



Mary Frances:

Hi everyone! Welcome to Gluten Free Cooking School's first live chat. Tonight we're talking about all things Thanksgiving.

Mary Frances:

Feel free to submit any questions that you have. Some readers sent in questions by email, so I'll start with a couple of those while everyone gets here.

Family Issues:

Mary Frances:

“Hey, We're visiting my mom's family for Thanksgiving and my aunt, who always cooks the cornbread stuffing, swears that she is going to make it gluten free. I don't trust her though. I know how hard it is to find gluten free cornmeal. How do I figure out whether the stuffing is actually gluten free?”

Mary Frances:

This first question touches on what makes Thanksgiving so difficult - figuring out GF in the context of family relationships. I think that the best thing to do is to call up your aunt and explain that you know that GF cornmeal is hard to find, and you don't want her to go to a lot of trouble only to find that you can't eat the stuffing. Then you can either talk about what she's purchased, or where she might be able to find some. Dealing with it now will be much better than dealing with it on Thursday.

Aaron:

I am a pretty good cook but how do you please the non-gluten free and gluten free eaters all at once

Amanda:

If you use GF seasonings in your food then most won't know the difference.. Pastas - just make sure they are al dente> And well desserts - I have had many love my desserts.

Mary Frances:

Aaron, my goal is to make the gluten free food taste just as good or better than the non gluten free food. I'm not always successful, but I've gotten most of our favorites down now. Is there a particular situation you had in mind?

Julia:

George, re: your question about pleasing NGF and GF people -- a lot of NGFs are surprised when they see how good GF foods taste.

Candy:

I agree, Mary Frances, about just making the food delicious. I eat GF by choice (best choice ever) and my husband has no idea he's now GF, too. I stick to whole foods, beans, lentils, and GF pasta and he's

clueless.

Amanda:

pleasing everyone is just impossible it will work out...

Gluten Free Cornmeal

Kim:

Now I'm worried. I have been buying cornmeal and from the ingredients, it appears to be gluten free. Is there something I should look for otherwise to make certain we are not getting hidden glutens?

Mary Frances:

Kim, I've had problems finding cornmeal for two reasons: 1) some stores do not carry plain cornmeal. They only carry cornmeal mix which contains wheat flour

Mary Frances:

The second problem is that I don't know where the cornmeal was processed. Was wheat also processed in the facility and could it have contaminated the cornmeal? I've had trouble finding cornmeal manufacturers that disclose that information on the package. Just to be safe, I try to only use cornmeal that carries a gluten free label.

Charlotte:

I thought cornmeal was gluten free, also. Isn't corn flour ok?

Mary Frances:

Corn is a naturally gluten free food. The issue is with whether it may have been contaminated during the manufacturing process. Wheat and corn both make a ton of dust when they are processed, and I can just imagine that wheat dust in the air getting all over my cornmeal.

Kim:

Okay. I can easily buy plain cornmeal with no issues. I just went and checked ingredients again, and everything looks good. One less thing to worry about here.

Amanda:

What brands of corn meal are gluten free? I love corn bread and would love to have some can anyone hook me up with a recipe for corn bread

Mary Frances:

Amanda, I typically use Bob's Red Mill cornmeal. But I think Kinnikinik (sp?) and Arrowhead also make GF cornmeal. I'm sure there are others as well.

Linda:

I looked on my box of cornmeal and I don't see anything that says wheat flour. Would it be called anything else?

Jane:

You can always go with Bob's Red Mill - everything GF from them is processed separately from their

wheat/gluten products.

Mary Frances:

Linda, that means that the manufacturer has not purposefully included wheat in the cornmeal. However, that doesn't mean that it wasn't processed in the same facility as wheat flour. Personally, I would not use that cornmeal because the label doesn't provide enough information to determine whether it is gluten free. You would need to call the manufacturer and ask whether it was processed in a corn-only facility. And even then, I'd feel more comfortable with a cornmeal that was processed in a gluten-free facility AND had been tested to make sure that the cornmeal was gluten free.

Gluten Free Gravy/Thickeners

Charlotte:

Does gravy turn out the same using cornstarch instead of flour?

