



# The MegaBite

## saferEATING

Newsletter #005 | Winter 2015

## Christmas is coming...

With Christmas but a reindeer's hair's breath away, Safer Eating founder Karen Woodford delivers you some festive tips and recipes. Because you've all been so good...

### Christmas lunch:

Ahh, it's the most wonderful time of the year. A time when everyone gets together, which can be so lovely... but also a logistical nightmare when there are different dietary requirements under one roof.

No matter which side of the family we spend it with, there are at least three special diets to factor in. We have vegetarians, wheat, dairy and lactose-intolerance and three coeliacs to cater for. Phew! It's hard work.

### "A logistical nightmare when there are different dietary requirements under one roof"

We usually try to take the "one fits all" approach, so whip up stuffing that is vegetarian plus gluten and dairy-free. Some things are a bit too difficult, though, so there are often separate gravies, a meat-free option for a main and at least two desserts.

The risk of cross-contamination is massive. Hopefully your family takes it all seriously and tries their best to be careful. If we are spending Christmas away from home, I take a Santa-sized sack of snacks, filled with gluten-free crisps, bread, biscuits and lactose-free spread and cheese in case of emergencies.

If there are lots of people around, it is worth just going over the basics of preventing cross-contamination. Usually this is all taken in good spirits as people want to keep you as safe as possible.

### "Hopefully your family takes it all seriously and tries their best to be careful"

### Christmas presents:

Receiving food, drink and even things such as cosmetics and toiletries can be a problem for anyone with severe allergies or dietary requirements. As always, make sure you check the labels carefully. Don't just eat and drink something so you don't make the present-giver feel bad – they would not want that. And how will they ever learn what is safe for you if you don't let them know?

With little ones, it can be harder. I find that it is best to warn my three-year-old daughter, who is coeliac, that if there is any chocolate or sweets doing the rounds, then they might contain gluten. This way we can check everything like we always do and she doesn't get upset. Always remember that the people who are buying the gifts will not usually have had as much practice as the people living with it every day.

## TOP TIPS!

- ★ Always check labels carefully
- ★ Use toaster bags to protect free-from bread if you need to use a contaminated toaster
- ★ Use squeeze sauces/jam to prevent contamination with knives/spoons
- ★ Plan ahead when staying at other people's houses. Find out if you will safely be catered for. Take things with you if you need to, e.g. gluten-free bread/crackers
- ★ Give family members a quick run over the main things to help you keep safe (e.g. wash hands frequently, be careful with breadcrumbs)
- ★ Use Safer Eating stickers to warn people of gluten items, items where care is required to prevent contamination
- ★ Make separate areas in the kitchen if necessary so people know where the problem foods will be prepared
- ★ Make as much of the Christmas lunch as possible free-from to make it easier for all. It doesn't mean you have to sacrifice taste!

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# Lovely free-from stuffing to accompany Christmas dinner

## Free from:

gluten, milk, mustard, sesame, soya, sulphites, seafood/ shellfish, fish, celery, lupin

## Contains:

egg, may contain nuts

## Ingredients:

1 onion (peeled and finely chopped)

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1 tablespoon of fresh sage (finely chopped)

80g fresh white gluten-free breadcrumbs (e.g. Genius)

Salt & pepper

1-2 eggs (beaten)

## Alternatives:

For egg-free use egg replacement

## Serves:

4

## Method:

1. If the oven is not already on, preheat it to 180°C

2. Heat the oil in a frying pan over a low heat

3. Add the onion and fry gently until soft, but not coloured

4. Mix the sage, breadcrumbs and cooked onion in a bowl and season well

5. Add the beaten egg to bind the mixture together (you may not need all of it)

6. Roll into stuffing balls and cook next to the meat or on a greased oven tray for 30 minutes

7. Alternatively stuff the turkey prior to cooking (stuff the neck end of the turkey only and not the body cavity. Add approximately 10 minutes to the cooking time)



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# GLUTEN-FREE GRAVY

## Free from:

gluten, egg, sesame, fish, seafood/shellfish, sulphites, nuts, milk/lactose, mustard, lupin

## Contains:

celery, check for meat. Can be VEGETARIAN/VEGAN

## Alternatives:

For a veggie option use vegetable stock cubes, e.g. Knorr

## Ingredients:

2 tablespoons cornflour

2 tablespoons of cold water/stock (home-made)/vegetable water

Meat juices (optional)

$\frac{3}{4}$  pint of boiling water/stock (home-made)/vegetable water

1 stock cube (beef, chicken or vegetable) e.g. Knorr (check for gluten, lactose and meat)

## Method:

1. First put the cornflour in a saucepan and mix in the cold water until it is a smooth paste

2. Add 2 tablespoons of meat juice (scrape any dark coloured bits from the roasting tin if possible)

3. Add the boiling water/stock, put on a high heat and stir continuously

4. Sprinkle in the stock cube, continuing to stir

5. Once the stock cube is mixed in and the gravy has thickened, reduce the heat and simmer the gravy for 5 minutes adding water if the gravy become too thick



