



The How Can It Be Gluten Free Cookbook: Revolutionary Techniques. Groundbreaking Recipes.

America's Test Kitchen (Editor)

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More than 3 million people have a serious health issue that requires that they eat gluten free. In addition, many people with chronic health issues experience relief of symptoms by following a gluten-free diet. But perhaps the largest growing market for gluten-free products is the segment of the population who have become convinced that a gluten-free diet is healthier and will help them lose weight. All too often, those who have to eat gluten-free are forced to settle for gummy, gritty baked goods and gluten-free products that are a far cry from the real deal. This is because baking without gluten is incredibly difficult and simple substitutions just don't cut it. With this book America's Test Kitchen has tackled classic baked goods including pizza dough and yeast breads that look and taste like the real deal. The bulk of this book is devoted to baked goods, from everyday recipes like pancakes, waffles, and muffins to cookies and bars, pies and tarts, yeast breads, pizza, quick breads, and cakes. But we also wanted to solve the problem of what's for dinner too so we rounded out the book with additional categories of recipes. A chapter on comfort foods tackles recipes like meatloaf, chicken tenders, and lasagna. The pasta chapter includes a recipe for our homemade GF pasta as well as recipes using our favorite brand of GF pasta. The grains chapter covers the wide range of gluten-free grains that are now sold in pretty much every American supermarket with an array of approachable, appealing recipes.

The How Can It Be Gluten Free Cookbook: Revolutionary Techniques. Groundbreaking Recipes. Details

Date : Published March 1st 2014 by America's Test Kitchen

ISBN : 9781936493616

Author : America's Test Kitchen (Editor)

Format : Paperback 328 pages

Genre : Food and Drink, Cookbooks, Cooking, Food, Nonfiction

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Kitten Kisser says

America's Test Kitchen did a beautiful job in their efforts to create a cookbook filled with mostly baked goods that actually taste good. While they seem to grasp the need for many of us to be on a gluten free diet, I didn't get the impression that they fully understood the severity of the health risks involved for some individuals. They had one goal - make gluten free treats that are as close to gluten based treats as possible.

They have a flour blend that they came up with. They recommend it over any other flour blend. This is all well & good IF you can tolerate the flours they chose in their blend. Unfortunately a lot of people cannot have oats as well as wheat. Oats have a protein structure that closely resembles wheat & many cannot digest oats even gluten free oats. ATK's flower blend uses white rice flour, brown rice flour, potato starch, tapioca starch & nonfat milk. If you are sensitive to dairy this is another problem. This is your "all purpose flour" for lack of a better term. From there the recipes will call for additional ingredients that may once again be an issue for some: Pysillium, Xathan Gum, Eggs, & Corn.

I have a very sensitive digestive system & must use extreme caution. Therefore I could not use their flour blend. I did make their pumpkin pie using my own coconut flour recipe as the crust. The pie filling was okay. Nothing to get excited about. I am rather surprised because I have another of ATK's cookbooks & every recipe I tried came out amazing. My pie coconut flour crust was pretty awful & I don't recommend it. I usually make the crust using a recipe from Breaking the Vicious Cycle that uses nuts. Everyone loves it! I also made the flourless chocolate cake. This was amazing! No added sugar either. Too sum it up, it's a lot of eggs, bittersweet chocolate & butter. You do bake it & have to let it chill for a long time. The flavor is intensely rich. You don't want to eat too much of it. It is VERY satisfying. When all my hens are in full lay & I'm overloaded with eggs, I plan on utilizing the recipe for my family, neighbors & friends.

ATK breaks down a lot of gluten free products available. I really enjoyed this part of the book. Granted they didn't cover 90% of the options, but they did cover the most popular or easiest to find in stores. I have tried Bob's Red Mill. ATK is dead on regarding the overly beany flavor of Bob's GF flour. Besides GF flours they also discuss in detail various GF pastas, breads, grains, etc. They explain the purpose for particular ingredients & also compare the results. Example Xathan Gum vs. Guar Gum.

ATK gives you the option of using their flour blend, Bob's Red Mill or King Author GF for most of their recipes. They explain why the other flours may or may not work as well as their blend.

The main reason I selected this book was I wanted to make my own GF English Muffins. Sadly it's a no go for my situation. I find that I can consume certain GF products in moderation. I trust Pamela's Products & Food For Life's GF English Muffins in the Natural Foods freezer section. When I bake, I tend to go sans any flour or use nuts - it's just easier that way.