Ginger:

To Charlotte: Yes! I have always used corn starch to thicken gravy, and we use it in my restaurant (no flour there.)

Mary Frances:

Charlotte, what sort of gravy are you making? Is it the more translucent gravy that a lot of people serve with turkey and dressing?

Karen:

Cornstarch works well - caramelize some onions and use broth to add flavor.

Charlotte:

Just regular turkey gravy with cornstarch or flour, water, and the broth.

JJ:

Organic kudzu powder is a great thickener and is used in Chinese medicine as a kind of tonic for congees, "puddings" (sweet or savory), and also as a hangover remedy in hot water as a tea. It must be dissolved in hot water first. It is considered as strengthening for those who are recovering from illness chronic or acute; it is great for an upset stomach or overeating.

Maria Russo :

I am from Venezuela, and need to know what kudzu is please

Mary Frances:

It's a vine that will take over everything in its path. It's also edible and its starch is used as a thickener. It's not a very common product

Mary Frances:

Though given how much of it there is in the Southern United States, I'm not sure why we don't use it more.

JJ:

Kudzu (also kuzu) was mentioned because it is not GMO, which can disturb body metabolism as much

as gluten for some people. Almost all corn and many or most grain products are GMO now unless they are specifically labeled organic, and rice may be next.

Sue:

What about xanthan gum as a thickener? I have a lot of trouble with that trying to get the right amount... I usually put in too much but I don't know the equivalent to cornstarch.

Mary Frances:

Sue, I've never tried to use xanthan gum to thicken gravy (I assume we were talking about gravy when you sent this comment). I generally use a brown rice flour, a GF mix that doesn't have xanthan, or cornstarch.

Anne:

I wouldn't say xanthan gum is a good thickener for gravy either. If you can't do cornstarch, I might try tapioca starch or potato starch.

PATRICIA:

Don't use potato starch for thickening gravy . I did and it was truly disgusting .

Gluten Free Turkeys:

Deborah:

This is my first Thanksgiving going GF. I heard that turkeys that you buy at the grocery store can have gluten in the "natural juices" that are added and that you have to buy an organic or specifically gluten free turkey. Is that true?

Mary Frances:

Deborah: It's definitely possible that gluten containing ingredients have been added to a processed turkey. I would look for one that states that it is gluten free. Food manufacturers are supposed to disclose whether there is any wheat in the "natural flavors", but that doesn't account for barley or rye.

Sue:

What about seasonings used to flavor the turkey? Do some pre-made turkeys have flour in the seasonings?

Mary Frances:

Sue, anything is possible in the world of processed foods. If the label doesn't state that the turkey is gluten free, then I would call the manufacturer.

Charlotte:

It is my first GF thanksgiving, also. Spartan turkeys are gluten free.

Candy:

I order my turkey direct from a farmer here. Fresh, not frozen. No extras added, then I brine it myself. Feel safer that way.

JJ:

Wheat is used in the manufacturing process of msg/caramel coloring/ bogus "natural flavors"/soy sauce

etc., if my research is correct.

Mary Frances:

JJ: My understanding is that wheat "can" be used in those ingredients, but it not always. The food manufacturers are supposed to disclose the presence of wheat if it is included in those items you listed.

Sue:

Thanks, I will do that. Is there a possibility that any seasonings put on the turkey skin at the time of cooking would seep through the skin? In other words, if I went to someone's house and just ate the turkey without the skin would that be a safe GF step?

Mary Frances:

Sue, I do not know about seasonings seeping through. If I knew that the seasonings had wheat in it, I would personally not eat the turkey because of the chance that the skin touched my part of the turkey. Or that the knife that cut all of the turkey had gluten on it from cutting through the skin.

Sue:

Oh, thanks! I never thought about the knife passing through the skin... wow...there's A LOT to think about... makes one not want to participate in thanksgiving!

Karen:

I buy a free range turkey brought in from the farm - organic if I can afford it - they taste the same but are "different" - cleaned with no additions - then I can do what I like

Tensha:

What about organic turkey, chicken and beef? Are they gluten free?

Mary Frances:

Organic does not necessarily equate to gluten free. I guess that it's possible that they could use organic wheat in the flavoring.

