



SO, YOU WANT TO BAKE GLUTEN-FREE COOKIES?

PAGE #: 1

So, You Want to Bake Gluten-Free Cookies?

Gluten-free (GF) baking is an entirely different animal than gluten baking. What works for gluten baking, often times not apply to gluten-free baking because the gluten is missing.

We won't be covering too much of the technical mumbo jumbo here. We want you baking cookies, not nursing a headache from information overload.

Fear not! We have provided you a fool-proof kit that will help you be successful at gluten-free baking.

You'll find a couple of Tried and True recipes that are easy to make and produce a great tasting product. These cookies are some of my favorites.

Included in this kit:

Peanut Butter Cookie recipe and Jules Gluten Free Flour Mix
Chocolate Chip Cookie recipe and Pamela's Baking & Pancake Mix



Getting Started – GF Basics

Before you start baking, you need to know a few basics.

What is gluten? Gluten is a protein found wheat, barley, rye and commercial/mainstream oats (e.g. Quaker) due to contamination. Certified gluten-free oats are acceptable for most celiacs.

Where is gluten found? Just about everywhere! Bread, pizza, cake, cookies, crackers, pasta, cereal, soups, beer. - just to name a few foods. Many processed foods contain gluten in some form or another. It's very prevalent in the Standard American Diet.

What does gluten do? Besides making certain people sick, gluten provides the structure, the framework – it holds everything together. It provides that chewy texture that is desirable in many foods like bread & pizzas. Since gluten is missing, other things must take the place of it when it comes to baking. Baking without gluten is like building a house without wood – it can be done, but you need to know how to do it. Things are easy when you know the “magic” behind it.



SO, YOU WANT TO BAKE GLUTEN-FREE COOKIES?

PAGE #: 2

Gluten-free flours

One can become a mad scientist in the kitchen mixing up all the different gluten-free flours to make specific flour blends. Flour blends that work well for cookies, may not work well for cakes. Again, we won't be getting into all of that here. Luckily, there are some really good flour blends on the market that allow you to use their product cup for cup to replace the wheat flour.

These baking mixes have Xanthan Gum (pronounced "ZAN-than") already added to them. This ingredient is what allows you to do the cup for cup replacement. It's a thickener – you'll see it used in salad dressings, ice creams, etc. It also is a humectant which means it helps retain moisture so the product is not so dry and crumbly. Dry and crumbly are not good eats!

Jules Gluten-Free Flour and Pamela's Baking & Pancake Mix are two flours that will be used here. Jules will be used for the Peanut Butter Cookies and Pamela's will be used for the Chocolate Chip Cookies. Certainly Jules flour could be used for the Chocolate Chip cookies as well. Pamela's mix contains different flours giving the finished product a bit different taste/texture profile.

Jules mix is certified by The Gluten Free Certification Organization. This certification lets celiacs know that any product bearing this certification contains less than 10 parts per million of gluten. It also means that they must adhere to strict manufacturing procedures and processes.

<http://gfco.org/>

Pamela's mixes are produced on 100% dedicated gluten-free machines. This trusted company has been making GF products since 1988.

One drawback on these flour blends is that they are more expensive than wheat flour. There are a variety of reasons for this, but I won't cover that here. Jules mix is not available in retail stores and must be ordered online. A 5 pound bag costs 19.95 + shipping. The Pamela's Baking mix is available in stores and costs about 5.00 – 6.00 for a 24oz bag. One benefit of these flours is seeing that smile on that gluten-free friend's face when present them your homemade cookies – it's priceless!

You can visit these website for more product information:

<http://www.julesglutenfree.com/>

<http://www.pamelasproducts.com/ProductsMIXbaking.html>



SO, YOU WANT TO BAKE GLUTEN-FREE COOKIES?

PAGE #: 3

Cross Contamination

Not only must the food be gluten-free, it must not come in contact with any gluten. Cross contamination and the concept of “a crumb will hurt you” is pretty tough for people to wrap their brains around. I'd venture to say it's probably **the** toughest concept because it involves very small amounts.



How small? Here's a perfect illustration. An average grain of rice weighs 28 milligrams. Now, divide that grain into 4 pieces. One of those 7 milligram pieces is too much. A medical study demonstrated that 6 milligrams of gluten per day can be tolerated by many celiacs.

Yes, crumbs matter! Someone can get seriously sick by ingesting (seemingly) very small amounts. This can mean even less than 10 parts per million*.

