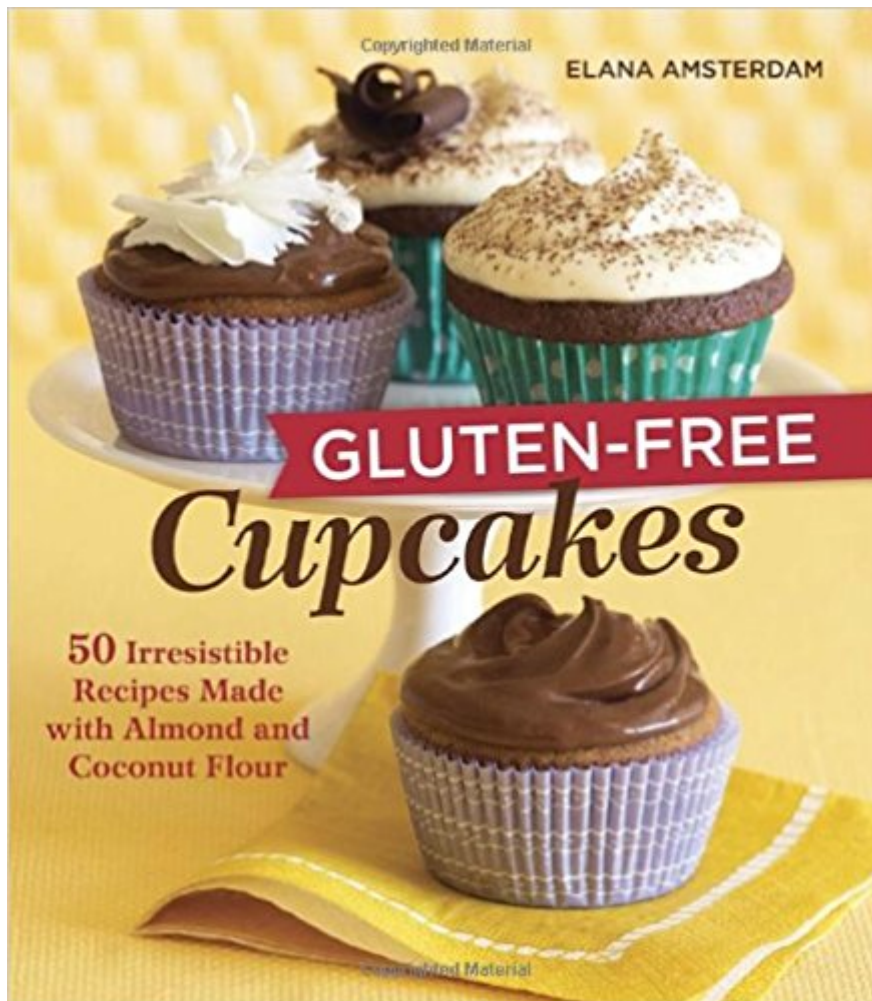


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Gluten-Free Cupcakes: 50 Irresistible Recipes Made With Almond And Coconut Flour



Synopsis

Cupcakes are the world's most adorable pastry—but until now, people with gluten sensitivities struggling to find sweetness on a gluten-free diet haven't had a cupcake cookbook to call their own. Enter gluten-free guru Elana Amsterdam, who has re-engineered the favored treat for today's dietary needs. Her colorful collection showcases classics like Red Velvet Cupcakes and Vanilla Cupcakes and features creative concoctions like Ice Cream Cone Cupcakes and Cream-Filled Chocolate Cupcakes. These simple-to-make—and simply delicious—cupcakes rely on coconut and almond flours rather than the sometimes difficult-to-source gluten alternatives. Some of the recipes are even vegan and dairy-free, and none use refined sugar. With fifty cupcake recipes plus a variety of frostings to mix and match, *Gluten-Free Cupcakes* offers delightful cupcake alternatives as tasty as their traditional counterparts—to anyone in need of a little cupcake fix.

Book Information

Paperback: 112 pages

Publisher: Celestial Arts; 1st Edition edition (April 26, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 158761166X

ISBN-13: 978-1587611667

Product Dimensions: 7 x 0.4 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars— See all reviews— (132 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #170,435 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #130 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Baking > Cakes #282 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Special Diet > Allergies #341 in Books > Cookbooks, Food & Wine > Special Diet > Gluten Free

Customer Reviews

This is a beautiful book. The instructions for each recipe are clear and concise, and the photos are scrumptious. It makes me excited about making grain-free, sugar-free cupcakes. I look forward to making all the cupcakes and muffins in this delightful little book -- triple chocolate, red velvet, vanilla fig, apple spice, banana split...YUM! Thanks Elana! My one small quibble with the book is that Elana uses agave nectar in all but one recipe. I won't use agave nectar because of its high fructose content which is a strain on the liver and creates insulin resistance over a period of time. It's absolutely true that honey and agave can be substituted 1 to 1 or 1 to 1.25 (agave to honey) depending on your preference for sweetness. I would rather use a granulated sweetener that does

not raise my blood sugar much at all, though. For every 1/2 cup of agave nectar that a recipe calls for I substitute 5/8 cup erythritol + 1/8 cup Zsweet All Natural Zero Calorie Sweetener, 1.5-Pound Pouches (Pack of 2) + 1-2 scoops of KAL stevia extract powder + 1/2 cup of a liquid like coconut milk or almond milk. I also increase the baking temp by 25 degrees. Everything else in the recipe stays the same. For those of you who have trouble getting unusual ingredients where you live, you can use any granulated sweetener in place of the erythritol. Just skip the stevia if you're using sugar, since sugar is sweeter than erythritol.

