

Bakery Products, Noodle & Pasta

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FREE FROM - GLUTEN FREE -

Gluten free diet became popular as a healthy diet of the overseas celebrities. Originally, gluten free foods are for people with celiac disease – an immune reaction triggered by the consumption of gluten, causing damage in the small intestine and affecting absorption of nutrients. This type of diet started to attract attention as a “healthy way of eating” from 2005 in the US and it became a great hit after professional tennis player Novak Djokovic and model Miranda Kerr publicly introduced their gluten free diet. The number of restaurants offering gluten free menus in Japan is increasing over the years.

The global gluten free product market size in 2016 expanded to 14.94 billion USD and it is expected to grow at CAGR 9.3% from 2017 to 2025. In Japan, stores selling breads or sweets made of rice flour instead of wheat flour are increasing. Among the different gluten free items, rice flour breads are the center of attention. In May of 2017, "Japan Rice Flour Association" was established in response to the increasing demand for rice flour as an alternative of wheat flour. Toru Wakui, president of the Akitakomachi Association who participated in the inaugural meeting said, "I thought it was impossible to increase the consumption of rice in my life time. That is when the word gluten free appeared." Also, according to Mr. Michiru Hasebe of the Ogata Village Akitakomachi Rice Producers Co, Ltd., while domestic rice consumption continues to decrease, his factory began making rice flour products 10 years ago and sales grew sharply after adding the word "gluten free" on the package.



White Rice Bread (Niigata Koshihikari)



Brown Rice Bread (left) and Roasted Type(right)

One of the pioneers of Japanese gluten free item developer and producer, Mr. Hidetsugu Muraki of Organic Foods Life is now in his 15th year working on gluten free and organic products of different varieties.

He distributes his products to many retail stores including National Azabu Supermarket and hotels. “All gluten free breads are shipped frozen. The bread loaf type has 10 slices (450g) and is free of contamination. It has a shelf life of 5 days at room temperature, 2 weeks if refrigerated, and 180 days if frozen. Frozen pizza and frozen donuts are also popular. Frozen pizza is rich in variety: vegetable, mozzarella, bacon, corn & tuna, and mock crab. Our bagels also get positive feedbacks”, says Mr. Muraki. Currently, they are producing over 120 items.



Challenges of the future

Furthermore, Mr. Muraki stressed, “Things like ‘gluten free booms’ or ‘vegan booms’ are only just passing trends, so we have to find a way to maintain the market after the ‘boom’ has passed. With gluten free, people with wheat allergies are increasing significantly. People trying gluten free as a health fad may eventually abandon the diet. But given that there are more and more people who physically can't eat gluten, I don't believe we'll need to worry too much about raising productivity. Rather, I think the key will be to focus on these people who struggle to find items without gluten and providing them with gluten-free alternatives that are just as delicious as their normal counterparts.”



Rice Pasta Spirals, Rice & Corn Pasta



Gluten Free Custard Mix, Gluten Substitute



Gluten Free Noodle and Rice Pasta at National Azabu Supermarket



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