

Converting Recipes / Baking Gluten Free

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We talked a bit about recipe conversions..... your favorite old recipe from “pre-gluten free” days, perhaps. There are things you can do with the basic foods, like sauces, in that you can thicken sauces, gravies, etc., with cornstarch. And of course, using gluten-free noodles for spaghetti, etc.

Baking with gluten-free flours is another matter – a bit more complicated. There are some good basic gluten-free flour mixes on the market (Bob’s Red Mill, Hodson Mills). In order to substitute gluten-free flours for the wheat flour, you will need to have a good mix or variety of flours, such as Bette Hagman’s flour mix (or one of the pre-packaged ones). This would be a mix consisting of perhaps rice flour, tapioca flour, potato starch flour as a basic mix. Then you can expand on that depending on what type of item you are making. Millet can make breads lighter, sorghum can add a bit of sweetness, amaranth holds moisture – which is good for quick breads like date bread. Bean flours add protein. Look up the various types of gluten-free flours in one of the cookbooks, or online, etc., and see what the characteristics of the flours are. Then you will know how to add them to your basic flour mix for added flavor and nutrition.

Rice flours and some others can be purchased at Oriental food markets – the rice is finer (which is better for recipes) and also less expensive.

But, remember when substituting a gluten-free flour mix for the old wheat flour, you will need to add xanthan gum! That replaces what the gluten does in the baking. There is kind of a general guide as follows:

For 1 cup of flour mix, xanthan gum addition would be approximately:

Scant 1 teaspoon in breads,

½ teaspoon for cakes,

¼ teaspoon for cookies

¾ teaspoon for muffins

You can also add an extra egg to your mix, or ½ to 1 teaspoon of unflavored gelatin. Or even a small package of instant vanilla pudding mix to your recipe.

And “bake with a pencil”. Write down what ingredient and what quantity you used in that particular recipe conversion, and then after you will know if it is OK as is, or needs to be tweaked a bit yet.

There will be baked goods that fail - - it has happened to all of us! Don’t let those discourage you - - keep trying and you’ll be baking good foods soon!