Due to my health condition and food allergies, I must eat grain-free and dairy-free and am thus limited to nut flours and coconut flour. While others love almond flour, I only like it somewhat, and it is very expensive. So, I was very interested in starting to cook with coconut flour. From what I have read, coconut flour is quite healthy. It has a high fiber content and decent protein content. It is also less expensive than almond flour. Finally, coconut flour seems healthier to me than the (high-glycemic index) rice-flour, potato starch, gum combinations that so many gluten-free individuals can turn to. My digestive system cannot function with the typical gluten-free rice flour mixes anyway. I wondered how the coconut flour would taste. I think that its flavor is very subtle and not like that of coconut, but rather it has a very caramel(ized) flavor, which is delicious. The 'cupcakes' (I prefer the word muffin...since I don't frost them) are extremely moist. Yes, they are slightly denser than what you might have been used to with wheat-flour muffins/cupcakes. But they are also moister. A definite plus, in my opinion. As I read in another cookbook, one has to stop expecting non-wheat products to taste like wheat-products. Wheat has a taste that we are used to and other flours will not have that taste. So far, I have made the following recipes from the book (I am an experienced baker): -Lime cupcakes (but I substituted lemon zest for the lime zest and added poppy seeds). The recipe was a 1/2 cup almond flour, 1/2 cup coconut flour recipe. Very good. One of my favorites. -Chocolate banana cupcakes. A coconut flour only recipe. Very moist and good. I am not sure that I love this flavor combination, though. Next time, I will just use Elana's banana muffin recipe. -Basic Vanilla cupcakes. A coconut flour only recipe. Moist and delicious. As I said, there is almost a caramel flavor to them that seems to come from the coconut flour (or from the agave too?). I tried to do a calorie count for one muffin and came up with: 192 calories for one muffin. Another favorite. -Apple Spice cupcakes. A coconut flour and arrowroot starch recipe. Good. Elana's recipe called for 1 T of cinnamon, which seemed like a lot to me. I reduced it to 2t and it was still powerful. These cupcakes taste less sweet than the others I've made despite having the same amount of agave. Not as moist as the other recipes....could it be due to the arrowroot? Next time, I am going to

leave out the arrowroot and see what happens. Also instead of chopping the apples, I think I will shred them on food processor disk.

-Strawberry cupcakes. My least favorite of the cupcakes. I just didn't like the texture of the fresh strawberries once cooked (to me, they are mushy and stringy...the flavor changes too). I might try strawberries again...but I would perhaps cook them to reduce them down and bit before adding. And I would use the coconut cupcake recipe base.....again, this strawberry cupcake recipe had arrowroot starch and I find that the recipes with arrowroot are less moist. Also, this recipe had no oil in it. Surely another reason that I didn't like them. I ended up throwing this batch out.

-Lemon-blueberry muffins. Very moist, very lemony, and bursting with blueberries. The second time I made these, I reduced the blueberries from 1 cup to ½ cup and I eliminated the lemon zest, since I wanted more of a pure blueberry taste w/out the pronounced lemon flavor. I loved the result w/ my changes.

-Coconut Cupcakes. A coconut flour and coconut oil recipe. I replaced the agave with coconut sugar syrup (boil 1 ½ cups coconut sugar with ½ cup water...and then measure. I got this idea from a comment on one of the reviews here..thank you!). I wanted an all coconut muffin (coconut flour, coconut sugar, coconut oil) WITHOUT a pronounced coconut flavor, so I left out the shredded coconut in the recipe. Result: extremely moist, caramel flavor. A rich, buttery taste on the palate and not too dense. They are great with jam. Also, it would be delicious with the shredded coconut as called for in the recipe...I like coconut but don't always want it. It would be easy to add some zest, chocolate shavings or something to jazz it up. This will be my go-to recipe, but I will add mix-ins to vary them. I tried to calculate nutritional info for my version using the info on the packaging of ingredients and doing the math. I came up with this info per muffin: 211 calories, 3.8g protein, 15g (healthy) fat, 13g sugar, 2.5g fiber. Just right for me as a snack/dessert/treat.

