

1. Place sweet potatoes in a large pot and cover with water. Add 1 teaspoon of salt and bring to a boil.
2. Reduce heat. Cover and simmer the potatoes for 20-30 minutes until fork-tender. Drain.
3. Add the sweet potatoes to a food processor and pulse until smooth.
4. While the potatoes are boiling, heat butter in a soup pot over medium heat. Once the butter is frothy and golden, add the spices, garlic, and ginger and reduce the heat. Cook for about 20 seconds, or until very fragrant, being careful not to burn them.
5. Add the pumpkin, water, broth, coconut milk, and sweet potato puree, and stir to combine. Bring the liquid to a boil and then reduce heat to low. Simmer for about 20 minutes.
6. Before serving, season the soup with salt and pepper or more of the spices if desired. Once seasoned to your liking, allow the soup to cool a bit.
7. To serve, divide the soup between bowls and garnish with a swirl of heavy cream or a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil if desired.



Pumpkin Soup

Picadillo Ground Beef

with Tomatoes, Olives, and Raisins



Start to Finish

1 hour (30 minutes active)

Servings

3-4

Ingredients

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 pound ground beef

½ white onion

5 cloves of garlic

1-2 jalapeños

4 medium tomatoes

8 green olives

2 tablespoons of liquid from the olives

¼ cup raisins

1 poblano chile or green bell pepper

1 teaspoon cumin

¼ teaspoon ground cloves

1 small cone of piloncillo (can substitute with 1 teaspoon of sugar dissolved into 1 teaspoon of molasses)

Salt and black pepper to taste

Note: Control the heat by reducing how much jalapeno you add to the dish. For a milder dish, choose a green bell pepper instead of the poblano pepper.

Method

Prepare ingredients: Soak the raisins in warm water until softened, about 20 minutes. Drain and set aside. Thinly slice the onion. Roughly chop the garlic. Dice the jalapeno and remove the seeds and membranes. Remove the seeds from the tomatoes and dice. Remove the pits from the olives and quarter the flesh. Remove the seeds from the poblano or green bell pepper and roughly chop.

1. Add the olive oil to a large frying pan over medium heat. Once shimmering and very hot, add the jalapeños and onions and cook until the onions are beginning to brown and soften, about 10 minutes.
2. Add the ground beef to the pan and brown, using a fork to break up the meat. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Once the beef is cooked through, carefully drain the fat into a heatproof dish and discard.
3. Return the beef mixture to the skillet over medium heat and add the garlic. Cook for 2 minutes.
4. Add the tomatoes, green olives, reserved olive liquid, raisins, chopped pepper, cumin, ground cloves, and piloncillo. Season lightly with salt and pepper and stir to combine all the ingredients.
5. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, partially covered, for 30 minutes.
6. Divide the stew between bowls and serve.



Picadillo Ground Beef with Tomatoes, Olives, and Raisins

Gefilte Fish with Beet–Horseradish Cream



Start to Finish

25 hours 40 minutes (40 minutes active)

Servings

8-10

Ingredients

2 tablespoons of olive oil

Nonstick cooking spray

3 carrots

2 leeks, white and light green portions only

3 eggs

¼ cup matzo meal

¾ cup chicken stock, fish stock, or water

1½ pounds finely ground whitefish or whitefish/pike mixture

2 teaspoons salt

¾ teaspoon freshly ground white pepper

½ teaspoon sugar

Juice of ½ lemon

¼ teaspoon paprika

5 ounces prepared kosher horseradish cream

2 canned whole beets

Lemon slices and fresh parsley sprigs for garnish

Method

Prepare ingredients: Heat the oven to 350 F. Lightly coat an 8½-by-4½-by-2¾-inch loaf pan with nonstick cooking spray and set aside. Peel the carrots and finely chop. Remove the tough outer layer from the leeks and chop off any tough, dark green leaves. Thoroughly rinse and then finely chop the white and light green parts.

1. Add the olive oil to a skillet and heat over medium high until simmering. Add the chopped carrots and leeks and cook, stirring regularly, until softened and browning in spots, about 5-7 minutes.
2. Remove from the heat and let cool for 10 minutes.
3. Using an electric mixer, combine the eggs and matzo meal and beat on medium speed for about 1 minute. Add the stock, fish, carrot-leek mixture, salt, white pepper, and sugar and beat until blended.
4. Pour the mixture into the prepared pan and smooth the top with a spatula. Drizzle the lemon juice over the top and sprinkle with the paprika.
5. Bake until a wooden skewer inserted into the center of the loaf comes out clean — about 50-60 minutes.
6. Let cool to room temperature, then cover the pan with aluminum foil and refrigerate overnight.
7. Meanwhile, in a food processor fitted with the metal blade, combine the horseradish cream and beets and process until pureed. Transfer to a small bowl, cover, and refrigerate until ready to serve.
8. To serve, invert the loaf onto a platter and lift off the pan. Garnish with lemon slices and parsley and accompany with the beet-horseradish cream. Cut into slices and serve.



