

Sophie-Safe Cooking - "Family Favorites for Food Allergies"

By Alisa Fleming, www.GoDairyFree.org - The whimsical illustration on the cover of Sophie-Safe Cooking is the perfect representation of its contents. Simple, down-home recipes, created from a mother's love. There is just one thing missing...okay, there are eight things missing...milk, eggs, wheat, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, and shellfish. Emily Hendrix authored this delightful collection from the tasty meals and treats she created for her food allergic child, Sophie.

One might ask, so what's left? Admittedly, I am guessing that Emily's pantry is sparse, with large bags containing a handful of ingredients. Yet, what is in it gets some seriously creative mileage. I like that Emily uses only easy to find, everyday ingredients. Though natural foods and spices are her focus, trips to an expensive specialty grocer (i.e. Whole Foods) are completely unnecessary when following her recipes. Apple cider vinegar is about as exotic as it gets.

Sophie-Safe Cooking houses over 100 recipes very neatly laid out, one per page. Most of the recipes contain less than ten ingredients (always a top feature for me) and for the most part the directions are just a few straightforward sentences. Emily adds in helpful, but brief, notes with several of the recipes. Most of the recipes are Sophie-Safe versions of familiar family favorites, such as Granny's Meatloaf, Shepherd's Pie, and Chocolate Cupcakes (frosted of course!). While a few unique concepts caught my eye, like the Whipped Pinto Beans, Zucchini Brownies, and Taco Vinaigrette. My one and only complaint: the size is handy (6 x 9"), but it is difficult to reference while cooking without a stand to hold the book open.

It should be noted that many of the baked goods rely heavily on oat flour. For those who may have gluten concerns with oats, but would like the benefits of Emily's recipes, Gifts of Nature produces certified gluten-free oats. Purchasing oat flour is a convenience, but unnecessary. Just grind up oats in a blender, food processor, or my favorite, the spice grinder until it becomes flour.

Speaking of oats, the first recipe I trialed from Sophie-Safe Cooking was the Oatmeal Muffins. They were delicious, and gone in minutes! The muffins were a bit crumbly, but so good that my husband and I polished them off before there was time to make a mess. I like that most of Emily's baked goods are somewhat hearty, yet wonderfully sweet and tasty for kids and adults alike. At first I was unsure if the serving-size was correct, but I then realized that they are portioned for little ones. My husband and I each downed two muffins slathered with peanut butter, without a pang of guilt.

This cookbook covers the daily menu: breakfast, lunch, dinner, and dessert. Though, I must confess that I seem to be stuck on the baked goods and the salad dressings. In fact, the Pumpkin Muffin recipe below is now on my weekly baking schedule.

Having already made this recipe numerous times, I recommend making just 12 muffins for preteens to adults, and adding ½ cup of raisins to get the most of the pumpkin and spice flavor. In the batch pictured below, I also experimented (successfully!) with evaporated cane juice in place of the white sugar (1:1). An obvious note: Emily's recipes are extremely versatile.

Pumpkin Muffins

- 2 2/3 cups oat flour
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 Tbsp baking powder
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp cloves
- 1 1/2 cups pumpkin, canned
- 1/2 cup rice milk
- 1 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
- 3 Tbsp vegetable oil

Mix all of the dry ingredients on low speed with a mixer. Add pumpkin, rice milk, vinegar, and oil. Mix well. Spoon into lined muffin cups. [a lightly greased muffin tin also works, I use a silicone one, and they pop right out]

Bake at 350°F for 20 minutes. Makes about 18 muffins. [see note above on sizing]

Where to Buy Sophie-Safe Cooking:

- Lulu (Download also available)
- Amazon U.S.
- Amazon Canada
- Amazon U.K.