

Naomi Devlin

When I was diagnosed as coeliac almost ten years ago, the news brought both shock and relief. It's the reaction many coeliacs have to diagnosis. The relief of having an answer to all this pain and illness, comes with the realisation that nothing will ever be quite the same again.

My glass is pretty much always at least half full, so I set about discovering how I could heal myself and delight my taste buds in new and unexpected ways. Previously a total foodie and artisan home baker, I made it my mission to try it - if it was gluten free. The journey took me around the world by way of indigenous grains, native breads that are inherently gluten free such as Injeera, Socca, Dosas and Blinis and into the amazingly online community of fellow bloggers who experiment and share both culinary failure and success with infectious enthusiasm alike.



As a nutritionist, I find that my own experience helps me to understand some of the feelings that people have when dealing with dietary restrictions. Coeliac disease can feel like an enormous burden to carry and fear of contamination can ruin meals out and spontaneity.

But I always emphasise the potential that we have as coeliacs to eat delicious, nutritious, interesting food if we want to. We don't have to be content with genius bread, white flour substitutes and cardboard pastry! We can create breads that are like nothing else – not just

facsimiles of Mothers Pride and Kingsmill granary. I personally want to eat dark, malty Teff sourdough; light, nutty sorghum and almond pastry; moist, fruity chestnut and apple muffins and wicked chocolate and coconut brownies. What a shame that more people don't get a chance to eat these amazing things!

I teach a beginners and advanced gluten free day course at River Cottage in Devon. On both courses I aim to inspire people to get into the kitchen and bake their own bread, pastry, pancakes, muffins, cakes and cookies using nutritious whole grain gluten free flours and none of the gums and additives that you find in commercially produced gluten free products. It's liberating because none of the recipes are complicated, they all freeze well and with a little planning, you could have a month's supply of home baked goodies in your freezer, for an afternoon's enjoyable baking.

Sound like fun? It is! I can answer all of your gluten free questions – and usually a lot more besides. There is nothing serious about the day and even the least experienced cook can go away with newfound kitchen confidence – those with more experience might want to look at my advanced day where we make pitta breads, puff pastry, choux buns and more.