

Enjoy Life's Cookies for Everyone! - "Delicious, easy, inexpensive, and versatile treats"

Enjoy Life's Cookies for Everyone!: 150 delicious gluten-free treats that are safe for most anyone with food allergies, intolerances, or sensitivities by Leslie Hammond and Betsy Laakso

I have to hand it to Leslie Hammond and Betsy Laakso, this cookbook is a real gem.

If you had asked me when I was five years old what my favorite dessert was, I would have shouted "Cookies!" Last week, someone asked me what my favorite dessert was, and I think I scared them a bit when I enthusiastically responded, "Cookies!" Some things never change. Yet, while I was excited to review an entire book filled with my favorite treat, I was a bit apprehensive. Would a gluten-free cookie book really be useful for me?

To clarify, I am not gluten-free, though I do love gluten-free goodies. To me they offer new tastes and textures that plain old wheat flour can't always provide. So I keep a basic selection of gluten-free flours on hand, but it is very basic. Most gluten-free cookbooks I come across call for binders like xanthan gum and hard to find (or just plain expensive) flours like mesquite, coconut, teff … you get the picture. I stock brown rice flour, starches (tapioca, arrowroot, and cornstarch), oats for making oat flour (mine isn't certified gluten-free), and on occasion white rice flour, buckwheat flour, and cornmeal. That's about it for my "on hand" supplies. It will take a really awesome recipe for me to splurge on some of the others.

But, for this cookbook, I didn't need to! I could literally make 90% of the recipes in Cookies for Everyone right out of my current pantry. Yes, this is an inexpensive gluten-free book with dozens upon dozens of kid-friendly (oh yes, and adult-friendly too) cookies, bars, and other bite-sized treats.

Trying (in vain) to show my maturity, I went for the "healthy" recipes first:

Sunny Nature Snack Bites – This was a really simple recipe, but such a good idea. Essentially apple or pear slices, slathered in seed butter, and sprinkled with granola. I happened to have the new granolas from Enjoy Life on hand, so I kept mine allergen-free, and used the Cranapple Crunch on Apples – I had to stick with the theme! They were the perfect healthy snack.

Granola Bar One-Bites – Once again I felt the urge to use some more of the new crunchier Enjoy Life Granola, but this time I used the Very Berry Crunch. Since I didn't have any nut-free trail mix on hand, I doubled up on the granola. These were baked treats with a bar consistency, broken up by the granola add-ins. I must confess that the granola added a bit too much chew for my liking, but overall they had a good flavor and texture. Next time I would go with a trail mix version instead.

Feel-Good Fruit ‘n Flax Cookies – I have already made these three times!

But what has been so fun about this recipe is making it my own. On the second go I customized it a bit, and on the third I tweaked it just a bit more. I will post up my modified recipe on Go Dairy Free and One Frugal Foodie, to give you the basic idea for this delicious, low-fat and hearty cookie. They had a baked energy bar appeal that my husband and I both loved.

From the "healthy" section, I still have the Sunny Honey Cookies and the Oatmeal Bowl to Go recipes on deck. But don't let my "earthy" looking pictures fool you, there are so many other sections to choose from with some very indulgent little treats. I am also anxious to make the:

Mini-ficent Pancakes
Marvelous Marshmallow Squares
People's Choice Chocolate Chip Cookies
Banna-danna Streusel Bars
Pumpkin Pie Pick Ups

And the list goes on, and on, and on … did I mention that ALL of the recipes have these cute names too!

A Few Bonus Notes:

These recipes are extremely versatile. If you have to bake without dairy, eggs, gluten, wheat, soy, tree nuts, peanuts, and even corn (though cornstarch is called for in many recipes, an alternate starch is usually noted) then you will find a lot of love in this cookbook. But, if you can have any one (or even all) of these types of foods, substitutions are oh so easy. No brown rice flour on hand, but you can eat wheat? Sub it in. Prefer peanut butter to sunflower butter? Go right ahead. Also, the authors frequently offer "this or this" for ingredients, helping you to make substitutions with ease. One of the recipes I trialed said "sorghum flour or brown rice flour." Since I keep

rice flour on hand, but am not very familiar with the properties of sorghum flour this was very helpful.

Some of the recipes (but not most) call for using an Enjoy Life brand product. Of course you can substitute your favorite granola for theirs, or another "safe" chocolate, or a homemade trail mix, etc. But I appreciate that they do suggest their own brand since it is one of the few truly "free-from" brands out there. Don't let the proprietary name scare you away, this cookbook really is for Everyone!

With so many fun and easy recipes to play around with, I can honestly say that Cookies for Everyone! will be in my permanent cookbook collection. This is a third party review by Alisa Fleming, author of Go Dairy Free: The Guide & Cookbook. To purchase Enjoy Life's Cookies for Everyone! visit Amazon.