Karen:

If you want your turkey to brown rub the skin with olive oil an a bit of salt - place a couple of strips of organic bacon at the top - it will add a lovely flavor and golden color.

Maria Russo:

Thanks. I have another question. Here in my country they offer tenderized turkeys. Does that mean they are using MSG?

JJ:

Tenderized can mean papain powder alone or a mixture with lots of wheat derivatives.

Food Labeling:

JJ:

Manufacturers are supposed to disclose wheat in seasonings but not all do.

Mary Frances:

JJ: Agreed. The more that I learn about food labeling, the less I want to eat anything that is processed.

Courtney:

I use McCormick spices and seasonings only because they state if there are allergens in them.

Deborah:

I was surprised when I read that having "modified food starch" in the ingredient list meant that there was gluten in the product. Do you know if this is true? It is hard to find anything without that ingredient!

Mary Frances:

Deborah: That's not necessarily true. Now that we have allergen labeling laws, they should disclose if wheat is the source of the starch. For those of you who have questions about labeling and food additives, this is a topic that John and I spent a lot of time on when we wrote our new e-book *Gluten Free Survival Guide*. It's definitely a confusing topic.

Maria Russo :

Badia spices are also gluten free as they told me

Karen:

Modified corn starch is OK - not modified food starch - Make your own :)

Karen:

Buy your ingredients fresh, meat from a butcher (direct from the farmer) - once it goes into a manufacturing plant there is a high level of cross contamination potential

Theresa:

Someone told me there is gluten in some cheeses, but I haven't found any labels with wheat in them. Is it true that some have wheat?

Mary Frances:

Theresa: it's possible that shredded cheese could be dusted with a wheat containing ingredient to prevent sticking...not sure whether this would have to be disclosed on label. That being said, i do buy shredded cheese, so maybe I should think about it.

Janet:

Theresa - most cheeses are gluten free. Some brands will add wheat as an anti-caking ingredient in shredded cheese (Sargento's doesn't). Also some blue cheese is made using bread mold and may not be GF.

Janet:

BTW, shredded cheese that uses wheat will disclose it on the package (I've seen it on some generic brands).

Gluten Free Stuffing:

JJ:

Do you have a recipe for a good GF stuffing?

Mary Frances:

Let's talk about stuffing for a minute.

Mary Frances:

<http://www.glutenfreecookingschool.com/archives/gluten-free-cornbread-dressing-recipe/>

Mary Frances:

PJ: That's the link to my recipe for cornbread dressing. It's based on the dressing that my grandmother taught me to make. *(it's also the recipe included in this Gluten Free Thanksgiving Made Easy Kit)*

Courtney:

Do you have good bread to egg & stock ratio for GF stuffing?

Mary Frances:

Courtney: I think that the bread: egg and stock ratio depends on personal taste. I like mine rather wet; John likes it dry, so I end up doing something in the middle. When my grandmother made it she would add enough stock, butter, and egg, so that the uncooked mixture was pretty soupy.

Ginger:

I've recently gone gluten and sugar free to lose weight. I know I should cut back on that delicious turkey skin and other wonderful things this Thanksgiving, but I need some suggestions as to how to make some stuffing that I can eat, that is not cornbread stuffing! I have purchased some gluten free bread, but there is just not the same consistency as regular flour bread and I don't know if crumbling this (expensive) bread up to make stuffing would taste good. So, I guess I'm looking for ideas here.

Mary Frances:

Does anyone have any comments for Ginger on making a bread stuffing. I grew up with cornbread stuffing and am not as familiar with the bread version.

Linda:

On the Udi's gluten free bread, there is a recipe for stuffing - you need to butter and toast the bread in the oven before using it in your regular recipe

Karen:

I made myself a rice bread stuffing and it was nicely seasoned but was awful - the rice bread had a mush gag level consistency once it got steamy and I couldn't eat it - that was with drying - the rice flour just liquefies - I think the corn bread is a good idea or go with rice stuffing.

Candy:

I've made stuffing with a mixture of cornbread and regular GF bread, then added brown and wild rice blend. Takes up "space" without going through a whole loaf of GF bread.

