



## The perfect... Gluten-free scones

by Denise O'Callaghan

Your cut-out-and-keep guide to the fundamentals of cooking

**W**ith **gluten-free** baking, the number-one pitfall is the flour. The most common mistake is that people buy one **gluten-free** flour and think that it will do everything. But **gluten-free** flour is more complex than regular flour, and that's particularly true when it comes to baking. For example, rice flour is gritty and heavy, and it makes a gorgeous brownie or chocolate torte, but not a light sponge cake. Cornflour is very starchy, white and powdery. It can be chalky on its own and a criticism of a lot of gluten-free baking is that it doesn't have a very nice mouthfeel.

By trial and error in our bakery, I developed a flour blend that's also in my cookery book. The challenge was to get something that would do everything. To make 850g (2lbs) it's a matter of mixing together 250g (10oz) rice flour, 25g (1oz) tapioca flour, 275g (11oz) potato flour, 275g (11oz) corn flour, 13g (½oz) teff flour and one teaspoon each of gluten-free baking powder and guar gum. Gluten is the glue in wheat flour baking, so think of the guar gum like the corset in gluten-free baking.

Gluten-free baking won't have the same rise or texture, but it will be lighter. A lot of people favour gluten-free baking for the lightness.

I still love the dainty, high scones like my mother used to make, but fashion now is for big mothership ones that are more flat. But scones don't need to be perfect. Character is good. This is home-baking and they don't need to look like they came off a conveyor belt.

But don't let down a good scone with bad butter, and a pretty plate always helps. This recipe makes 8-10 scones depending on the size of your cutter.

### You will need:

200g (8oz) Denise's Delicious flour blend (see above)
1 teaspoon gluten-free baking powder
1 teaspoon xanthan gum powder
50g (2oz) butter/margarine (or dairy-free margarine)
50g (2oz) caster sugar
2 large eggs
A little milk for glazing

### Method:

Preheat the oven to 190°C, 375°F, Gas 5. Sieve the flour, the baking powder and the xanthan gum powder into a bowl. Rub in the butter or margarine, whichever you are using, until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Sieve the caster sugar in to the dry ingredients. Beat the eggs and add to the mixture. Bring together into a ball. If the mixture is a little stiff or does not form a ball, add a little milk to soften. Turn onto a floured board and knead lightly until the underside of the dough is without cracks. Press out with the palm of your hand and cut out scones using a round scone cutter dipped in potato flour before cutting each scone. Place on a floured baking tray and brush the top of each scone with a little milk. Bake in the centre of the oven for 15-20 minutes until brown. Turn the scones upside down for the final five minutes to finish cooking and ensure that they are baked to a golden colour underneath. Cool on a wire rack and eat warm. ■



Denise O'Callaghan is the owner of **Delicious the Gluten-Free Bakery**, whose baked goods are sold in leading supermarkets nationwide. Her book, **Delicious Recipes from my Gluten-Free Bakery**, is published by Mercier Press  
In conversation with Sarah Caden