

More cracking recipes from the authors of
Don't give me eggs that bounce

It's all about the food not the fork!

**107 easy to eat
meals in a mouthful**

Peter Morgan-Jones

with Lisa Greedy, Prudence Ellis and Danielle McIntosh

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The recipes contained in this book have been carefully tested to produce the desired food consistency and texture. However the authors cannot guarantee results due to a number of variable factors including cooking conditions, inputs varying across brands and products being subject to change over time. Accordingly, all care must be taken on each occasion when applying the recipes to verify that the consistency and texture of the food is appropriate and safe for its intended use.

Please note: some photos of food and meals may not fully reflect our recommendations regarding contrast but are included for creative purposes.

For the latest news on It's all about the food not the fork! and to purchase related products, share tips, recipes and feedback, visit crackingrecipes.com



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INTRODUCTION— BRINGING BACK FINGERS

Peter Morgan-Jones

For many years as a chef I've enjoyed making delicious canapés for restaurants and events across the globe seeing 'first hand' how popular and acceptable it now is to eat on your feet, using your fingers.

So it wasn't surprising that amidst the success of our previous cookbook, *Don't give me eggs that bounce: 118 cracking recipes for people with Alzheimer's*, by far the greatest interest was in our approach to mid meals and finger foods!

As I and the other authors promoted the book around Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, discussing our innovative recipe research and development, the conversation would continually turn to what seems such a simple idea—food that can be eaten with hands but is nutritious, appetising and beautiful!

Of course for some cultures, eating with your hands is the most traditional way to eat a meal but for others, especially in the West, a stigma has attached to eating this way, particularly in the past 100 years or so. Eating with your hands may be seen as bad manners or something for children.

Fingers before forks

History abounds with accounts of the development of implements for eating food, with tools for cutting meat discovered as

far back as the Neolithic era. These knives developed into the most common eating accessory and it was only in more recent times that other tools became prevalent, such as the fork in Roman and Greek culture and chopsticks in China and then the rest of Asia.

It was common in medieval times to arrive at a banquet with your own dagger-style knife to eat with, having had it sharpened at the castle beforehand! The modern usage of forks probably began in Italy, may have been first associated with eating pasta and was finally given Royal sanction in 1633 when Charles I of England declared, 'It is decent to use a fork.'

Dispelling the stigma

'Coutelier' was the Old French term for knife and later was adapted to become the modern English term cutlery. An amazing array of etiquette has arisen around the use of cutlery, and this no doubt contributes to the stigma sometimes associated with older adults eating with their fingers. And while it might seem younger generations are less affected—with the rise of fast food—you might be surprised to know how many conversations I've had with family members who are concerned that their mum or dad is using their fingers at mealtimes.

Once given an explanation, with compassion, families soon see the positive impact of finger foods for people who struggle with the use of cutlery. We often explain how ‘mum or dad’ is now more independent, displays less anxiety at mealtimes and is usually eating more than they have done, with signs of healthy weight gain. Families are always quick to welcome these benefits and to view finger foods or hand-held meals differently.

Hand-held heroes

Having seen the positive change finger foods can make, we have made them the stars of *It's all about the food not the fork!* Every food recipe in this book can be eaten by hand and the following chapters provide fascinating insights into eating, ageing, dementia and finger foods.

A highlight of our recipes is the chance to provide a solution to the difficult area of modified meals—in a pureed, minced or soft form—presented in a finger food style. These really are hand-held heroes!

‘A highlight of our recipes is the chance to provide a solution to the difficult area of modified meals—in a pureed, minced or soft form—presented in a finger food style. These really are hand-held heroes!’

01 SO MUCH MORE THAN PARTY PIES

Peter Morgan-Jones with Emily Colombage

Finger foods can open the door to more independence and improved nutrition for people living with dementia (and other conditions) who are struggling to use cutlery. They allow the person to control what is going into their mouth, returning a measure of dignity which may otherwise be lost.