JJ:

Udi's bread tastes pretty good toasted, as do some other gluten free rice breads. With lots of organic

butter, onion, garlic and herbs, the slowly toasted bread might make a great stuffing.

Mary Frances:

I was doing some research on bread stuffing the other day, and one of the tips I found frequently was to dry the bread out in the oven at low heat (basically, toasting at a low temperature) instead of leaving the bread out to go stale.

Courtney:

I found GF stuffing cubes (pre-seasoned) from The Grainless Baker at Wegmans. I'm going to be making a test batch of stuffing with those tomorrow.

PATRICIA:

My mom makes bread stuffing with Udi's bread and it is amazing.

Julia:

The Udi is \$12 a loaf here. Is it worth it?

JJ:

Roasted potato and root vegetable stuffing? Organic chestnuts mixed in there too? Fluffy organic wild rice and regular rice stuffing tossed with butternut squash, celery, onions if the rice bread stuffing is too mushy? Also, stuffing does not have to be in the turkey but a glass baking dish with foil over it is fine; just stuff the turkey with aromatic herbs.

Courtney:

Order it online for cheaper, Julia.

Candy:

Yikes, Julia. I think you can buy it online cheaper than that. Look for the \$1 off coupon from Udi's too. It sells for \$5.56 here.

PATRICIA:

The Udi bread is definitely the closest thing to "real" bread I've found after trying literally dozens. I am willing to spend the money for that treat.

Julia:

Wow, Candy. Thanks for the tip!

Janet:

Julia - Udi's is one of the better breads around but at \$12 a loaf, you might be disappointed. You'd probably be better off making your own bread from scratch. Udi's can be very small in size and often has gaping holes in the middle (which is fine if you're making it into stuffing not so much for sandwiches).

Candy:

I've also made Bob's Red Mill GF bread for croutons. Would be good in stuffing & you could slice it thick for croutons. I add herbs, flax meal, and buckwheat for some whole grain texture.

Theresa

I found some gluten free flour in the grocery store here. I wonder if you could make your own bread for the stuffing?

Anne:

I make great GF bread w/ my breadmaker, I'm sure it would be delicious in stuffing.

Michelle:

Theresa, for stuffing I buy UDI bread and I cut it up into cubes and then put on a cookie sheet and bake in oven until crispy and then I put that in to make my stuffing.

Candy:

I make GF bread crumbs from the heels of my GF bread. Just keep them in the freezer until I have a few, then process in food processor then dry out in oven. Perfect for fried green tomatoes [which I apologize has nothing to do with Thanksgiving :)]

Cream Soups

Linda:

I am sad that I can't find any cream of soup that is gluten free.

Mary Frances:

Linda: I have a secret recipe for that and it's so simple to make. It can be changed to be whichever type of soup that you want. Chicken, mushroom, celery, etc. It is one of the family recipes that I've shared in our new e-book.

Charlotte:

Progresso makes a cream of mushroom soup and I, also, have found another GF cream of mushroom in a health food store. (Don't know the brand name)

Julia:

Health Valley has cream of chicken and mushroom soups that are gluten-free.

Amanda:

A lot of the Progresso brands are GF like the clam chowders and cream of mushroom and others...just check the labels.

Kim:

Linda, that was something we felt was missing in our GF diet as well. Try this to substitute for a can of cream of anything. 1 c cold milk, 2 tbsp cornstarch, 1 1/2 tsp butter, 1 tsp chicken bouillon (Better than Bouillon is GF), 1/2 tsp salt, pepper to taste. In small saucepan, whisk milk and cornstarch till well blended. Stir in butter, bouillon, salt, and pepper. Heat to a boil, stirring frequently. Simmer on low for one minute more to thicken. You can add mushrooms or celery or chicken.

Karen:

<http://glutenfreecooking.about.com/od/soupsandsalads/r/gfcreamsoups.htm> - take 20 minutes and use fresh vegetables

Sue:

Is the Progresso GF? That is awesome if it is.... I haven't been any to find any GF cream soups.

Guest:

Pacific Foods has a new condensed cream soup out. There is celery, mushroom and chicken.

Courtney:

I just found Pacific brand condensed soups (celery, chicken, and mushroom) at Wegmans! =) Bought them but haven't tried them yet.

