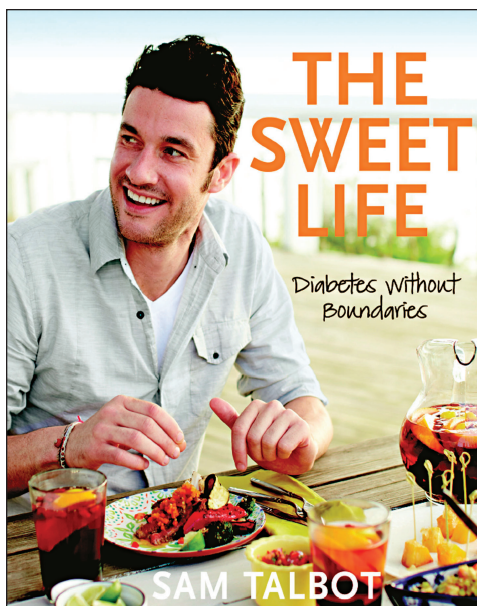


Pear Perfection



Sam Talbot's "The Sweet Life" is available on amazon.com, at Barnes and Noble, and at book stores nationwide. Photo credit: Sarah Kehoe

FAMILY FEATURES

For the more than 25 million Americans living with diabetes, food choices are critical to maintaining their health.

Chef Sam Talbot, who was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when he was 12 years old, understands those challenges. But with his new cookbook he proves that diabetics don't have to sacrifice flavor in order to follow a healthy eating plan. Talbot earned national recognition as the runner-up in Season 2 of Bravo's hit TV show "Top Chef." In his new book, "The Sweet Life: Diabetes without Boundaries," he shares how diabetes has affected — but has not compromised — his life and career, and offers 75 fresh, all-natural recipes that can be enjoyed by both diabetics and non-diabetics.



The Glycemic Index

The glycemic index (GI) rates carbohydrates on a scale of 1 to 100 based on how rapidly a food item raises blood sugar levels after eating. Foods that rank high on the glycemic index are digested rapidly, which produces marked fluctuations in blood sugar and insulin levels. Foods with a low glycemic index are digested slowly and raise blood sugar and insulin levels gradually.

Source: University of Sydney Glycemic Index Group, Human Nutrition Unit, School of Molecular Biosciences.

Cooking to Manage Diabetes

Doctors recommend that people with diabetes follow a healthy, well balanced diet that includes plenty of fiber-rich fruits and vegetables and carbohydrates that rank lower on the glycemic index (GI). (See sidebar for more on the glycemic index.)

"Pears are one of my favorite fruits to use in recipes," says Talbot. "They are a low GI fruit, they're high in fiber, and the flavor of a ripe pear is just out of this world. They are incredibly versatile in sweet and savory recipes in all types of world cuisines. They can be part of any meal of the day."

The two recipes here are from Talbot's book, and showcase the fresh, sweet flavor of pears. For more information, visit www.SamTalbot.com, and for additional pear recipes visit www.usapears.org.

- One medium pear provides 24 percent of your day's fiber, and 10 percent of your day's vitamin C — for only 100 calories.

- There are ten different varieties of USA Pears, each with its own color, flavor and texture.

- More than 80 percent of the fresh pears grown in the U.S. are from the Pacific Northwest states of Washington and Oregon. USA Pears are in season from early fall through early summer.

Yogurt with Pear and Coconut

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1/3 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- 2 tablespoons graham cracker crumbs
- 1/2 cup Grape-Nuts or granola cereal
- 1 tablespoon granulated stevia extract, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 ripe pears, such as Anjou or Bosc, slightly firm to the touch
- 3 cups 2% plain Greek yogurt

- In medium bowl, combine lemon juice, coconut, graham cracker crumbs, cereal, sweetener and cinnamon.

- Peel, core and finely chop pears.
- Spoon yogurt into 4 bowls and top with fruit and coconut mixture, or sprinkle directly onto each individual container of yogurt.
- Per Serving: 265 calories, 15 g protein, 38 g carbohydrates, 8 g total fat (6 g saturated), 8 mg cholesterol, 6 g fiber, 157 mg sodium



Chef Sam Talbot. Photo credit: Sarah Kehoe

Lavender Poached Pears

MAKES 4 SERVINGS

- 2 large ripe pears, such as Bosc or Anjou, slightly firm to the touch
- 3 tablespoons granulated stevia extract, or to taste
- 1 tablespoon dried lavender
- 2 blossoms dried hibiscus
- 1 chamomile tea bag
- 1/2 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves

- Peel, halve and core pears using a melon baller to scoop out seeds.
- In large pot, combine 3 cups water, sweetener, lavender, hibiscus, chamomile tea and mint. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce heat to medium-low. Add pears and simmer until you can easily pierce pears with the tip of a knife, about 20 minutes.

- To serve, transfer pear halves to 4 individual bowls and ladle some of the cooking liquid over the top.
- Per Serving: 72 calories, 1 g protein, 19 g carbohydrates, 0 g total fat (0 g saturated), 0 mg cholesterol, 4 g fiber, 2 mg sodium

Recipes excerpted from the book, "The Sweet Life: Diabetes without Boundaries," by Sam Talbot. Published by Rodale. Copyright (c) 2011.



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