

Cooking with Gluten Free Flours: Part 2



Following on from my article *Cooking with Gluten Free Flours: Part 1*, here are another three popular flours that are excellent for your health, have tasty unique flavours and are very flexible to cook with. Soybean, buckwheat and chickpea flours are enjoyed around the world in a variety of different ways including bread & pastry making, pasta, baking, desserts and much more.

Here's a few facts you might not know.....

Soy flour from soybeans is rich in protein and has a very high concentration of isoflavones. Studies have linked these powerful compounds to many health benefits including being protective against breast and prostate cancer and reducing the risk of osteoporosis as well as being able to lower cholesterol.

Soy flour is found in many store bought gluten free flour and bread mixes and has a distinctive rustic flavour that is best used in savoury dishes. We recommend soy flour for making pie crusts, pizza dough and for binding veggie patties. It also makes fantastic homemade fruit bread.

The earthy tasting pale yellow flour made from chickpeas is known as besan flour and is also packed with protein and highly nutritious. In studies comparing besan to wheat flour, besan flour has a more positive effect on blood sugar levels mainly because it contains a type of starch that keeps you fuller for longer. Besan flour is also rich in iron, magnesium and potassium.

Besan flour makes a great alternative to plain flour when used as a thickener in soups and it makes an excellent batter for fritters, fish, patties and savoury pancakes. Besan flour has long been used in India for making flat breads and is also used extensively as a thickener in curries. In Iran, besan flour is mixed with chicken to make dumplings and in South Africa it is mixed with potato flour to make noodles.

Buckwheat flour comes from the ground buckwheat kernel and is another on the list of healthy and versatile gluten free flours. Buckwheat is a fruit seed and not related to wheat as the name would lead you to believe. In fact it is actually in the same family as rhubarb.

Buckwheat flour is currently being studied for its ability to reduce gallstones, cholesterol and body fat. The flour is valuable in baking as it creates a soft and moist consistency, perfect for fudge cake, pancakes, cupcakes and savoury bakes. For more structure and a firmer mix try blending buckwheat flour with soy, rice or quinoa flour.

Wishing you the best with your gluten free baking,

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