-Vegan Buttercream: For me, the result was inedible and it went into the trash. I followed the recipe exactly, with the brands Elana recommended. I should have known that I would hate the final product since I didn't like the taste of the Earth Balance Natural Buttery Spread (soy free). This product is very salty. So, for me, the "buttercream" was way too salty and just had a bad taste (the taste of the Earth Balance product). I tried to save it by adding homemade vegan caramel that I had on-hand and then melted dark chocolate. Nothing helped cover the taste of the Earth Balance spread (salt!). Next time, I will try her Vegan Chocolate Frosting recipe, which does not contain the Earth Balance spread. It is very easy to make substitutions for those who don't want to follow the recipes to the letter. In the recipes, I used virgin coconut oil. Coconut oil does not make the muffins/cupcakes taste distinctly like coconut. If there are any flavorings (zest, cinnamon, fruit), the coconut taste disappears. Some disagree, but I think that coconut oil is healthy. As for agave, I do use it sometimes (and find it delicious). But I have also used honey in its place. I would use

maple syrup, but it is very expensive. I am planning on mostly using coconut sugar syrup (1 ½ cups blonde organic coconut sugar with ½ cup water boiled, which makes 1 cup of coconut sugar syrup. Then measure it like you would agave.). The coconut sugar syrup costs me about 15% of what agave or maple syrup costs me, is organic and seems like a good choice. Elana says in the introduction that she doesn't recommend freezing the cupcakes once they are made. I must freeze them, because I try to not eat more than one a day and absolutely no more than two a day. I have found that they freeze just fine. The fact that the cupcake recipes are dairy-free is very helpful for me since I have a dairy allergy. Criticisms: My only real criticism is that the ingredients are only given in cup measurements and not given by weight. Elana does give you the flour weights for one cup in the introduction, but I still have to look up weights for all other ingredients and calculate the weight of flour for each recipe. I LOVE cookbooks that give a weight for every single ingredient, like Rose Levy Bernanbaum's fabulous books (from the time of my life before I knew about my wheat and dairy allergies!). I believe that all cookbook writers should follow Mrs. Bernanbaum's lead. Finally, one does usually need to sift coconut flour since it naturally clumps in storage. I weigh and then sift (4oz coconut flour = 1 cup). I didn't see sifting mentioned in Elana's book. But this is just nitpicking! The book is great. I'm hoping that Elana will write a coconut flour cookbook that goes beyond cupcakes, but I thank her A THOUSAND TIMES for this book, that has made following a difficult diet so easy. Muffins are just about the only portable 'fast food' (well, besides portable fruits, nut/seed mixtures, and Larabars) that I can have, and as a working mom, I need that convenience. This book helps me add to my repertoire and gives me the knowledge that I need to improvise on my own. Elana is fabulous!

Ok, so the first thing anyone who buys this book HAS to know, is that EVERY SINGLE RECIPE uses agave nectar instead of sugar, and that the book DOES NOT EXPLAIN HOW TO SUBSTITUTE regular sugar for the agave. [*UPDATE* As several people have asked about this in the comments, I want to clarify that AGAVE NECTAR DOES NOT CONTAIN GLUTEN, and it was never my intention to claim that it does. My problem with it has to do with the fact that I don't normally use it or have it in the house, and that I understand it is quite controversial for other reasons. However, it is gluten free **End Update**] Frankly, this is pretty annoying, and it is particularly annoying because this was in no way made clear in the advertising for the book. There is one line in the blurb about the recipes "not containing any refined sugar", which is easy to miss and a little ambivalent. Other than that, it really isn't stated clearly anywhere. It really would have been nice if in the front cover, where it says "recipes with almond meal and coconut flour", it would

have also said "and agave nectar", to make it clearer to the potential buyers. The recipes also, by the way, use grapeseed oil, but that really isn't a big deal considering that you can easily replace it with canola or vegetable oils or any other relatively flavorless oil. Ok, so I got this book, realized that it was all agave and debated if to just return it outright to , since I have no intention of starting to regularly bake with agave. After consulting with some people, however, I decided to give it a try using regular sugar. It was suggested that I use a little bit more sugar than agave (because agave is sweeter) and that I add a bit more water to make up for the liquid of the agave, and a bit of lemon to make sure there is enough acidity in the recipe to allow the rising agents to work (as agave also has acidity in it). I ended up making a simple syrup using 1 cup of sugar, 1/3 cup of water and a squeeze of lemon juice (cooked together until the sugar melts), and just used it in the same quantity as agave nectar. This worked out pretty well, although the recipes came out perhaps a little less moist and less sweet than I would have liked, so next time I will use extra simple syrup in the recipes. Ok, so now that we resolved that problem, back to the book itself. The book is pretty, and offers both classic cupcakes and some pretty exciting original recipes, many of them quite mouth-watering and maybe just a little "sinful". Unlike most gluten free recipes that use multiple flour mixtures and many strange ingredients, most of these recipes are pretty straightforward and use only coconut flour or only almond meal. I was a little concerned about the coconut flour because it initially had a very dominant coconutty smell, but the cupcakes themselves did not actually taste like coconut at all (except for the coconut cupcakes). The recipes are simple and so far the results have been beautiful and delicious. So, bottom line, if you are gluten free and want to cook with Agave, and you enjoy a cupcake, this is definitely the book for you. If you don't want/like to use agave, be warned that all of the recipes in this book do use it, but if you are willing to try a workaround, then it may still be a good book for you, as the recipes are quite simple and interesting.

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