PATRICIA:

Can you make the cream soups without using corn?

Julia:

The Pacific condensed soups are pretty inexpensive at Costco.

Bonnie:

The Pacific Farms soups are gluten free. They are in some stores, but not all yet. I, too, have bought some but not yet used them.

Mary Frances:

Patricia, yes the soups can be made without corn. I would substitute tapioca starch for any recipes that calls for cornstarch. I made a quick batch of gravy this week using my recipe for cream of mushroom soup and only used brown rice flour.

Mary Frances:

I do use Bob's Red Mill rice flour though. I do not notice a grainy feel with it like I do some of the other rice flours.

Being a Guest at Thanksgiving:

Guest:

I'm newly diagnosed - is there a way to eat as a guest at the house of someone who is cooking a 'standard thanksgiving meal'? Or do I just need to bring along my own???

Mary Frances:

Guest: How well do you know the person who will be hosting you?

Julia:

Guest -- Bring your own just in case. Well intentioned people will say things like, "Oh, can't you just scrape off the crust?"

Courtney:

@ Guest: Bring your own meal, for sure! That's what we are doing.

Julia:

I always bring veggies and something like hummus that I made that will be filling, just in case -- enough to share.

Julia:

It's safest to bring something that will at least tide you over. Some people just don't "get" that you can be allergic to something that is pretty much in everything.

Mary Frances:

I agree with most of you about bringing your own food. When we do Thanksgiving with my Mom's siblings, I always bring a full meal for us. I make enough of some dishes to share, but others stay hidden in the kitchen and are only for us.

What Can I Not Eat At a Traditional Thanksgiving?

Katie:

I am new to all of this. I'm not sure of what are the main things that I won't be able to eat.

Theresa:

I think maybe you could eat the vegetables, like the mashed potatoes, yams, cranberries, etc.

Mary Frances:

Katie: The main suspects are the dressing/stuffing, anything with a crumbly topping, pretty much any dessert, and any casserole.

Theresa:

I can't eat the green bean casserole because of the fried onions my daughter puts on the top.

Janet:

Just remember, unprocessed fruits, vegetables, meats and dairy are all naturally gluten free. The only issues come from the stuff that gets added so if you stick with individual fresh or dried herbs and spices to flavor your foods, you should be safe from gluten contamination.

Courtney:

Katie-that's a tough one b/c it depends on how everything is prepared and what ingredients are used.

Dani:

My thought was that I would just have to eliminate the stuffing and the dessert.

Mary Frances:

Dani: I don't trust any casserole. So many of those use Campbell's Soup and most people who are not GF do not realize that Campbell's Soups have wheat in them.

Theresa:

And the gravy.

Mary Frances:

Oh yes, gravy is usually full of gluten

Karen:

Lots of vegetables for you! - without sauces - are good to go! Shredded cheese, nuts, butter are also

good - Bring your own fruit sorbet or soy ice cream for dessert

Green Bean Casserole:

Sue:

It might seem like a lot of work but is there a way to make GF onion rings for the green bean casserole?

Mary Frances:

<http://glutenfreemommy.com/green-bean-casserole/>

Mary Frances:

That recipe from Gluten Free Mommy has a recipe for GF onion rings

Sue:

awesome! thanks for the link!

Amanda:

green bean casserole can be made with the progresso cream of mushroom with a little corn starch to thicken and leave off the onions maybe recommend a side dish if people want to add them.

Gluten Free Rolls

Mary Frances:

The thing I miss most is a whole-grain yeast dinner roll. Do you have a really, really good recipe? Thanks!

Mary Frances:

That is a question from Candy that was emailed in.

Mary Frances:

I do not have a whole-wheat type roll recipe, but I do have a pretty darned good regular yeast roll recipe. It is also included with the new e-book. (*A new and improved version is included in this Gluten Free Thanksgiving Made Easy Kit*) Does anyone else have a good recipe for yeast rolls?

Amanda:

My favorite is croissants (not sure on spelling) does anyone have a recipe for something close to them?

Mary Frances:

I think that Gluten Free Gobsnacked has a croissant recipe.

