

Sweet on gluten-free

I love to indulge in winter pud but I usually limit my treats to visits from friends or family. For me, hot, saucy, sweet endings to meals are cheerful comfort food.

And as we have a couple of gluten-intolerant family members coming to stay, this week's creations are wheat and gluten-free.

About 10 per cent of Kiwis have coeliac disease – a lifelong intestinal intolerance to gluten. But many don't even know it. Symptoms can include chronic fatigue, bloating, headaches, itchy skin and irritable bowels.

Gluten is a protein that is stored in certain starches including wheat, barley, rye and oats. In wheat, the gluten is the stretchy protein that allows bakes to hold their shape once they have risen. With gluten-free baking mixes, extra raising agents are required or more eggs are needed in a recipe.

These days there are numerous products on supermarket shelves to help gluten-free cooks. Plus, the New Zealand Coeliac Organisation (coeliac.org.nz) has some great resources. Check out Coeliac Awareness Week from June 14-20.

GLUTEN-FREE FEIJOA & APPLE PIE

A free-form pie (pictured). Excellent served with a gluten-free custard or ice cream.

Ingredients

- Pastry: ½ cup icing sugar
- ½ cups gluten-free flour

RECIPE FOR SUCCESS



- 125 g butter chilled cubed
- 1-2 Tbsp icy water
- Filling: 1 egg, separated
- 300g each: feijoas, Granny Smith apples
- ¼ cup ground almonds
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 3 Tbsp caster sugar

Method

Place the icing sugar, flour and butter in a food processor and mix until well combined. Add enough water so the ingredients form a ball. Flatten the dough and wrap in cling film. Chill for 30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 190C. Lightly beat the egg white and yolk in separate bowls.

Peel and slice the feijoas. Peel, core and slice the apples.

Roll out the pastry on a sheet of baking paper to form a 30cm round. Brush the pastry with the egg yolk leaving a 5cm border free around the outside. Sprinkle the egg yolk with the ground almonds. Arrange the feijoas and apples on top. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of the caster sugar and cinnamon combined.

Fold the pastry edges over the fruit. Brush the pastry with the egg white and sprinkle with the remaining sugar. Lift the baking paper and pie onto an oven tray.



Bake for about 30 minutes until golden and cooked through. — Serves 6

SLOW COOKER GF CHOCOLATE PUD

This pudding is self-saucing. Any leftovers can be reheated in the microwave. A little water may be required to loosen the sauce.

Ingredients

- 1 cup lightly packed brown sugar
- 2 cups plain gluten-free flour
- 6 Tbsp cocoa powder
- ½ tsp each: xanthan gum, salt
- 4 tsp baking powder
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 1 tsp vanilla essence
- Sauce: 1½ cup brown sugar (not packed)
- ½ cup cocoa powder
- 3 cups boiling water

Method

Spray a slow cooker insert with oil. In a large bowl, combine the sugar, flour, cocoa powder, xanthan gum,

salt and baking powder. Mix well. Stir in the milk, oil and vanilla until combined. Place evenly over the base of the slow cooker. Turn the cooker to high. Combine the brown sugar, cocoa powder and boiling water. Pour down the sides of the slow cooker insert. Cover and cook on high for 1½-2 hours. The cake top will come away from the sides and the sauce will bubble up around the edges.

Great served with ice cream or whipped cream. — Serves 8

CARAMELISED PERSIMMON GF CAKE

This cake can also be cooked in an 18-20cm round cake pan. Do not use one with a removable base.

Ingredients

- Base: 25g butter
- 3 Tbsp brown sugar
- 1 large persimmon, peeled and thinly sliced
- Topping: 2 eggs separated
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ tsp almond essence
- ¼ cup ground almonds

- 1 tsp baking powder
- 2 Tbsp arrowroot
- ½ tsp ground cardamom

Method

Preheat the oven to 180C. Line the base of a 20cm ring cake pan with baking paper. Heat the butter and sugar in a small saucepan, stirring until the sugar is dissolved.

Spread evenly over the base of the cake pan. Place the persimmon on top overlapping each slice slightly.

Whip the egg whites until stiff. In a second bowl, whip the egg yolks and sugar until creamy. Slowly mix in the sugar.

Add the almond essence, ground almonds, baking powder, arrowroot and cardamom. The mixture will be thick. Gently fold in half the egg whites.

Once incorporated, fold in the remaining egg white. The mixture will be streaky. Spread evenly over the persimmons.

Bake for 25 minutes until the top is golden and a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. — Serves 6-8