

Have your cake and eat it, too

Cookbook authors help Celiac sufferers

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By A.K. Whitney, Food Editor

Imagine getting sick from eating a slice of bread. Or not being able to have a piece of birthday cake or a plate of pasta without suffering a lot of pain.

That's what happens to people in this country with Celiac disease, an auto-immune illness that targets your digestive system and makes you intolerant to gluten. The only way to deal with Celiac disease is to follow a gluten-free diet.

Gluten is a protein found in wheat and other grains. It gives bread and other baked goods their elastic structure. But it is also found in a number of processed foods, from hard candies to soups to cold cuts, according to the California-based Celiac Disease Foundation, so gluten intolerant people cannot stay safe by just avoiding bread or cakes or pasta. And, since the foundation estimates that as many as one in 250 people have Celiac disease, or are at risk for developing it, that means a lot of folks are having trouble not feeling deprived on a daily basis.

However, there are cookbooks out there that can help.

One is "125 Best Gluten-Free Recipes," by Donna Washburn and Heather Butt (Robert Rose, 2003, \$18.95), and a second is "Gluten-Free," by Michael Cox (Fireside, 2000, \$18).

Washburn and Butt have written several books on baking, focusing on recipes for bread machines. Their decision to write a gluten-free book was made as a result of readers with Celiac disease clamoring for help, as well as the fact that Washburn's son and husband are dealing with the condition.

Since the authors are experts on baking, the majority of their recipes are for baked goods. But what about those dishes that may have hidden gluten?

Cox takes care of that in his cookbook. A Celiac sufferer himself, the former cookbook designer is on a quest to eat well in spite of his condition.

The book covers everything from soup to nuts with an international flair. Cox also discusses Celiac disease and offers pointers for how to shop for products that are gluten-free.

As he writes in his introduction: "Far from being a handicap, a gluten-free diet can be very satisfying."

PEACHY PLUM HAZELNUT GALETTE

1 batch hazelnut pastry (see below)

3 cups peeled, sliced peaches, about 5 medium

2 cups sliced red or purple plums, about 4 large

1/4 cup hazelnut flour (see Tips)

1/4 granulated sugar

2 tablespoons cornstarch

1 tablespoon butter

1/3 cup chopped hazelnuts

1 tablespoon granulated sugar

2 tablespoons grape or red currant jelly (see Tips)

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Generously dust a large baking dish with sweet rice flour.

Place the chilled hazelnut pastry disk in the center of prepared pan. Cover with waxed paper and roll out to a 12-inch circle.

In a large bowl, lightly toss together peaches, plums, hazelnut flour, 1/4 cup sugar and cornstarch. Set aside.

Carefully remove the waxed paper. Place the fruit mixture on pastry to within 2 inches of the edge. Dot with butter and sprinkle with hazelnuts. Carefully fold the pastry up over the filling to form a ragged edge, leaving fruit exposed in the center. Sprinkle pastry with 1 tablespoon sugar.

Bake in preheated oven for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 375 degrees and bake for 25 to 30 minutes longer or until fruit is tender and pastry is lightly browned. Brush with jelly.

Serves 8 to 12

Tips: If hazelnut flour is not readily available in your area, make your own from hazelnuts. The jelly spreads more evenly when microwaved on high for 20 seconds.

Variation: Prepare the pastry with almond flour and sprinkle the prepared galette with sliced almonds. Almonds toast as the galette bakes.

—From "125 Best Gluten-Free Recipes," by Donna Washburn and

Heather Butt.

HAZELNUT PASTRY

3 tablespoons ice water

1 teaspoon cider vinegar

1 egg yolk

1/2 cup sorghum flour

1/4 cup cornstarch

1/4 cup tapioca starch

1/4 cup sweet rice flour

1/4 cup hazelnut flour

1 teaspoon xanthan gum

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup cold butter, cut into 1-inch cubes

In a small bowl, combine ice water, vinegar and egg yolk. Set aside.

In a large bowl, sift sorghum flour, cornstarch, tapioca starch, sweet rice flour, hazelnut flour, xanthan gum and salt. Re-sift.

Using a pastry blender, blend butter with flour until mixture resembles small peas. Stirring with a fork, sprinkle egg yolk mixture over flour until it makes a soft dough.

Gently gather dough into a ball and place on plastic wrap and

flatten into a disk. Wrap well. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

Makes 1 pastry disk.

CRANBERRY ORANGE MUFFINS

1 1/2 cups rice flour

1/3 cup cornstarch

1/3 cup tapioca starch

1 1/2 teaspoons xanthan gum

1 tablespoon GF baking powder

3/4 teaspoon salt

2/3 cup cranberry juice

1/3 cup water

2/3 cup orange marmalade

1 teaspoon cider vinegar

1/4 cup vegetable oil

2 eggs

1 cup cranberries, fresh or frozen

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a muffin tin.

In a large bowl, stir together rice flour, cornstarch, tapioca starch, xanthan gum, baking powder and salt. Set aside.

In a separate bowl, using an electric mixer, beat cranberry juice, water, marmalade, vinegar, oil and eggs until combined.

Pour marmalade mixture over dry ingredients and stir just until combined. Gently fold in cranberries. Spoon into each cup of prepared muffin tin. Let stand for 30 minutes.