Additionally these hand-held heroes can improve self-esteem and enjoyment in meal times. Importantly, finger foods for the older person are much more than party pies and sausage rolls. Rather than a quick dish for serving at a party, when we talk about finger foods in *It's all about the food not the fork!* we are referring to the regular provision of finger food as an alternative to 'cutlery food'—that is, food which requires a tool to eat it. A simple example of finger food is meatballs with baby carrots—this book is full of other finger food ideas and recipes.

Nothing childish about this food

Research shows that many people living with dementia may struggle to eat enough food. One reason is that mealtimes can be stressful and unpleasant occasions. Dining tables can be spaces of frustration and confusion where an individual struggles with arthritic hands, poor eyesight, unfamiliar objects and poor concentration. As a result

of these hurdles it can be difficult to fit into the usual routine of sitting down for three square meals a day.

In this context, finger food can be overlooked because it is misunderstood or simply not available. At times there are misconceptions about finger food being 'childish' or not nutritious enough but with careful planning and presentation this is not the case.

Fabulously flexible food

Finger foods can be utilised in many different ways. At a basic level, finger foods can be served across the three meals of the day—breakfast, lunch and dinner (see 'Meal plans'). Finger foods can also be made that suit people who are on texture modified diets and thickened fluids (see 'Proudly modified' and other recipe sections). They can be eaten seated or standing up and even while walking around (being mindful of falls risks).

Alternatively, finger foods can be given in smaller amounts, several times across the day. This approach of small and frequent meals, or grazing, might suit someone with a poor appetite or an individual who is very active. An active individual living with dementia may have higher energy requirements and six to eight meals per day may better meet their energy requirements

As a variant, finger foods may be used for an individual at certain times when normal meals are unsuitable. For example, if a person's tremors are worse at a particular time of the day, or when they are tired, finger food may be an easier means of feeding themselves.

Suzie lives with Alzheimer's disease. She also has a visual impairment, poor dexterity due to arthritis, has lost muscle strength and so is becoming more frail. Sometimes she expresses some frustration and aggression. She struggles to do things on her own but does not like receiving help. And it's quite clear—she is not enjoying mealtimes. When Suzie walks into the dining room, she swears and pounds her fist on the table. When a meal is placed in front of her she is often less than impressed! Suzie's carers are keen to try a different approach that might improve her mealtime experience as well as her nutrition. First, finger foods were introduced. It took Suzie some time to get used to eating without cutlery but then she embraced it. She starts her meals by touching the food then slowly taking little bites. After a few months of the new approach Suzie has gained a few kilos, which is fantastic, but even more importantly, she seems happier and more relaxed around the dining table.

What we've learned in practice

In introducing finger food in our cottages for people with dementia, we have learned not to overcrowd the plate and to keep presentation simple. More food can be added if the initial food has been eaten.

Rectangular plates worked well and we chose coloured plates to frame the food. For example, white sandwiches on white plates were untouched, but were consumed when placed on coloured plates where the sandwiches stood out. As a further help, a family member or friend sitting down and eating a similar meal offers positive cues to the person with dementia. A sense of sharing food and being in familiar company can have a calming effect.

Our experience shows some people really embrace using their fingers to eat food (though it might have taken a few meals before they got used to the change). It is important that the provision of finger food is carefully considered. We do not recommend a blanket approach for all individuals living with dementia, working with them in decision-making is vital.

Finger foods, along with smaller portions and more frequent meals, are very useful tools in a longer list of strategies to treat an older person with malnutrition. Some people will benefit from many strategies all at once, some from a selection. There are a range of strategies offered across each of the chapters in this book.

RECIPES

R Regular diet, no restrictions

S Soft

M Minced

P Pureed

T Thin fluids, no restrictions

Th1 Mildly thick

Th2 Moderately thick

Th3 Extremely thick



BREAKFAST

Breakfast is now finger-licking great, thanks to these appetising recipes that transform all our breakfast favourites into high energy and high nutrition finger foods.