Mary Frances:

<http://glutenfree.wordpress.com/2008/01/09/gluten-free-homemade-croissants/>

Gluten Free Desserts

Theresa :

Is sherbet gluten free?

Theresa

How about frozen yogurt?

Mary Frances:

Theresa, sherbet and frozen yogurt can be made without gluten, but you would still need to read the label to make sure.

Jayne:

What is a good GF pie crust recipe and what kind of flour to you use in the pie when it calls for flour?

Anne

My pie crust last year was from a mix and it was a fiasco. Very tough! A chef friend of mine suggested weighting it with beans and par-baking it in advance, to keep it thin. Haven't tried since but I will.

Mary Frances:

I tried Perfect Pantry crust for the first time this week and had a hard time with it tearing. That may have just been my lack of experience with pie crust. It is the ONLY thing that my grandmother and mother never made from scratch.

Sharon:

Does anyone have a gluten free, egg free pumpkin pie recipe?

Mary Frances:

<http://www.bookofyum.com/blog/gluten-free-allergen-free-vegan-coconut-pumpkin-pie-recipe-4372.html>

Mary Frances:

This post from Book of Yum has a recipe for a GF, Egg free pie, but there are also links to several other GF pumpkin pie recipes and to other vegan recipes.

Maria Russo:

Check out the blog of Sweet Tartelette, she just posted a gluten free pear pie a few days ago, and it seems great.

Anne:

Your obstacle with pumpkin pie re: gluten is likely to be the crust only

Charlotte:

I purchased my pie crusts from a lady that markets her GF baked goods in the Traverse City, Mi area. Quite good. But, I know you can buy GF pie crust mixes or probably substitute a GF all purpose flour mix (like Pamela's) for the wheat flour.

Anne Anne:

I have a dairy free pumpkin pie recipe that can probably take an egg substitute.

Maria Russo:

Here is a recipe for the GF egg free and dairy free pumpkin pie

<http://www.thepunkycocoanut.com/2010/10/pumpkin-pie-egg-free-gluten-free-no.html>

George:

What about a pumpkin cheesecake instead of pie? Are there GF ways of making cheesecake without compromising?

Julia:

George, I fake cheesecake crust by sprinkling ground almond mixed with sugar and butter on the bottom of the pan.

Candy:

George, use GF gingersnaps for crust in your pumpkin cheesecake. You can make them or buy them already made.

Amanda:

If you use GF graham crackers...for your cheesecake it should be fine.

Michelle:

For cheesecake I use GF graham crackers and crush them up and butter for the crust

Sharon:

Thanks for the pumpkin pie recipes!

Michelle :

Sprouts has a great GF cheesecake that is ready to buy

Mary Frances:

Sharron's question earlier about a GF egg-free pumpkin pie got me thinking about pumpkin pie alternatives. I made a custard type pumpkin pie last week and was just not crazy about it at all.

Mary Frances:

I think that pumpkin filling mixed with whipped cream, on a crumb crust, and the frozen might be really good.

Theresa:

I thought graham flour had gluten in it.

Julia Julia:

Theresa, Indian "gram" flour is garbanzo flour. But I think the "graham" flour does have gluten.

Mary Frances:

Kinnikinnick makes a gluten free "graham" cracker, I believe. Graham flour is made from wheat

Melissa:

Has anyone tried to make Pumpkin Roll GF? I want to make it for Thanksgiving. My family and I love it.

Mary Frances:
I'm not familiar with a pumpkin roll. What is it like?

Kim:
Pumpkin roll is like a sponge cake (pumpkin in this case) with a cream cheese filling that is rolled.

Amy:
Pumpkin roll is a pumpkin cake cooked in a cookie sheet like pan so it's thin and then typically has a cream cheese filling you spread on it, roll it to a log shape and cut slices off that way. I'm still working on a good GF flour for my recipe.

Mary Frances:
For the flour for the sponge cake, I would try a flour mix that is equal parts brown rice flour, tapioca starch and sorghum flour. That is my go-to flour mix for cakes. I'd try it first with xanthan gum added at a ratio of 1/2 tsp to 1 c. of flour.