Bake in preheated oven for 25 to 30 minutes or until firm to the touch and tops are golden. Remove from the pan immediately and let cool completely on a rack.

Makes 12 muffins

Tip: Leave cranberries in the freezer until just before using. This prevents them from "bleeding" into the bread. Sprinkle a little granulated sugar on top, just before baking, to help them brown.

Variations: For a sweeter muffin, replace fresh or frozen cranberries with dried.

You can also substitute fresh or frozen blueberries for the cranberries.

–From "125 Best Gluten-Free Recipes," by Donna Washburn and Heather Butt.

VANILLA CHEESECAKE

For the crust:

Butter for greasing

4 cups of cornflakes

1/4 cup superfine sugar

1/2 stick (4 tablespoons) unsalted butter, melted

For the filling:

4 cups cottage cheese (or ricotta cheese)

3 extra large eggs

1/2 cup superfine sugar

2 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch

1 teaspoon gluten-free vanilla extract

2/3 cup sour cream

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees. Using melted butter, grease an 8-inch spring-form cake pan.

To make the crust, place the cornflakes, sugar and melted butter in a food processor and process until fairly fine, or place in a plastic bag and crush with a rolling pin. Place in the bottom of the prepared pan and press down with a metal spoon to create an even layer.

To make the filling, first rub the cottage cheese (or ricotta) through a sieve into a bowl. Separate the eggs, putting the whites and yolks into different bowls.

Mix the sugar and cornstarch together and add to the egg yolks. Beat until light and creamy. Work in the cheese, blending it in well. Then add the vanilla extract and sour cream. Mix everything together thoroughly.

Whisk the egg whites until stiff, then carefully fold into the egg and cheese mixture.

Pour the cheesecake mixture over the crust in the cake pan and bake in the preheated oven for 1 hour, until the filling has set. Turn off the heat but leave the cheesecake in the oven until it cools. When cold, chill the cheesecake for 24 hours before serving or topping.

Serves 6-8.

RASPBERRY GLAZE TOPPING

1 pound fresh raspberries

1/4 cup superfine sugar

1 tablespoon cornstarch

3 tablespoons water

1 tablespoon butter

Wash raspberries. Set aside half of them to decorate the top of the cheesecake. Make a puree with the rest of the berries, either by blending in a food processor or passing through a sieve.

Place the puree in a saucepan and add superfine sugar. Set over low heat and cook gently to draw out the juice. Meanwhile, mix cornstarch with water and add to the raspberries in the saucepan. Bring to a boil and stir until thickened. Cook for 1-2 minutes, then add butter and stir until melted. Strain the puree and leave to cool. Spoon the cooled glaze over the cheesecake, decorate with the whole raspberries and chill until ready to serve.

For pineapple glaze topping, drain a 20-ounce can of crushed pineapple and use approximately 1 cup of fruit. Place this in a pan and cook as for raspberry glaze topping.

–From "Gluten-Free," by Michael Cox.

CHOCOLATE HAZELNUT CAKE

For the cake:

10 ounces good quality bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

1 1/2 sticks (12 tablespoons) unsalted butter, cut into small cubes, plus extra for greasing

Parchment paper

6 large eggs, separated

1/2 cup packed dark brown sugar

1/2 cup plain yogurt

2-1/2 scant cups ground hazelnuts

Heavy cream to serve (optional)

For the chocolate icing:

4 ounces good quality bittersweet chocolate, coarsely chopped

1 tablespoon unsalted butter, cut into small cubes, plus extra for greasing.

To prepare the cake, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 10-inch spring-form cake pan and line the base with parchment paper.

Place the chocolate into a medium-sized mixing bowl and stand this over a saucepan of gently simmering water. Stir until the chocolate has melted. Add the butter, stir until evenly blended with the chocolate, then remove from the heat.

Put the egg yolks and sugar in a large mixing bowl and whisk until thick and creamy. Stir in the yogurt and hazelnuts, then add the melted chocolate and butter and mix well.

Whisk the egg whites until stiff. Fold a quarter into the chocolate mixture to loosen it a little, then gently fold in the rest.

Pour the mixture into the prepared pan and bake in the center of the oven for 60-70 minutes until the cake is well risen and feels firm to the touch. Use the skewer test to ensure the cake is cooked through. Leave to cool in the pan.

When the cake is cold, run a palette knife around the side to loosen it from the edges of the pan. Remove the cake from the pan, carefully transfer it on to a serving plate and peel off the lining paper.

To prepare the chocolate icing, melt the chocolate in a small bowl placed over a saucepan of simmering water and stir in the butter.

Spread the chocolate icing over the top of the cake with a palette knife and mark it into swirls. Once the icing has set, cut the cake into slices and serve with heavy cream poured over it.

Serves 6-8.

NOTE: For a less chocolatey topping, beat 1/2 stick (4 tablespoons) of butter with a wooden spoon until light and fluffy. Gradually sift in 1/4 cup of confectioners' sugar until the desired texture and level of sweetness are achieved. Spread the butter cream icing over the cake and decorate with grated chocolate. This recipe produces enough icing to cover an 8-inch cake.

–From "Gluten-Free," by Michael Cox.

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