Overall it is a fabulous in depth book for the gluten free baker but how much use you can get out of it depends upon each individuals health situation.

Chris says

What I liked the most about this cookbook is its approach to gluten-free cooking. Instead of just providing recipes, America's Test Kitchen explains what they tried that didn't work as they developed each recipe. Maybe that doesn't sound like a big deal, but gluten-free cooking (especially baking) requires a completely different sort of cooking chemistry than what most people are familiar with. Because they explained what the challenges of each recipes were, what they tried, why they tried it, and how successful the results were, I learned more about gluten-free cooking from this cookbook than I'd learned in my previous 18 years of being gluten-free. While the baking recipes use a flour blend developed by America's Test Kitchen (which can be made in bulk for less than buying flour blends), each recipe also includes adaptations for using two different commercially available flour blends.

Stephanie Mohler says

I like the cookbook enough to buy it, but I didn't cook anything in it yet! A lot of my family is going gluten free and this cookbook explain how to cook for them. I like that the cooking processes are described- why it works/how different gluten free flours work in each recipe.

Pam ?Because Someone Must Be a Thorn? Tee says

I don't know about you but I want to serve more gluten free meals. I don't believe that anyone in our family has an intolerance for gluten, but I do think the American diet is a little gluten heavy.

There are two reasons I haven't implemented my plan previously. The first reason is simple and not really a huge contributing factor. Truth is, I'm a little timid to get started. I've always cooked and baked with flour and the idea of ruminating off into new, unexplored territory is a little intimidating. The second reason though is the biggest problem. And that is that when I stand up and wander about the kitchen, thinking about what to make for dinner, my mind goes blank and I can't think of something gluten free to make. (Stupid I know, but I'm being honest.) THAT'S WHY I LOVE this book from American's Test Kitchen. It's there to give me ideas for every meal, and it serves to give me 'idiot proof' instructions that give me confidence.

WHAT YOU GET -- Ingredients and what not

At the beginning of the book there is a section about what Flour actually does in cooking --think Alton Brown science approach-- and then there is a discussion of what the Kitchen folk had to look for to overcome the lack of flour stickiness.

You don't need to read the above material but I thought it was interesting. What I do suggest you read is the section on EVALUATING COMMERCIAL FLOUR BLENDS. On this page they compare Bob's GF Baking Flour with King Arthurs's, Pamela's and others.

THEN they give their own formula. And using White Rice flour, brown rice flour, potato and tapioca starch with a little nonfat milk powder --we can make our own blend.

What's really cool is that they then show us a muffin made with their GF flour mix and King Arthur's and Bob's. They don't look the same.

From there they compare other ingredients and even store bought bread. I appreciated this a lot.

WHAT YOU GET -- Recipes

THE GOOD

I love The American's Test Kitchen recipes. They start off with a section about "Why This Recipe Works". I like this because it helps me figure out if it's a recipe I want to try right away.

Then there's the instructions. They are VERY thorough. Though I've cooked for decades, when I try something new I prefer to be 'over-taught' rather than to have to guess what a procedure should feel like.

The Variations that they offer are great. If I see something that my kids aren't crazy about, I'll look there for substitution ideas.

Finally, I like the Smart Shopping tips. These are suggestions for what to look for quinoa, for example, or rice. If there is a name brand they like, they aren't hesitant to use it.

THE NOT SO GOOD

My husband and I are currently on a diet. And what I never noticed before is that there are no calorie estimates. I know I can calculate them, but I never noticed that the Test Kitchen doesn't include an estimate. It would be good to have a vague idea so that I could easily eliminate items that are high calorie.

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I really like this cookbook. It has recipes for all occasions and it has a lot of advice on what to buy and how to prepare. The color photos of the finished foods are scrumptious, and I love that there are variations for all the recipes so that if I want to substitute I don't have to wrack my brain.

The only downside I've found to this book is that there are no calorie estimates. Obviously not a problem for most folks, but if you are on a diet, it makes for a little extra work.

Liberty says

I've been a fan of the America's Test Kitchen for over a decade. I've always loved how they get into the science behind their cooking and explain why recipes work. Even so, I've never bought a cookbook from them--been tempted in the past, but haven't done it. Until now. After previewing this cookbook from my library, I knew I'd have to have it since I went gluten-free last year. I'm a baker at heart, and have missed making breads and goodies that I can partake in--or even simple things that suddenly became more complicated like fried chicken.