**How much is 10 parts per million? A stack of pennies one mile high that contains ten dimes.*

Think of gluten as a poison (which it really is). How much arsenic would you like in your food? Very good, I thought you'd say none. :-)

One very common cross contamination concern comes from “double dipping”. For most people, this is a common practice for mayo, peanut butter, jelly, jam and other products in jars or canisters. It's often an overlooked source of gluten for those new to the gluten-free lifestyle.

Butter dishes are another common source.

If you are using any products that lend themselves to “double-dipping”, you'll want to purchase and use new, fresh product. Brown or White sugars could get contaminated if the measuring cup was first used to measure wheat flour (without washing the cup before measuring the sugar). Using new bags of sugars is the best and safest option.

Brown sugar has another risk factor. Some people will put a piece of bread in their container. This keeps the sugar soft. If you do this, please purchase new brown sugar.

You'll also want to use a fresh stick of butter – butter dishes are crumb magnets!

Your cookie pans will be another potential source of cross contamination. Fortunately you don't need to buy new cookie pan, just use parchment paper. You can find parchment paper in the grocery store, it's usually found near the waxpaper, plastic wraps.



SO, YOU WANT TO BAKE GLUTEN-FREE COOKIES?

PAGE #: 4

Glass bowls work the best for mixing ingredients. They are easy to clean.

Do not use any wooden spoons or utensils. Porous items can harbor gluten.

Look closely at the beaters of your mixer – make sure they are perfectly clean.

Here are some other gluten problem areas:

Toasters - if you've ever toasted glutened products in it, there is no way to effectively clean it.

Toaster Ovens – unless: you've got removable racks, then you can cover them with aluminum foil in order to provide a clean surface. Even fixed racks can be covered with foil.

Colanders/Strainers/Flour Sifters – Since pastas/gluten often get stuck in the small little holes and slits, cleaning them fully is a nightmare if not impossible.

Wooden utensils/boards/rolling pins – Porous item can harbor gluten.

Cutting boards [plastic or wood] – due to the deep cuts and grooves, it's best to get a new one.

Cake pans – these pans typically have a lot of very deep cuts/grooves in them. You can purchase disposable aluminum cake pans. Cookie sheets – you could always use parchment paper with your existing pans when baking GF cookies.

Non-stick pots & pans – if there's any cuts or scratches in the surface, do not use it, gluten can get caught. As long as it can be well cleaned, it should not be a problem.

Cast iron skillets – the “seasoning” develops from years of use is definitely something to stay away from.

Ceramic bake or cookware – yeah, that old pizza stone ain't gonna cut it. Foil it, or hand it down to the gluten eaters.

Shopping

The recipes here contain brand names of any products. If a brand name is specified, it's known to be gluten-free and you'll want to purchase that brand. If there isn't a brand name, it's generally considered safe - like sugar or brown sugar. If you have a concern about a product, call the manufacturer to verify.



SO, YOU WANT TO BAKE GLUTEN-FREE COOKIES?

PAGE #: 5

Preparation

Now that you've got your GF ingredients and recipes in hand, you need to think about how you are going to prepare it and keep it gluten-free. Making gluten-free food in a non-gluten-free kitchen is risky, but very possible when precautions are taken.

Insider Information: There's a wide range of what celiacs find acceptable to them when it comes to the "risk factor". Some celiacs do not eat any food that they didn't cook or at least have a hand in preparing – particularly in a non-dedicated GF kitchen. Most times these are the same people that almost never eat out. Other people are more comfortable with higher risk situations.

We have a mixed house. I am GF, my wife is not. We have successfully fed many gluten-free people over they years (myself included).

You'll need to examine your workspace since we've already covered the utensils above.

- 1) Make sure any gluten items have been put away. Don't do GF baking and gluten baking at the same time. Always do the GF baking first.
- 2) You'll want to start by washing down your counters with warm soapy water. Make sure it's impeccably clean. Gluten isn't a living creature that has to be killed, it just has to be washed away.
- 3) Have your parchment paper handy and remember to use it. If you're not used to using, it might be easy to forget to use it.

Here are some additional articles on providing gluten-free meals for guests. Please take the time to read them.

A Celiac is Coming For Dinner -

<http://healthy-family.org/caryn/1307/a-celiac-is-coming-for-dinner>

Cooking for Gluten-free family or friends -

<http://thesavvyceliac.com/2010/11/05/cooking-gluten-free-for-celiac-family-or-friends-please-read-this-first/>



SO, YOU WANT TO BAKE GLUTEN-FREE COOKIES?

