

Allergen substitutes (part 3)

In this month's factsheet we are continuing to investigate substitutes for allergens. This time we will be focussing on Peanuts, Tree Nuts, Lupin and Soya, all of which belong to the legume family. Someone with a severe peanut or soya allergy may well be allergic to other members of this family which also includes peas, beans and lentils.

Lupin

FACT: Lupin is a flower with tall spikes of blue or purple flowers that is native to Latin America, North Africa and some parts of Europe. The seeds are usually dried and ground into flour. Lupin is **gluten-free** and is often used as a substitute for wheat or other cereals containing gluten in gluten-free products, specially in Europe. The seeds can also be eaten raw, pickled or boiled. Lupin is part of the same legume family as the peanut and is high in protein and low in carbohydrates. Anyone suffering from a peanut allergy may wish to avoid lupin because of possible cross-reactivity.

- **Rice flour** can be used as an alternative to lupin flour when cooking and baking and does not contain any of the 14 major food allergens.
- **Almond flour or coconut flour** can also be a substitute depending on whether more fat is needed in the recipe.

Soya

Soya is a vegan and vegetarian hero, as well as being a staple of East Asian cooking and a popular milk alternative. Immature beans are known as **edamame** beans, which are often served in salads. Mature beans are made into oil or flour or eaten as whole beans. Soya is also used in cooking and food production as an emulsifier, a protein filler and to add texture. It is also used to make tofu which is made by soaking the beans in water before crushing and boiling.

- Almond, rice and oat milk are excellent substitutes for soya milk as a non-dairy alternative.
- Green peas can replace edamame beans.
- Coconut aminos can replace soy sauce.
- Seitan or polenta can replace tofu.
- Solid coconut cream can be used instead of soya in some dishes.
- Chickpea flour can provide an alternative to soya flour or tofu. Chickpea flour, also known as Gram Flour, is also gluten-free.

FACT: Not all foods with "Nut" in their name are classified as a Tree Nut! For example, Nutmeg, Coconut and Pine Nuts. Tiger Nuts are edible tubers.

Peanuts

Peanuts are a high-profile allergen and the one most likely to be associated with anaphylaxis by the public. They are sometimes known as "Monkey or Ground nuts" and unusually, they grow underground. Many Southeast Asian dishes contain peanuts as an ingredient and so those with a peanut allergy should take care when dining at restaurants featuring these foods. Peanut oil is also used for frying.

- Cashew nuts are an obvious alternative but this will depend on the person not having a **Tree Nut** allergy
- Tahini, a paste made from ground toasted sesame seeds can be used instead of peanut butter- **Sesame** is one of the 14 allergens.
- Soy nut butter has a similar texture and flavour to peanut butter. **Soya** is an allergen
- Sunflower seed butter is made in a similar way from roasted and ground seeds and is not one of the #14 allergens.
- Beans such as cannellini and haricot can be roasted to provide a similar flavour and texture to that of peanuts.
- Grape seed oil from crushed grape seeds has a mild flavour and can be used as a general alternative to peanut oil.

Tree Nuts

One of the most versatile foods. A nutritious snack, a main ingredient in sauces and dressings, a vegan alternative to the meat component in many meals and equally suitable for sweet and savoury dishes.

- There are several alternatives that provide a similar taste and texture. Seeds are close to nuts in nutritional value and consequently **chia, flax, pumpkin** and **sesame** seeds are all common nut substitutes.
- **Oats** toasted with butter can have a creamy nutty flavour that replicates that of nuts and granola gives a similar crunch.

Nuts are a hidden ingredient in many foods and even plain vanilla ice cream can contain traces of nuts via cross contamination during manufacturing or use of ice cream scoops.

Always read the ingredient label.