# PIGS IN BLANKETS

## Free from:

gluten, milk/lactose, nut, fish, crustaceans, molluscs, sesame, mustard, celery, lupin, soya, egg

## Contains:

sulphites, meat

## Ingredients:

12 gluten-free chipolatas (e.g. Tesco Finest)

6 slices of streaky bacon

## Method:

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C

2. Cut the bacon in half lengthways

3. Wrap each chipolata in half a slice of bacon. Keep in place with a cocktail stick if needed

4. Put the pigs in blankets in a roasting tin. Roast for 15-20 minutes until cooked thoroughly (should be a lovely golden-brown)



If you do not have time to make everything from scratch (like us)....

The winning products from the BBC Good Food Christmas taste test this year are:

**Collection gluten-free Christmas pudding, £8.50, M&S.**

Serves 4.

Contains egg, almonds, pecan nuts & milk. Vegetarian

**Waitrose LoveLife 4 mince pies, £2.50/4, Waitrose.**

Contains sulphites, almonds & may contain other nuts and peanuts. Vegetarian

**Collection Gluten-free Christmas cake, £12, M&S.**

Serves 12.

Contains egg, milk & almond. Vegetarian

(Source Daily Mail November 2015)

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# CRANBERRY SAUCE

## Free from:

gluten, lactose, fish, seafood/shellfish, sesame, mustard, lupin, soya, nuts, celery, sulphites

## Contains:

No allergens.  
VEGETARIAN/VEGAN

## Ingredients:

125ml water

100g sugar  
(Muscovado/brown)

150g of cranberries

Pinch of cinnamon

## Method:

1. Pour the water in a saucepan. Boil over a high heat

2. Add the sugar. Stir until dissolved

3. Add cranberries and return to the boil

4. Reduce heat and simmer for approximately 15 minutes. If the cranberries have not burst or do not burst easily with a spoon - cook for a further 5-10 minutes

5. Add the cinnamon. Stir

6. Allow to cool. Either leave as it is or blend for a smooth sauce

# YORKSHIRE PUDDINGS

*These might not be your average traditional fare – but they are for my husband's family....*

## Free from:

gluten, lactose, fish, seafood/shellfish, sesame, mustard, lupin, soya, nuts, celery, sulphites

## Ingredients:

50g gluten-free plain flour  
(e.g. Dove's Farm)

50g cornflour

3 eggs

150ml Lactofree milk

1 tablespoon of olive oil

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C

2. Split the oil between the sections of a tart/Yorkshire pudding tray (depending on what size you need) and heat it in the oven for 5 minutes

3. Put the eggs and milk into a jug and whisk with an electric whisk

4. Add the flours to a bowl and mix together

5. Add the whisked egg and milk mixture a little bit at a time and beat it with a fork/hand whisk

6. Once all of the fluid is added, season to taste and whisk the whole mixture with an electric whisk

7. Take the tin out of the oven and pour in the mix as quickly as possible. If you put the tin over a hob this will ensure that the oil remains hot

8. Cook the Yorkshires for 25-30 minutes or until cooked through and golden on the top



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# BREAD SAUCE

*Based on Delia Smith's Traditional Bread Sauce*

## Free from:

lactose/milk (depending on what cream/milk is used), gluten, nuts, sesame, lupin, meat, fish, crustaceans, molluscs, celery, mustard, sulphites

## Contains:

Soya/milk depending on what cream/milk is used, egg.  
VEGETARIAN

## Ingredients:

110g gluten-free white bread  
(e.g. Genius)

1 onion

15-18 cloves

1 bay leaf

8 black peppercorns

1 pint lactose/dairy-free milk  
(e.g. Lactofree or soya)

1 tbsp of lactose/dairy-free  
cream (e.g. Lactofree/soya)

50g lactose-free/dairy-free  
spread (e.g. Pure Soya)

Salt & black pepper to taste

## Method:

1. Cut the onion in half and stick the cloves into each half evenly

2. Pour the milk into a saucepan. Add the onion, bay leaf and peppercorns. Bring to the boil over a high heat

3. Remove the pan from the heat. Cover and leave to infuse for 2 hours or more

4. Remove the onion, bay leaf and peppercorns

5. Put the pan on a low heat. Stir the breadcrumbs into sauce

6. Add 25g spread. Stir

7. Cook for approximately 15 minutes. Stir occasionally

8. When the sauce has considerably thickened, use a whisk to make a smoother consistency if you wish. I actually love the sauce at this stage so you can serve it immediately, freeze or refrigerate at this point

9. If you want, add a creamier taste - reheat gently over a low heat. Beat in 25g spread and 1 tbsp cream. Stir and the scrumptious sauce is ready



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