



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Who do you aim your products at?

Everyone! But seriously, what is critical to our success are consumers who prefer our products regardless of their dietary needs. We commonly hear "This is the best Lemon Drizzle I have ever eaten, I didn't realise it was Gluten Free" or "Finally someone baking a proper cake, reminds me of those my Gran used to make". These anecdotes are highly flattering of course, but our most successful retailers market our products universally, and upsell the added dietary benefits only when asked.

Our menus cover classic recipes, Free From bakes for those avoiding gluten or dairy, and a specialist range of Vegan products.

Which of my customers want Free From food?

Coeliacs are the most commonly known group who are intolerant to Gluten, but there are a wide variety of medical conditions that exclude Gluten and/or Dairy from diets.

Increasingly, avoidance of Gluten or Dairy is also a lifestyle choice, and recent research estimates that at least one person in 40% of UK households is now electively or otherwise avoiding these food groups. The Free From market is experiencing rapid growth and is a £multi-million industry in the UK.

Around 8% of children under 5 years old are also lactose intolerant. But every child I have met has a sweet tooth. Our Dairy Free products are an ideal treat, and parents further value our absolute refusal to use artificial additives.

What are the legal requirements of Gluten Free goods, and how can I be assured you meet them?

Products that are labelled, advertised or presented as Gluten Free have to contain fewer than 20 parts-per-million (ppm) wheat gluten in order to meet the specification set out in The Foodstuffs for People Intolerant to Gluten (England) Regulations 2010 and Commission Regulation (EC) No. 41/2009. We self-impose a target of fewer than 10ppm Wheat Gluten in any recipe which is the gold standard in Free From baking. We undertake routine and random testing on all our goods in production to ensure that these standards are retained. As the retailer, you can assure your customers that products bearing our name are guaranteed as free from Gluten.

My business serves customers baked goods at the counter. How can I avoid contaminating a free-from product?

Separation is the key here. You should have display, cutting and handling tools that are only used for your Free From foods. For example, we recommend displaying our café cakes in cake domes, and using a coloured knife for cutting and serving. It sounds like a simple thing, but if all your staff know that the green knife is for Free From products you can largely eliminate the risk of cross contamination. We are happy to supply any of this equipment if you need it too.

Greasy or sticky surfaces can easily retain minute traces of gluten. Dishwashers significantly reduce cross contamination risks as they remove grease better than hand washing.

All of our products are best stored in airtight containers, which again should largely eliminate the risk of cross contamination. This is especially important if you are baking or cooking other produce – wheat flour for example is easily airborne.

I would like to offer Free From products, but don't want to handle them. Do you have a solution?

We have a family of products to suit every customer. If you don't want to handle our bakes, then we would recommend the loaf cakes and packaged tray bakes. The loaf cakes are available in three sizes – large, medium and mini - they are the ideal solution for retail shelves and cafés. The large loaf provides about 10 service slices, medium 4-6 good sized slices for consumers to enjoy at home. The mini loaf is an ideal accompaniment to a drink or meal but is notably useful for the grab-and-go consumer. Tray bakes are normally packaged to 15 portions, but we would be happy to discuss your specific requirements.

Our loaf cakes are baked in easy open, and fully biodegradable, moulds. All of our packaged goods are heat-sealed into cellophane bags, which again is naturally biodegradable unlike plastic. Heat sealing isolates the product until opened and provides a stable environment at ambient temperature for display. The moulds help decrease the damage that could otherwise be caused by consumer handling.

I have tried other Free From products and found them dry and/or tasteless. What makes yours different?

This is our main point of difference, and what we intentionally set out to solve. Historically, Free From products have suffered by the removal of classic ingredients which are then replaced with weak alternatives. A good example is the substitution of wheat flour for a potato and rice flour mix, and then rather too much baking powder. The result is a puffy, dry cake that crumbles easily. Many of our competitors use a variety of additives to bind, flavour and colour their products in an attempt to mask these shortcomings.

From inception, all of our products are created from the ground up rather than being an adaptation of classic recipes. As a result, what you serve has been considered first for taste, then for quality, and finally for longevity. Whilst the content of our products is no secret, the use of finer quality and more expensive raw ingredients dictates, in our opinion, the superior results.

I buy cakes that crumble or dry out before I can sell them. How can you help me reduce wastage?

The secret here is again in our recipes. The nature of our product development to achieve a good shelf life considers the effect of drying out and mitigates it, certainly when stored correctly. The crumb structure of our bakes differs from flour-replacement products, giving a sharp cut and little to no crumbling. This is of specific benefit to self-service environments. It is always a pleasure to hear from our customers that they "sold every slice" and our bakes are renowned for all but eliminating wastage.

You talk about ingredient quality being critical. Tell me more.

Core to the ethic of our company is an insistence to only use the very best quality ingredients. We fundamentally believe these are the building blocks of a great bake. Some examples include: -

Eggs – All of our eggs are organic and come from a free-range farm a few miles from our bakery. We have been working with this producer for years, and regularly inspect the flock. The consistent care given to the birds, the acres they have to roam, and the quality of their feed reflect our humane ethos of food production. All of the eggs are supplied in cardboard trays which we recycle.

