

# Be a glutton, ditch the gluten!

When culinary gurus Neville and Judy Green moved into a new Pukekohe home three years ago they decided their new garden would be wholly food bearing.

Consequently, with the exception of a small flower bed near the front door, their property is ringed by pristine, raised beds packed with vegetables and fruit of every description.

From this food bowl the couple pickle and preserve, bottle and bake, freeze and frieze-dry – virtually nothing is wasted.

But not content to stock their own larder, over the years the innovative duo have experimented with all types of recipes and these days are focused on gluten-free cooking that tastes fantastic.

As the principals of Gluten-Free Made Easy, they run one-day, five-hour workshops where one of the most popular items are crispy, bite-size crackers, full of flavour and, of course, gluten-free. But you could say they are just the icing on the cake – so to speak!

Students can expect feather-weight, melt-in-the-mouth, chocolate chip cookies, light and fluffy scones, comfort-packed muffins, breads of all description, perfect pasta (some egg-free) and much more.

A budding masterchef or not, Neville and Judy say anyone can learn to prepare and cook mouth-watering, inexpensive, gluten-free food simply by attending one of their information-packed, fun-filled “Gluten-Free Made Easy” workshops.

It's all about small groups gathering around the kitchen bench and watching them go to work. During the course of the workshop their teamwork is the key to students learning how to easily make delicious, gluten-free food without resorting to expensive premixes.

And, at the end of the day, everyone goes home armed with scores of recipes, a list of retailers who sell ingredients at the right price and the confidence to tackle a variety of easy, gluten-free dishes.

Attendees can also opt to receive a regular newsletter with new recipes, cooking tips and fresh ideas.

With more than 65 years' combined experience in the catering and hospitality industry, the Greens know what makes a good kitchen tick. For many years Neville was an executive chef in top hotels and restaurants and also spent 15 years at Air

The shift to gluten-free diets, often motivated by ailments such as coeliac disease, has seen a growth in gluten-free products. However, some leave a lot to be desired, prompting a local couple to set up gluten-free cooking classes. **HELEN PERRY** checked them out.



**Judy and Neville Green – making gluten-free easy.**

New Zealand, catering for first class passengers on a variety of airlines.

Judy has also worked as a hotel restaurant manager and later maintained her avid interest in ‘healthy’ food by developing her preserving, frieze-drying and other culinary skills.

Between them, Neville and Judy also operated an award-winning lunch bar and café in East Tamaki, which among its many accolades, won Customers’ Choice in the 2002 Westpac Manukau Business Excellence Awards.

“It was while we had the café that



We weren't impressed so began experimenting with our own ideas.”

Those who have tasted Neville and Judy's recipes have tried to persuade the couple to set up shop. But Green's interest lies in empowering people to look after themselves for the rest of their lives rather than just enjoying five minutes of quick gratification.

“After 10 years of working with gluten-free flours from many sources we have come to the conclusion that this field has a long way to evolve and with the current high cost of many gluten-free commercial products we want to give people the ability to make delicious food at a fraction of the price,” Judy says.

And delicious it is – pizza bases, fresh pasta, many different breads, even pickles and relishes; ideas for thickening sauce and casseroles using gluten-free flours and suggestions as to how to convert old family favourites into gluten-free winners.

Workshops are generally held at weekends – Saturday or Sunday, 9am to 2pm – finishing early enough for people to get home to families or evening plans. However, the couple will run weekday workshops if the numbers stack up – six to 10 people.

At \$95 per person these almost full day sessions have been pronounced ‘fantastic value’ by past attendees.

For example Delia from Epsom wrote: “Loved it – a thousand thanks. This has been amazing and life-changing.”

Another couple attended a workshop after hearing that a gluten-free diet might help improve life for their autistic son.

“They later told us that after just two weeks on a gluten-free diet they had seen positive changes in their son,” Neville says. “What's more they wrote to us to say how delighted they were at being given the skills and means to bake gluten-free treats that everyone really enjoyed.”

Many other letters of praise have boosted the Green's determination to keep developing new recipes to make gluten-free food not just palatable but truly appetising.

“We are thoroughly enjoying this new direction,” they agree. “Making the most of our veggie garden, together with the cooking classes gives us pleasure and keeps our pantry full.”

To find out more about Neville and Judy's Gluten-Free Made Easy workshops phone 09 238 0610 or visit [www.glutenfreemadefree.co.nz](http://www.glutenfreemadefree.co.nz)

Photos Wayne Martin

we became interested in gluten-free cooking,” Neville says. “A customer who regularly popped by for coffee finally asked if we did gluten-free.

“At the time we didn't but immediately began looking for recipes to cater for gluten intolerances and those suffering from coeliac disease.