Gefilte Fish with Beet-Horseradish Cream

Goat Cheese and Fig Jam Knife-and-Fork Burger



Start to Finish

50 minutes (35 active)

Servings

4-5

Ingredients

2 pounds ground hamburger with a fat ratio of 90/10 or 85/15

1½ tablespoons shallot

3 tablespoons fig jam

2 ounces crumbled goat cheese

Salt and black pepper to taste

1 tablespoon olive oil

Minced herbs, such as sage, thyme, or parsley leaves, and soft, baby greens for serving



Method

Prepare ingredients: Peel and mince the shallot. Preheat the grill — or stove-top grill pan — to medium-high.

1. In a medium mixing bowl, add salt and pepper to the ground beef and gently mix by hand until combined.
2. In a small mixing bowl, combine the goat cheese, fig jam, and minced shallots.
3. Divide meat into four even sections, about 8 ounces each. Take one section and divide it in half. Flatten both pieces into even patties, about ½-inch thick. Spoon about 2 tablespoons of the cheese and jam mixture into one patty, leaving about ½ inch of space around the edges. Take the other patty and place it gently on top of the cheese and jam mixture. Gently pinch around the sides to seal the burger.

Tip: You may wish to wet your fingers with water to help glue the meat together and smooth out the edges.

4. Complete the other three sections and then put the patties in the freezer for about 15-20 minutes until firm.
5. Lightly brush each burger with olive oil.
6. Grill burgers over high heat for about 7-10 minutes per side until the beef is cooked through with an internal temperature of 160 F.
7. To serve, plate the burger on a bed of baby greens, if desired, and sprinkle with minced herbs of your choice.



Fig Jam and Goat Cheese Burger

Vegetarian Squash Chili



Start to Finish

1 hour

Servings

8-10

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 medium red onion

1½ cups bell peppers

2 celery stalks

1 butternut squash

4 small garlic cloves, minced

1 tablespoon chili powder

2 teaspoons ground cumin

2 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa powder

1-2 tablespoons chopped chipotle in adobo, depending on how spicy you want your dish to be

28-ounce can of diced tomatoes

5 cups cooked black beans

4 cups vegetable broth (for a richer flavor, replace 1 cup of vegetable broth with 1 cup of brewed coffee)

Salt and black pepper to taste

Sour cream, minced chives, and lime wedges for serving

Method

Prepare ingredients: Chop the red onion and the bell peppers. Small dice the celery and set aside with the onion and peppers. Peel the butternut squash, remove seeds, and chop into ½-inch cubes. Mince the garlic cloves. Drain and rinse the black beans. Prepare the coffee, if using, and set aside.

1. In a 4-6 quart Dutch oven or stockpot, heat olive oil over medium-high until shimmering. Sauté the onion, bell pepper, celery, and butternut squash until the onions begin to soften, about 7-8 minutes. Once the onions become translucent, reduce the heat to medium-low.
2. Add garlic, chili powder, cumin, cocoa powder, and chopped chipotle and cook, stirring regularly, until the spices are fragrant and the vegetables are evenly coated, about 30 seconds.
3. Add tomatoes, beans, and vegetable broth (and coffee, if using) and stir to incorporate all the ingredients. Bring the mixture to a boil and then reduce the heat to a simmer, cooking for 30 minutes or until the vegetables are very soft and the liquid has reduced and thickened a bit. Before serving, season with salt and black pepper to taste.
4. To serve, divide the chili between bowls and top with a dollop of sour cream and a sprinkle of chives and lime wedges on the side.



Vegetarian Squash Chili

Asian Chicken Meatballs



Start to Finish

40 minutes

Servings

4

Ingredients

¼ cup breadcrumbs

½ cup fresh cilantro

1 pound ground chicken

1 egg

1 teaspoon onion powder

2 tablespoons soy sauce

Dash of ground ginger, to taste

1½ teaspoon garlic powder

Salt and black pepper to taste

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Optional: Lime wedges, for serving

Method

Prepare ingredients: Thoroughly rinse the cilantro and roughly chop the leaves and tender stems.

1. Add all the ingredients in a mixing bowl. Using your hands, gently knead the mixture until evenly combined.
2. Form the mixture into 1-inch diameter meatballs and set aside.
3. Heat the oil in a large skillet until shimmering and add the meatballs, being careful not to crowd the pan. Fry in batches, depending on the size of the skillet. Cook, turning occasionally, until the meatballs are golden brown all over and cooked through, about 10 minutes total. Transfer to a plate and keep warm.
4. Garnish with a bit of chopped cilantro and lime wedges.



Asian Chicken Meatballs

Chocolate Chia Pudding



Start to Finish

15 minutes

Servings

2

Ingredients

1 cup unsweetened almond milk

2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup chia seeds

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon chocolate liquid stevia —
or $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon chocolate syrup — or
granulated sugar to taste

Method

1. In a medium bowl, whisk cocoa powder into the almond milk until smooth.
2. Add the chia seeds, vanilla extract, and chocolate liquid stevia, and whisk to combine.
3. Divide the mixture between two serving glasses and chill in the fridge until set, about 10-15 minutes or overnight.
4. To serve, drizzle with coconut milk, mint leaves, or cacao nibs, if desired.





Chocolate Chia Pudding



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