Courtney Courtney:
<http://www.glutenfreehomemaker.com/2008/11/pumpkin-roll-great-thanksgiving-dessert.html>

Marianne:
I fixed a strawberry-pretzel dessert last year gluten free that was great, sorry I don't have the recipe with me right now

Mary Frances:
I bet the strawberry -pretzel dessert recipe is pretty wide-spread online. We LOVE the Glutino pretzels. SO GOOD!

Charlotte:
I've made a delicious pumpkin bread. Can't tell it's GF. Adding ingredients like pumpkin, applesauce, carrots (carrot cake) etc really help disguise the different taste and keep things moist.

Charlotte:
I don't know how to post my recipes, but just find any good pumpkin bread, cake , banana bread , whatever recipe and substitute.

Gluten Free & Corn Free:

PATRICIA:
I am also allergic to corn and am having a very hard time finding gluten and corn free products and recipes. Any ideas?

Maria Russo:
As thickener you can always use arrowroot if you are avoiding corn

Maria Russo:
My son is allergic to corn and I am using arrowroot, sorghum flour, tapioca and potato flour, and

garbanzo flour too.. Now there is also coconut flour. Check out spunky coconut blog.

Michelle:

Patricia I am allergic to both gluten and corn I usually sub tapioca starch for corn starch and I use rice chips and crackers in meatloaf and other things that call for bread crumbs.

Making Recipes Gluten Free

Melissa:

Can you replace wheat flour with GF flour when a recipe calls for flour?

Melissa:

Why couldn't you just use an all purpose GF flour when a recipe calls for flour? Here in PA, I found an all purpose GF flour at the grocery store. What will happen if I just substitute it? Will it taste funny?

Mary Frances:

Melissa, I've tried several different packaged GF mixes and I've never gotten really great results from them. Many of them contain xanthan gum and leavenings, and I prefer to add those ingredients as needed for the individual recipe.

Also, I've found that some recipes just need different flours. For example, my biscuit recipe only uses rice flour and cornstarch, but many of my other recipes use a flour mix that is more nutritious.

Julia:

Melissa, a lot of the GF flours are not fluffy. Your baked goods might come out with a brick-like texture.

Amanda:

If you just substitute things will not cook right, taste right, or just be nasty I learned the hard way...

Amy:

A lot of trial and error eventually gets us to finding good combos. So far for most cookies I use equal parts cornstarch, soy flour and sorghum flour. Out of all the cookies I've made with this combo, I've not had anyone notice they are gluten free. My 3 year old even knows which container holds the cookie flour!

Charlotte:

I don't bother with all the different flours. I just buy the GF all purpose kind and substitute it for regular flour. It usually works fine. Sometimes you need to add an extra egg or a little less flour and under bake it a little or it is too dry.

Guest Guest:]

What is xanthan gum?

Mary Frances:

Xanthan gum is a food additive that helps make gluten free doughs stretchier and keeps them from crumbling. It helps replace the effect that gluten has in wheat doughs.

Devin:

I have a favorite roll recipe passed down from my grandmother, but I haven't figured out how to make it gluten free. I was going to try it tonight using your flour blend. Do I need to add anything else? (Love your recipes by the way)

Mary Frances:

@Devin: Xanthan gum would probably be the only addition. When I made up my recipe I looked at 4 or 5 different gluten free recipes to try to figure out the correct xanthan gum: flour ratio.

Devin Devin:

So I should just experiment with the xanthan gum?

Mary Frances:

@ Devin: Yes, just look around at different recipes and see what ratio they used and then pick a ratio to start with. By the way, I ended up using a brown rice flour/corn starch mix for my yeast rolls, rather than the GF All purpose mix that I use for most things.

Cross Contact in the Kitchen:

Janet:

If I make gluten free pizza crust or anything gluten free, what should I do to make it an approved kitchen. Because I make regular pie crusts too,

Janet:

Can i make pie crusts with gluten and without in the same kitchen? Or does it have to approved? I sell my products in my business as a caterer.

Mary Frances:

Janet: I'm not sure whether the food labeling regulations would apply to use as a caterer. My first thought is just that you should make sure your clients know that wheat is used in your kitchen. Then I would take every precaution to make sure that you use different kitchen tools, clean the area very well after using wheat, and anything else that you can think of.

