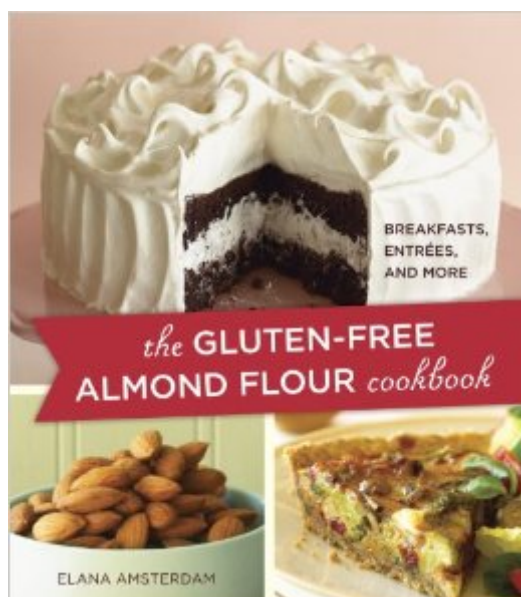


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The Gluten-Free Almond Flour Cookbook



Synopsis

The prevalence of celiac disease and gluten sensitivity among millions of adults and children has created the need for gluten-free recipes that are as nutritious and tasty as their traditional counterparts. Popular food blogger Elana Amsterdam offers ninety-nine family-friendly classics--from Pancakes to Eggplant Parmesan to Chocolate Cake--that feature her gluten-free ingredient of choice, almond flour. Because these recipes are low glycemic, low in cholesterol and dairy, and high in protein and fiber, they are also ideal for people with diabetes, obesity, and high cholesterol. So whether you're looking for a quick breakfast treat, a comfort food entrée, or a showstopping dessert, The Gluten-Free Almond Flour Cookbook proves that gluten-free cooking can mean healthy eating for everyone.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'm giving this book 5 stars even though I have had some issues with it, because the author has created a great resource for alternative baking. Many people avoid starchy flours because of allergies, special diets, or a combination, and Elana has done a great job experimenting with the use of almond flour in a very wide range of baked goods. There is no other resource for almond flour baking that remotely approaches the breadth of this cookbook. You really can make everything from chocolate chip cookies to chocolate cake to pie dough with almond flour. I'm incredibly grateful to the author for trailblazing into this new frontier. The recipes do have various notable peculiarities (see below), and of course different readers, especially in the context of the specialized diets to whom almond flour baking will appeal (including scd, paleo, low carb, celiacs) will have different

tastes, needs, and restrictions. However, I have found the recipes to be very adaptable where my tastes or needs diverged from the author's. Potential buyers should know that this book is not only geared towards grain-avoiding and celiac diets, but also aims for a 'healthy' approach to baking, in the name of which it largely avoids butter and refined sugars. In addition to the titular substitution of almond flour for wheat flour, there is a relatively single-minded substitution of grapeseed oil for butter/shortening and agave nectar for white sugar. While I don't have any general problems with agave or grapeseed oil, unlike some readers, I'm not satisfied with these ingredients in all cases.

This book has a number of good and SIMPLE recipes for gluten-free and low-carb dishes using almond flour. Well worth adding to the shelf; it simplifies and collects a lot of information about almond flour that is widely scattered. The one big caution is that the author uncritically uses agave nectar for sweetening in almost all the recipes. She says this is because agave nectar is "lower on the glycemic index", but that's not an advantage, that's merely because agave nectar is largely fructose, the most dangerous of the sugars. From Stephan Guyenet, Ph.D. in neurobiology (blog at [...]) "Agave syrup is made from the heart of the agave plant, which is pressed to release a juice rich in inulin. Inulin is a polymer made of fructose molecules. The inulin is then broken down either by heat or by enzymatic processing. The result is a sweet syrup that is rich in fructose. Agave syrup is marketed as a healthy, alternative sweetener. In fact, it's probably as bad or worse than high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS). They are both a refined and processed plant extract. Both are high in fructose, with agave syrup leading HFCS (estimates of agave syrup range up to 92% fructose by calories). Finally, agave syrup is expensive and inefficient to produce. The high fructose content gives agave syrup a low glycemic index, because fructose does not raise blood glucose. Unfortunately, as some diabetics learned the hard way, using fructose as a substitute for sucrose (cane sugar) has negative long-term effects on insulin sensitivity.

I haven't left many reviews but I was so disappointed in this book that I felt obligated to set the record straight. I've recently had to go on a low-sugar, gluten-free diet and was upset that I was going to miss out on all the Christmas baking this year. However, a friend of mine made me a delicious gluten-free cake and I realized that I could make delicious desserts that everyone would like if I did some research. And so, last Christmas was full of cakes and cookies all gluten-free, made from "regular" recipes I modified through a lot of research and a lot of trial and error. Success! But I don't always have time to hunt down new recipes so I figured I'd buy a cookbook to help me out. The reviews on this cookbook seemed very positive so I purchased it. Well, what a disappointment!

Many of the recipes are oily and bland tasting. The author uses Agave as a sweetener in most recipes and despite what the book says, this ingredient is NOT good for diabetics (you'd be better off using a sugar alcohol like xylitol). Sure, the author would probably say that Agave is "natural" unlike sugar alcohols (which are known for being more processed) however, Agave isn't 'natural' like maple syrup, it's also highly processed sweetener that has more fructose than high fructose corn syrup. I also assume she is trying to be "healthy" by staying away from milk, butter, and eggs in her recipes. Unfortunately, this ends up doing the recipes a lot of disservice. The use of grapeseed oil (light and relatively flavorless oil) makes her desserts taste heavy and (for lack of a better word) oily. The chocolate chip cookies I made came out as flat as a pancake... if she used ingredients like eggs it would help bind her recipes together better.

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