



# Have your cake and eat it!

Whether you're a coeliac or follow a **gluten** free diet by choice, **Denise** O'Callaghan of **Denise's Delicious Gluten** Free Bakery tells Clodagh Dooley why being on a restricted diet doesn't mean a restricted food experience

Owning a business had always been a lifelong dream for **Denise** O'Callaghan. Despite having a strong passion for home baking, which ran throughout generations of the O'Callaghan family, **Denise** began her career working in banking. However, following her father's diagnosis with coeliac disease in 2007, she soon realised setting up her own baking company was her true calling.

"When dad was diagnosed with coeliac disease, we found it difficult when starting out with baking treats that were **gluten** free," **Denise** explains. "At a time when **gluten** free products weren't as widely available or as tasty as they are today, I realised there may be a market for selling good **gluten** free products that tasted no different to regular treats. I developed the belief that although you were on a restricted diet, it really shouldn't be a restricted lifestyle."

And so **Denise's Gluten** Free Bakery ([www.delicious.ie](http://www.delicious.ie)) was established and has won at the Great Taste Awards over five consecutive years.

"We've had people come to us looking for dairy free and yeast free recipes now as well as **gluten** free, so our range of 'free from' treats is extending," says **Denise**. "It's a challenge to bake without certain ingredients each time, but something we love doing."

SWEET SECRETS

**Denise's** customers often ask her to share the secrets behind her **delicious** recipes and she emphasises using the correct flour as one of the most important steps in **gluten** free baking.

"Some people tell me that they used chestnut flour to make a chocolate torte and a sponge cake - the chocolate torte turned out brilliantly but the sponge was a disaster. No one flour sorts everything for **gluten** free products. If you're making a chocolate torte which needs to be heavy and succulent, then use chestnut but that won't work for a plain sponge you want to be light and fluffy.

"Use a flour blend (see recipe below) as the basis for all **gluten** free baking. Also be aware that **gluten** free products tend to fall apart more easily than regular products so to prevent this, use a gum.

"Nowadays there are many lovely **gluten** free products on the market which is a fantastic development," says **Denise**. "Ireland has the highest number of coeliacs in Europe and a lot more restaurants are becoming mindful of that fact. Non-coeliacs also choose to eat **gluten** free products which means people are asking for them, which is great. **Gluten** free cakes and pastries are no longer viewed as something you simply have to make-do with, now people have more choice and eat **gluten** free products because they genuinely enjoy them."



## MOIST CHOCOLATE BROWNIES

Makes 12

### INGREDIENTS:

50g hazelnuts  
600g cooked beetroot with natural juice drained off  
125g Denise's Delicious flour blend (see below)  
1 teaspoon guar gum  
1 teaspoon gluten free baking powder  
100g cocoa powder  
200g light muscovado sugar  
200g golden syrup  
6 large eggs  
½ teaspoon salt  
Icing sugar for dusting

### METHOD:

1. Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 5/190°C/375°F. Line a 25cm x 30cm/10in x 12in Swiss roll tin with baking parchment.
2. Rub the hazelnuts to remove any loose skins then place them in a food processor until finely ground. Add the beetroot and whizz until it is a purée. Pour into a medium bowl.
3. In another bowl, sieve the flour, gum, baking powder and cocoa powder all together three times. This will allow the cocoa to blend properly with the flour and avoids lumps.
4. Add the flour mixture to the beetroot mixture.
5. Combine the sugar, syrup, eggs and salt

- and beat together with an electric mixer on setting one until smooth. Stir into the beetroot and flour mixture.
6. Pour the mixture into the prepared tin and bake for 35 minutes until firm in the centre but still a little sticky.
  7. Allow to cool fully before cutting into twelve squares and, if you like, dust with icing sugar.



## DENISE'S DELICIOUS FLOUR BLEND

From her book 'Recipes from my Gluten Free Bakery'. Makes approximately 850g (2lb) flour blend

250g rice flour  
25g tapioca flour  
275g potato flour  
275g corn flour  
13g teff flour

1 teaspoon gluten free baking powder  
1 teaspoon guar gum

### METHOD

Sieve all the ingredients into a bowl and mix well.