Chocolate – We source our chocolate and cocoa from Belgium, world renowned for quality and consistency. We only use plain chocolate with 70%+ cocoa solids, and Dairy Free or Vegan options use cocoa from the same source. The resulting products speak for themselves, in delivering rich and indulgent flavour.

Water – One of the benefits of our location is that it sits over a natural spring, which provides all the water for the village. Filtered through the layers of chalk and other materials comprising the South Downs before purification, our water has the fewest food miles possible!

Extracts and Essences – We work closely with a UK manufacturer of natural extracts and essences who prepare their products by hand in small batches to ensure maximum freshness and quality control. They supply us with naturally gluten free and additive free products, suitable for vegetarians and vegans. The quality of these adds concentrated flavour without artificial enhancers. They are a significant employer in their community and have a strong SCR policy which mirrors our own.

Additives – We absolutely refuse to use anything artificial in our products. We believe that a fresh

bake does not warrant the addition of acidity regulators or stabilisers, nor will we consider artificial flavours, colourings or enhancers. Which makes our achievable product shelf life all the more gratifying.

I'm bored selling the same cakes week in, week out. How can you help refresh my PoS?

Our appreciation for the retail cycle, and the need to actively manage customer engagement to drive repeat business, greatly informs our product development.

As such, we have a core menu offering all the traditional staples everyone enjoys. This is updated with new seasonal options three times per year together with special menus for core sales periods such as Easter and Christmas.

The collections are themed, often to reflect the season and/or raw ingredients that are harvested at that time of year. Bake of the Month aims to be a talking piece, offering not only the unexpected or unusual, but delivering a centrepiece to your display.

The result is a constantly evolving presentation of products that eliminates stagnation.

What is the shelf life at delivery, and how should I store your products?

When creating a recipe, we specifically set out to deliver a product that will last well, yet without the use of preservatives. As such, all of our products are delivered at ambient temperature. The cakes and most tray bakes have a maximum shelf life of 14 days from delivery, with Brownies and similar offering up to 30 days from delivery.

You can successfully freeze, and re-freeze, all of our products though in order to extend their life.

What is critical in ensuring you get the best from each bake is correct storage, so here are a few do's and don'ts: -

Do keep our bakes: -

- In airtight containers where possible for storage. Our wrapped products can be kept in boxes.
- Always at cool temperatures (ideally 15 – 18 degrees centigrade)
- Out of direct sunlight
- At average humidity
- In the freezer – you can extend the life by up to 3 months overall and calculate Best Before End from the date of defrosting. Further, all of our products will happily re-freeze time and again. Just be mindful that you will get increased degradation on bakes containing fruit and vegetables if you do this.
- Under domes on the display counter (aside reducing contamination, this also maintains better average temperature and humidity)
- Away from strong odours or flavours

Don't: -

- Put them in the fridge. Our products do not contain raw dairy or other ingredients that need to be refrigerated. Keeping them in the fridge will only dry them out.
- Display them under hot lights, heat lamps or on heated benches.
- Keep or display them where there is significant air movement.

Some may seem obvious, others less so. But by way of example, a cake kept in a hot environment, or in the fridge, will at best only last for 2-3 days rather than the 14 days we would prefer you achieve.

How can you help me get new customers?

We are an established and reputable brand, with a loyal consumer following. We are aware of the great distances people will travel to get our products, and so we actively channel enquiries to local stockists.

We also have PoS material to help you promote awareness of the key elements of our products

when developing the loyalty that we know will follow. If you have any specific requirements for product and brand development, we would be delighted to discuss these with you.

My brand is very established, and I am looking for a manufacturer under our label. Can you help?

Yes, we have successfully supplied a wide range of self-branded products to both large and small customers. This is commonly achieved through the re-labelling of existing recipes in order to bring our products in line with your brand identity.

In some cases, we have developed ranges for our clients, be that for a specific event (mass caterer) or to ensure you have a true USP over our other customers. Naturally, this service is only available under contract and to minimum order values but demonstrates both our ability and willingness to work closely with each of our customers for our mutual benefit.

Tell me more about how you meet current labelling legislation.

On each of our packaged products, we provide full ingredient, allergen and nutritional information to meet and exceed all of the requirements set out in The EU Food Information for Consumers Regulation No. 1169/2011. Allergens are highlighted, and nutritional data is provided per 100g.

On all of our café cakes and un-cut tray bakes, we supply this information clearly on each product and can provide the same information on reference sheets for your staff to quickly and easily refer to.

It is important to me to be able to trace the origin of the products I serve and sell. How can you assure me of the consistency and provenance of your bakes?

Whilst we are passionate about baking and product development, we are running a commercial bakery and therefore take our wider responsibilities seriously.

We have detailed processes for traceability, being able to identify the raw ingredients in every bake, the oven used and the baker responsible. Our production methods monitor the quality of each bake from ingredient measurement right through to packaging. It may seem heavy handed to check every individual bake rather than by batch but remains fundamental to our belief in delivering consistency and quality without loss of the handmade aesthetics of our products.

Naturally, we have many other processes and systems common to commercial food production including HACCP, temperature logs, production logs and so forth. We also have pro-active relationships with all of the legislative and monitoring agencies, and of course the independent testing we conduct on Gluten Free bakes underlines our commitment to mitigating your risk.

We want all our customers to have supreme confidence in working with us and are happy to discuss any of these aspects further.