Amanda:

I worked with a catering company once and we had to use all new pans and utensils and surfaces had to be bleached for our gluten free patrons.

Janet:

Thanks Mary Frances and Amanda, I will check into it more!

Maria Russo:

I am concern is with the oven, Does it matter whether you cook GF foods in an oven where you bake other foods with gluten?

Mary Frances:

Maria: I would not think that the oven would be an issue as long as there isn't flour flying around. Kitchen equipment, baking stones, and baking pans are some of the main issues with a kitchen that is

used for GF and Gluten cooking/baking.

Sad About a Gluten Free Thanksgiving:

Melissa:

Having celiacs disease is so hard for me! I love to cook and bake. With Thanksgiving in a few days and with xmas coming.....I'm worried about things tasting good being that they will be GF....like cookies, pumpkin pie, gravy, pumpkin rolls..etc.

Melissa:

I cheat a lot...and pay for it!

Mary Frances:

Melissa, that's a legitimate concern. We've been GF for seven years and there are still baked goods that I'm just getting around to perfecting. But, it is possible to bake GF foods that taste AMAZING, so don't give up.

Julia:

You will do fine, Melissa!

Julia:

True, Mary Frances.

Melissa:

I'm a very picky eater to begin with and now I have to go completely GF.,,I'm really struggling.

Julia:

Melissa, just hang in there. You will feel so much better that it will be worth it.

Amanda:

Melissa it will be a trial type of thing. I went from all pasta type stuff to GF and in the 6 years almost 7 years I am still learning but there are many websites and newly packaged foods out there that make life easier...Good luck you can do it..

Julia:

Another tip for Melissa and newbies -- Asian markets and Indian markets have a lot of GF selections for cereal, baking, and even pasta -- like corn flour pasta and pure buckwheat pasta.

GF Mama :

I am completely terrified about thanksgiving. I have been GF since september. It has changed my life drastically!! I am worried about being glutened and being miserable!

Mary Frances:

GF Mama, are you hosting for Thanksgiving or eating in someone else's home?

GF Mama:

Going to the in laws. They know about our GF and my 7 year old is GF too.

Melissa:

I'm with you...GF Mama. Are you cooking? I am and I am having about 25 people to my house. I'm nervous that they won't like my food. Maybe I should just cook it the old way and deal with getting sick. I don't want to disappoint any of my guests. :(

Mary Frances:

GF mama, will the in-laws let you in the kitchen to cook? Can you bring anything? I like to bring the foods that I know I'm not going to be able to resist in their gluten version.

Mary Frances:

Last year when I visited my SIL for thanksgiving, I did end up cooking a full GF dinner with less than an hour's notice from a kitchen had no specialty GF products. You want to avoid that if you can!

GF Mama:

I am such a food lover and my favorite holiday is Thanksgiving, but now I don't think I even want to participate! My m-i-l is trying but i read EVERY label!

GF Mama:

Yes. I am making a dessert for my 7 yr old and myself. I figure the meats will be pretty safe as long as they use normal spices and then that's all I really need!

Amanda:

Melissa, don't chance it the damage is not worth it...I find if I am not sure about something I will buy a GF mix and follow the instructions but you will do fine..

Mary Frances:

@ GF Mama - you are right to read every label. But don't let it get you down. If you need to you can always have a full Thanksgiving meal later when you can cook it all that way you need to.

GF Mama:

good idea! I will make me something later!! Just a speed bump in the road and not wanting to feel like I use to. My craving are just now subsiding and I will be tempted.

Mary Frances:

My solution to cravings is to keep a entire jar of chocolate cake icing in my purse.

Mary Frances:

I will hide in the bathroom and eat it by the spoonful if I have to =)

GF Mama:

I am just missing the yummy things like rolls and I don't want to make a huge batch of them if I will be the only one to eat them.

Mary Frances:

GF Mama: Your comment about the rolls made me laugh. Between John and I, we've never had any rolls leftover. We absolutely gorge on them when I make them =)

GF Mama GF Mama:
:) I just need to make some rolls then!

Theresa:
Ha ha ha, a jar of icing!

GF Mama:
LOL! Mary Frances that's a wonderful idea!

Guest:
That thing about the icing just made me laugh out loud.