

Substitutes for common allergens.

Avoiding the 14 major food allergens can be tough- Peanuts, Cereals containing Gluten and Soya are all major ingredients in many different cuisines. However, people with allergies shouldn't have to miss out, and that's why we've put together a list of alternatives for the most common allergens. Last month's factsheet suggested substitutes for cereals containing gluten, replacing eggs in baking and milk alternatives. This month we are digging deeper into alternatives to **Celery, Fish, Mustard and Shellfish**. Always read the ingredient labels and ask for details of all ingredients when eating out as there are many "hidden allergens" to be aware of.

Celery

Allergy to celery is thought to be rare in the UK but reactions can sometimes be serious. The most common cause of allergic reactions to celery in the UK is a condition known as **pollen food syndrome**.

- **Fennel bulbs** have a similar flavour to celery and a crunchy texture which makes them a good alternative in salads.
- **Jicama** -known as the "Mexican turnip" is a good substitute for those who dislike celery as well as those with an allergy. It has the crunchy texture but a much milder flavour.
- **Bok Choi** (the bottom part) can be used instead of celery as an ingredient in soup, stews and sauces. It can also replace celery in a "mirepoix" which is a common flavour base consisting of carrots, onion

Fish

Fish in its many forms is one of the UK's favourite ingredients. Fish is usually eaten as a named part of a dish or meal, so it is relatively easy to tell if an item contains it. However, fish can often be found in some surprising products so it is essential to read the label.

- **Jackfruit** can be used as a substitute for flaky fish such as cod, haddock, snapper and bass.
- **Tofu** (soybean curd) has a mild subtle flavour and can be prepared in many ways. It makes an excellent alternative to fish fillets in a sauce.
- **Seitan** (vegan "white meat" alternative made from hydrated gluten). It can be used to replace fish fillets and made into fish burgers.
- **Seaweed** can be added to vegetable stock and used as an alternative to fish stock. It can also be added to dishes that require a "fishy flavour" without actually using fish or fish sauce.
- **Dried mushrooms** can be used to make a stock with a similar profile flavour to fish stock. Often used as vegan Umami.
- **Carrots** thinly sliced and marinated in oil with vinegar, algae and liquid smoke are thought to taste like salmon.

Shellfish

Crustaceans and Molluscs

Crustaceans include crab, lobster, crayfish and prawns.

Molluscs include clams, mussels and oysters which are bivalves. They can be further grouped into gastropods, such as snails and whelks and cephalopods, such as squid, octopus and cuttlefish.

If you react to one type of shellfish, it is likely that you'll react to others in the same group. In many cases those who suffer from an allergic reaction will avoid eating any shellfish at all.

- **Oyster mushrooms** can be used as a vegan alternative to scallops, both for their flavour and the fact that they can be cut and presented in a way that makes them look very similar.
- **Teriyaki** has a similar consistency to oyster sauce, whilst fish sauce and Worcestershire sauce (made from anchovies) have a similar umami flavour to oyster sauce. For an oyster sauce alternative that does not contain fish or animal products, pureed mushrooms can be used.
- **Monkfish** can be used as an alternative to lobster as it has a similar texture.
- **Imitation crabmeat is made from surimi** (a pulverised fish) and is not usually safe for those with a crustacean or mollusc allergy. But **Kosher Surimi** is available and contains no shellfish.

Mustard

Mustard is commonly used to add flavour to dishes. This includes mustard powder, seeds and liquid mustard.

- **Horseradish (or wasabi)** has a similar heat to Dijon and English mustard.
- **Caraway seeds** have a similar flavour profile.
- **Turmeric** has the same yellow colour and a gentle spice but does not have the heat or the same flavour as mustard.