

FOOD ON THE MOVE

FREE FROM SNACKING

Free-from trends

The “free from” industry has seen a very sharp rise in popularity in recent years, with sales of free-from foods growing from £470million in 2015, to an estimated £837million in 2018 (Mintel 2016).

Free From foods are foods that are manufactured and targeted specifically at consumers looking to avoid certain ingredients, either because of food intolerances or allergies. Some consumers might also follow avoidance diets because of perceived health benefits, and others might chose to avoid certain products for ethical or environmental reasons, in the case of dairy-free and veganism.

Allergens

An allergen is something which produces an abnormally strong immune response in those who are allergic to something, which the immune system fights off as a perceived threat, but would otherwise be harmless to the body.

There is no limit to what people can be allergic to, different individuals will all react differently to one another. This blog will focus on to main allergens gluten and lactose, providing ideas of snacks that are healthy and tasty.

GLUTEN FREE SNACKING

Coeliac Disease

Coeliac Disease is an autoimmune disorder caused by an intolerance to gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley and rye, leading to an immune response that damages the small intestine, affecting around 1% of the UK population.

Gluten is most commonly found in products such as bread, pasta, cakes and biscuits, but also hides in many other foods including sauces and beer. Read the labels carefully!

There is a growing trend among the population to choose gluten-free as part of a lifestyle choice (as opposed to those with severe allergies and intolerances), with celebrities like Victoria Beckham, Jennifer Aniston and Novak Djokovic all now promoting wheat-free and gluten-free diets.

As a result, some people confuse the concept of gluten-free option as a healthy option, why?

For many, it is because some of the foods commonly known to contain gluten are high fat, high sugar foods such as are cakes, pastries, biscuits and many other sweet treats. Some people assume that if they substitute a regular cake for a gluten-free cake that this is a healthier alternative. However, the reality is that a cake is a cake no matter if you put gluten in or not! Remember if gluten is removed from baked goods an alternative has to be substituted and in some cases to maintain taste extra sugar and fat may have to be added. Therefore calories can be as high as or higher than the regular alternative!!

Gluten-free healthy snacking tips

Going gluten-free doesn't mean residing yourself to boring, cardboard-like snacks! Just ensure you always check the label.

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, a great way to increase your fibre. Make them into crudités and dip into houmous, salsa, guacamole
- Opt for foods that are naturally free from gluten – baked chickpeas, corn, nuts, rice cakes and lentil snacks make for a great crunchy snack.
- Fancy something cold, grab a yoghurt or make up a smoothie.
- Missing your sweet treats? Brownies made from sweet potato provide a boost of minerals and vitamins as well as hitting that sweet spot, naturally! No harm with a treat once in a while
- Gluten-free alternatives will often use a number of artificial ingredients to mimic the properties that gluten provides, and often be high in salt and sugar. Keep an eye on the food labels, and where possible, cook from scratch so you can control the ingredients.

It should be noted that unless you have Coeliac Disease or gluten intolerance, there is no need to cut gluten out of your diet – gluten doesn't pose a harmful risk to otherwise healthy individuals.

DAIRY FREE SNACKING

Cow's milk naturally contains a huge variety of vitamins and minerals needed in a healthy diet, including calcium, iodine, B vitamins and potassium, as well as being high in protein. It can be an extremely beneficial drink for the health of the body. However some people can't tolerate it due to having a lactose intolerance

Lactose Intolerance

Lactose Intolerance is an adverse reaction to the sugar found in mammalian milk and other dairy products, such as cheese and yoghurt. The main symptoms include bloating, abdominal pain and diarrhoea, caused by undigested lactose passing through the small intestine. People who suffer from lactose intolerance should avoid dairy to alleviate symptoms.

Some people may also choose to cut out dairy for ethical and environmental reasons, in a bid to reduce the carbon footprint of commercial dairy farming.

Dairy-free snacking tips

- Coconut and almond yoghurts are delicious, dairy free alternatives – they are thick and creamy and their delicate flavours go well from anything from fresh fruits, to a side with a curry!
- Get to know the plant-based milks available to you – almond and other nut milks go great in smoothies, whereas oat milk is best for adding to tea and coffee, or in porridge!
- If opting for nut, soya, rice milks, ensure you chose a variety that is fortified with vitamins and minerals, so you aren't missing out on essential nutrients. And always try to choose the unsweetened version.
- Fancy a crunch, try crackers with nut butters, salsa or pretzels. Need to add sweetness have a small portion of dried raisins or apricots.
- Dark chocolate usually doesn't contain dairy – look for good quality chocolate about 50% cocoa solids – although always check the label to be sure!

Coeliac Awareness Week runs from 13th-19th May 2019, to help raise awareness around symptoms and improve diagnosis in the UK. Visit coeliac.org.uk for more information.

If you're dining with us at an Aramark location and would like to know more about the allergen information, ask any of the staff who will happy to assist and help you find the information you need or look for the allergen details on our menus

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