PAGE #: 6

Baking

Just follow the recipe provided.

How to make your gluten-free guest feel at ease

- 1) Don't be afraid to call and ask them for help. They will appreciate being consulted in the matter – trust me! Go over the menu with them in detail and ask for their input. They will tell you what's acceptable and what's not – what can be substituted. Some food items easily done gluten-free, some are not. Ask them for specific products & brands that they buy (ie – many soy sauces are not gluten-free, but as of this writing La Choy brand is). If you are unsure about a food/ingredient, don't guess – ask them. If they offer to bring food for themselves and/or to share, please don't be offended and graciously accept their offer. They are ensuring themselves they will have something safe to eat.
- 2) Spend some time thinking about cross contamination and how you will minimize the risk. This will take some conscious thought and action because it will be a such a foreign concept to you. You can't use the same spoon to stir a gluten-free dish that you used to stir a non-gluten-free dish, unless you thoroughly wash it first.
- 3) When your GF guest arrives walk thru the processes and procedures that you went thru to prepare their food. This should put them at ease, knowing that proper precautions (and great care) were taken in preparing their food.
- 4) Make sure your gluten-free guest knows what foods are gluten-free and what are not. If you are serving foods buffet style have the gluten-free foods separate from the gluten foods. This will lessen the cross contamination risks. Also ask if your GF guest would like to go thru the line first – before any of the GF dishes have a chance of getting contaminated. Yes, inevitably, someone will grab the spoon from the pasta salad to dish out the gluten-free coleslaw.
- 5) Provide them with the recipe so they can see what ingredients were used.

EAST CENTRAL WI GLUTEN FREE GROUP

Alan & Peggy Klapperich

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SO, YOU WANT TO BAKE GLUTEN-FREE COOKIES?

PAGE #: 7

Recipes

Peg's Primo Peanut Butter Cookies

To reduce cross contamination risks:

Thoroughly clean work area & utensils with warm soapy water.

Please use new, unopened peanut butter, butter, white sugar, brown sugar, baking soda, and Crisco.

Ingredients:

½ cup butter
½ cup Butter Flavored Crisco
1 cup sugar
1 cup Skippy Peanut Butter (use Chunky if you like more texture)
1 cup packed light brown sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon Gluten-free vanilla (McCormick's or Penzey's)
1 cup Bob's Red Mill Gluten-free Sorghum Flour
1 ½ cup Jules Gluten-free Flour Mix
2 teaspoons Arm and Hammer Baking Soda
½ teaspoon salt

Yield: 8 – 10 dozen

Directions:

Cream shortening, sugars & peanut butters.

Add eggs and beat well

Add flours, baking soda, salt to creamed ingredients.

Mix for 3-4 minutes.

Shape into balls - ½ tablespoon dough

Line cookie sheet with parchment paper.

Place on cookie sheet lined with parchment paper & flatten with fork. Dip fork in sugar first.

Bake at 350 for about 15 minutes. Time may vary depending on your oven.



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SO, YOU WANT TO BAKE GLUTEN-FREE COOKIES?

PAGE #: 8

Pamela's Chocolate Chip Cookies

To reduce cross contamination risks:

Thoroughly clean work area & utensils with warm soapy water.

Please use new, unopened butter, white sugar, brown sugar.

Ingredients:

½ cup butter

¼ cup white sugar

¼ cup light brown sugar

1 egg

1 teaspoon Gluten-free vanilla (McCormick's or Penzey's)

1½ cups Pamela's Baking & Pancake Mix

1 cups Nestle's semi sweet chocolate chips

½ cup chopped nuts (optional)

Yield: approximately 20 cookies

Directions:

Cream butter and sugar, add egg and vanilla and beat together. Add Pamela's Baking & Pancake Mix and chocolate chips (and nuts) mix thoroughly. Place tablespoon sized scoops of dough on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper. Flatten. Bake in preheated 350° oven for approximately 15 minutes. Let cookies cool slightly and use a spatula to remove from cookie sheet.

Fast & Easy: Use a small ice cream scooper or a tablespoon to form dough balls. Place on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper, flatten and put in a freezer. When frozen, remove from the cookie sheet and store in a freezer bag. For hot, fresh cookies, remove from freezer, place dough on a greased cookie sheet and bake in a preheated 350° oven for 15 minutes

Pan Cookies: Bake dough in a greased pan (9x12) for 20 to 25 minutes. Cut into bars after cooling.