BREAKFAST COOKIES

Serves 24 cookies/12 serves

Prep 10 minutes

Cook 16 minutes

2 cups rolled oats
1 cup plain flour
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
⅓ tsp cinnamon
½ tsp sea salt
1 can drained cannellini beans
¼ cup unsalted soft butter
1 cup soft brown sugar
1 egg
3 tsp vanilla
½ cup chocolate chips
½ cup raisins
½ cup finely chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 180°C. Place the oats in a food processor and pulse until fine. Add the flour, baking soda and baking powder, cinnamon and salt and process further until combined.

Remove and place in a large bowl, wash the beans and dry. Place in a food processor and pulse until a rough puree. Add the butter, brown sugar, egg and vanilla and blend, scraping down the sides as you go. Fold in the nuts, chocolate chips and raisins.

Place large spoonfuls of dough onto baking sheets sprayed with a little olive oil. Dampen hand and flatten down the cookies slightly with fingers and bake until golden brown, about 12 – 14 mins.

Allow to cool slightly and place on cooling tray. These will keep at room temperature sealed in a jar for quite a few days.

Tip: These cookies are packed with fibre and protein and are the perfect breakfast snack for people who are very active.

R

T

Th1

Th2

Th3



The background of the entire page is a soft-focus photograph of a dining table. In the foreground, a white plate holds a slice of bread topped with a spread and sliced onions, garnished with small purple and white flowers. To the right, a light green teacup with a gold rim sits on a matching saucer. In the background, another white bowl with a floral pattern is visible. A large, red, cloud-like shape with a white outline is centered over the image, containing the title and text.

ELEVENSES*

It's not only Winnie the Pooh and hobbits who need those extra snacks in the day. These mini meals might actually become the main way of dining for many people who can no longer enjoy larger meals. So enjoy these masterful recipes several times across the day or as more traditional morning or afternoon tea and supper.

* For elevenses, Winnie the Pooh prefers honey on bread with condensed milk while hobbits will eat just about anything.

BEAN QUESADILLAS

Serves 8 pieces

Prep 10 minutes

Cook 10 minutes

Rice bran oil for frying

1 can of red kidney beans,
rinsed and drained
and mashed

2 cups grated cheddar
cheese

250g punnet cherry
tomatoes, sliced

2 large flour tortillas

½ tbsp chopped parsley

1 tsp oregano

Spread the bean puree over one of the tortillas, sprinkle the sliced tomato and cheese and herbs over the bean and tortilla. Season with sea salt and pepper. Place the other tortilla on top and refrigerate for 10 mins.

Place 1cm in depth of rice bran oil in a large frying pan that will accommodate the tortilla. Carefully place the quesadillas in the hot oil and cook for 2 mins, weighing it down with a smaller frying pan or saucepan. Carefully remove and turn over the quesadillas repeating the process.

Drain on paper towel, cut into 8 pieces and serve straight away.

R

T

Th1

Th2

Th3





JUST DESSERTS

Who said desserts are bad for you? Enjoyable, enticing sweets made easy to eat—it's the icing on the cake, the cherry on the top, the delicate chocolate truffle in your hand! For a lot of older people, sweet foods are especially popular. These desserts are designed to satisfy the guilty pleasure without the guilt!

CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKE BROWNIE

Serves makes
14 slices/serves
Prep 10 minutes
Cook 50 minutes

190g melted butter
¼ cup cocoa powder sifted
1 cup caster sugar
2 free range eggs
1 cup plain flour, sifted

Cheesecake
285g cream cheese
4½ tbsp caster sugar
2 eggs
Cocoa powder, for dusting

Preheat oven to 160°C, mix the cocoa, sugar, melted butter and eggs in a bowl until smooth. Spoon mix into a 20cm square slice tin greased and lined with baking paper.

To make the cheesecake, process the cheese, eggs and sugar in a food processor until smooth. Dollop the cheesecake mix on top of the chocolate mixture and swirl with a knife.

Bake for 45-50 mins or until the cake is set. Cool in the tin, remove and dust liberally with cocoa powder. Cut into squares.

Tips: Keeps well refrigerated for a couple of days. ~ It can also be frozen in slices. ~ Try adding berries and/or sultanas.

R

S

T

Th1

Th2

Th3