So far, I've actually tried three of the recipes--the chocolate chip cookies, the crispy chicken strips, and the fudgy brownies. All are superb. The flavor is great, and they generally have the look, feel, and taste of their non-GF counterparts. I'm very pleased. I'm excited to try more of the recipes out of this cookbook as I'm able. Up next will probably be their sandwich bread. As much as I like Udi's (who they recommend highly), nothing beats homemade bread. If you're new to the GF lifestyle, this cookbook is a must-have. But be sure you follow their guidelines to a T. Read the hints and tips, and the story behind the final product of the recipes. They'll save you heartache--or just gritty cookies.

Curtis Mason says

I have not found anything in this book that is not fantastic.

Punk says

America's Test Kitchen does this thing where they introduce each recipe by explaining the process they used to develop it, and thus share with you their toil and heartache. It goes something like this: "We wanted to maximize the flavor so we doubled the thing, but our first attempt came out too flat, so we added more stuff, but then it rose too much and collapsed, so we added an extra round thing for protein and lift and it turned out perfectly," and at first I'm like, *Oh, what a happy ending!* But after half a book of that I shifted straight into *Thank god it's you spending five weeks in the kitchen trying to perfect a gluten-free layer cake and not me because after the third time it didn't come out I would straight up murder the next person to set foot in my kitchen.*

So, thank god for ATK, is all I'm saying. I love them in all their forms, so I was very excited to see that they'd turned their formidable attention towards cooking without gluten. This book has an emphasis on baking and things that normally depend on wheat flours, but there are also chapters on savory dishes that use rice and grains, sauces and pastas (including homemade), and meatloaf and breaded items like chicken and pork chops. I'm mostly here for the baked stuff, but it's nice to know I could bread something if I had to. The chapter on grains felt a little forced, but it does include good information about the various ways to cook them, and it doesn't take up much room.

Their recipes are developed based on their own gluten-free all-purpose flour mix, which is a little different from others I've seen because it includes fat-free milk powder. Most of their baked goods also call for xanthan gum, and they'll tell you when you absolutely can't replace or leave out the gum or milk powder. It talks about substitutions for these up front in the introduction, so there's not a lot of that in each recipe, but otherwise, it has all the information you need to know each time you need it, and all recipes have measurements by volume and weight.

Each recipe also has a little GF Testing Lab chart where it talks about whether substitutions are an option or not and explains what'll happen if you use GF flour mixes from King Arthur or Bob's Red Mill; usually there will be textural differences, with some grittiness from Arthur and some level of bean flavor with Bob. Sometimes they recommend you don't use either mix because the results were so poor. That more than anything convinced me to try mixing up some of their own flour blend. I trust ATK, and this book is a good resource with a lot of basic recipes for things I'm likely to make, like waffles, pancakes, pizza, some sandwich breads that look amazing, cookies, pies, cakes, and tarts.

There are color photos for nearly every recipe, an index, the kind of methodical explanations you expect from an ATK publication, an introduction that goes through the science of baking with and without gluten and rates some common gluten-free products like bread, pasta, and flour mixes, as well as a guide to gluten-free flours, grains, and leaveners.

Assuming their flour mix works out, I'll definitely be buying this.

Pam says

Every recipe I tried was good. Have learned good techniques and ingredients. I use Volume 2 more as it has more whole grain recipes.

Sharon says

This is the third America's Test Kitchen cookbook I've acquired ... and this time, it was out of necessity. As a newly-diagnosed Hashimoto's thyroiditis patient, I am having to go gluten-free to help stop the anti-thyroid antibodies. And, as someone who loves bread, all I could think about was deprivation.

Well, fortunately for me and other folks who are going gluten-free for health reasons, ATK has created a book to help deal with that. The first section talks about the science of gluten, and what this means in terms of textures and flavors for those who are making the change. The next section has product recommendations for things like sandwich breads, pastas and gluten-free flours.

Then you get to the recipes, which have conversions for two different commercially available gluten-free flours and the ATK blend (for which there is also a recipe). Each recipe has an explanation for how flavor and texture of the finished product may change using different flours, and for things that you can and cannot leave out.

Without this book, I would not have known that xanthan gum a) could be purchased as a consumer or b) that it would be required to make many baked goods stabilize. Nor would I have known which commercial products to try and which to avoid in my journey ... and that's on top of the many tasty recipes.

Highly recommended for those dealing with Hashi's, celiac, and other gluten intolerances.

