



**Ontario Home Economics Association**

# C O M M U N I Q U É

*Ask A Professional Home Economist*

**For Immediate Release**

## **De-Mystifying Gluten-Free Flours**

*(Sorghum and Whole Bean)*

**Baking Tips from Donna Washburn, P.H.Ec. & Heather Butt, P.H.Ec.**

**Professional Home Economists and cookbook authors Donna Washburn and Heather Butt announce the release of their latest book, *125 Best Gluten-Free Recipes* (Robert Rose Inc.) 2003. Acknowledged experts in the field of bread machine baking, they have extensive recipe development expertise working with many bread machine manufacturers and yeast companies.**

Baking with flours that do not contain gluten creates special challenges for the baker as it is the gluten that provides the structure in hearty yeast breads and light airy cakes.

According to Leanna Knox, RD of Nutrition Focus, “Gluten is the storage protein of many grains, including wheat, oats, rye and barley. So these, as well as anything made with them, must be eliminated. Celiac disease is a medical condition in which the lining of the small intestine is damaged by a substance called gluten. The tiny, hair-like projections that line the walls of the intestine, called villi, become flattened. As a result, there is less surface area available for the absorption of nutrients from foods. This can make the risk for malnutrition high.”

(more)

When a family member has celiac disease or a wheat allergy, this has usually meant cooking a separate meal for him or her. Gluten-free foods do not have to be plain or boring. It's possible to serve healthy, tasty meals that the whole family can enjoy.

Over the last few years, the range of flours and starches readily available has expanded, as has the knowledge of working with them. Two of the more adaptable gluten-free, wheat-free flours on the market are whole bean and sorghum.

Bean flour has more protein than other gluten-free flours, thus bread rises higher and the products are often more tender. It is usually combined with other flours because of its stronger flavour. Manufactured from a variety of beans, it yields both light and dark coloured flours. Many companies treat beans before grinding into flour to reduce the flatulent effects. The flour is then labelled micronized, processed, pre-cooked or toasted. Choose from several varieties including garbanzo bean (chickpea), garbanzo-fava (garfava) which combines garbanzo beans and fava beans (a broad bean that tastes very sweet and buttery), and whole bean flour from Romano (cranberry) beans. All bean flours are interchangeable in recipes.

Sorghum, known to some as Jowar, is a millet-like grain high in fibre, starch and protein and rich in fat-soluble and B-vitamins. The flour, not as finely ground as other flours, is grey-white with tan undertones. The higher sugar content gives a sweet product that browns well when baked. The slightly nutty, savoury, very earthy flavour may be too strong when a neutral-flavoured flour is required.

Donna and Heather offer some tips from their gluten-free cookbook for baking with these and other gluten-free flours and starches.

- Purchase flours and starches from reliable sources for consistent quality. Once you succeed with a particular product, either brand or quality, stick with it.
- Transfer flours and starches to square, stackable, airtight plastic containers with wide tops and tightly fitting lids to allow for ease of measuring of these powdery ingredients.
- Store all gluten-free flours and starches, except rice bran that needs refrigeration, away from heat and light. For long-term storage, freeze.
- Label all containers with easy-to-read permanent markers. It is impossible to tell the difference between some of the starches by feel or appearance.
- Sift all flours and starches as you fill the containers rather than spending the time each time you bake. Stir with a spoon or a fork, just before measuring.
- Organize a baking corner where you keep a variety of dry ingredients. Equip a deep drawer or an overhead cupboard with a set of dry ingredient measures and spoons, a metal spatula, a large metal spoon, a heat-resistant spatula, a set of your most commonly used baking pans, and a cooling rack within easy reach.

- Sorghum/bean flour combinations are particularly compatible for recipes containing chocolate, molasses or applesauce. Sorghum flour complements the sweet flavour of pumpkin, molasses and rhubarb.

Other cookbooks by Donna Washburn, P.H.Ec. and Heather Butt, P.H.Ec. include *Canada's Best Bread Machine Baking Recipes*, *More of Canada's Best Bread Machine Baking Recipes* and *125 Best Quick Bread Recipes* (Robert Rose Inc).

Contact Heather and Donna directly at [bread@ripnet.com](mailto:bread@ripnet.com), or visit their website at: [www.bestbreadrecipes.com](http://www.bestbreadrecipes.com).

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