Michelle says

America's Test Kitchen applied their extreme attention to detail and exhaustive testing to gluten-free baking and created the ultimate reference book. These are by no means healthy recipes, but for recipes that turn out right the first time, this will be my go-to resource. I'm most excited to use their testing notes and techniques to improve my own gluten-free baking, which relies heavily on almond and coconut flour and minimal sweeteners.

Ellen says

Have been experiencing mild depression after adopting a gluten-free diet for an auto-immune thyroid disorder. This book SAVED me. Goodbye wheat, and good riddance--there really is something to this wheat belly business--but I honestly can't live on quinoa alone, and America's Test Kitchen says, yes, even though you shouldn't (for reasons having nothing to do with wheat), you can still eat pancakes! and cookies! and a piece of bread once in a while! And it's good!

Meran says

This cookbook, from the American Test Kitchen, got me excited. I've been a long time fan of their Cook's Magazine.

They flunked the gluten free test. The recipes I've tried so far are bland, and difficult to work up. It's not good to work hard and get so little back on a recipe. I'm still working my way through, since I stupidly made up a bunch of their flour mix.

The biggest drawback is one they think is their biggest plus: using psyllium husk instead of xanthan or guar gum. This item is used in every product over the counter encouraging bowel elimination. So, every slice of their bread causes gut wrenching experiences in the bathroom. All for no flavor (or little) in the bread product.

NOT RECOMMENDED under any circumstances.

Deb says

If your new to gluten free cooking, this may not be the best choice for a cookbook. Like all ATK cookbooks, this one goes into great detail on why its recipes work and where others may fall short. I imagine it could be overwhelming to someone who's just coming to grips with a diagnosis that suggests such a monumental dietary change. I also found the recipes to contain many more steps than similar GF recipes in other cookbooks and online, without the end product being any better. That having been said, although nutritionally devoid, the ATK flour blend recipe toward the beginning of the book is a great all-purpose GF blend. I mix it up in big batches and use it for pretty much everything I bake. The science behind gluten free cooking and the general tips for GF baking (like letting the cookie dough or cake batter "rest" for 30 minutes before you bake to get rid of the gritty texture) ARE very helpful, but perhaps better digested (pun intended) a few months after embarking on a gluten free journey.

If and when you ARE ready for this cookbook, the recipe for biscuits containing plain yogurt is AMAZING paired with the gravy from the Biscuits and Gravy recipe on Gluten Free on a Shoestring blog!
Yum...yum...yum.

V Mignon says

It's not very often that I talk about the gluten-free cookbooks that I try out, but if I were to recommend only one book to the baker who is missing their cookies and crepes, it would be America's Test Kitchen's How Can It Be Gluten-Free.

I've read enough cookbooks now where the question, "Why?" is incredibly important to me. This book provides all the information possible on why your cupcakes will come out better with some white chocolate in the batter. You have to think by bizzaro baker logic with gluten-free recipes. Did you know that gluten-free flours don't absorb fat as well as wheat flour? No, I didn't either, and you'll find yourself using less butter than you could imagine.

As for the recipes, I just baked a batch of chocolate-chip cookies that satisfied me on a level that has been foreign since I stopped eating gluten. Many gluten-free books focus solely on taste, sometimes on texture but not to a dedicated level as America's Test Kitchen. Yes, you can have your cookies and your pies and your cakes again but you also won't feel as though you're consuming a lesser product. I can't even get over how perfect the texture of my cookies were.

So thank you, America's Test Kitchen, for really figuring out how flours work and how they can benefit our baking. As well as allowing me to make cookies that taste as if the recipe came from my grandmother.

Hari says

For those who eat gluten-free, you know how hard it is to find recipes that result in food tasting as good as "what you used to eat." The wizards at America's Test Kitchen have come to the rescue. Employing their vast knowledge of kitchen chemistry, and surprising themselves occasionally, they painstakingly tested various ingredients in numerous combinations and had non-gluten-free eaters taste-test the results (because if they liked the results, gluten-free eaters would, too). This cookbook contains the results of their extensive labors, covering a range of cooking from entrees to desserts. I've tried several recipes and enjoyed the results. But be aware, the recipes reflect an emphasis on taste and texture, not healthfulness and the recipes I tried took more preparation time.

The only reason my rating is reduced is because there is no nutrition information (calories, sodium, fat, sugar, etc.) provided for any of the recipes.
