



Flavor Flours: A New Way to Bake with Teff, Buckwheat, Sorghum, Other Whole & Ancient Grains, Nuts & Non-Wheat Flours

Alice Medrich, Maya Klein (With)

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Winner, James Beard Foundation Award, Best Book of the Year in Baking & Desserts

In this monumental new work, beloved dessert queen Alice Medrich applies her baking precision and impeccable palate to flavor flours—wheat-flour alternatives including rice flour, oat flour, corn flour, sorghum flour, teff, and more. The resulting (gluten-free!) recipes show that baking with alternate flours adds an extra dimension of flavor. Brownies made with rice flour taste even more chocolaty. Buckwheat adds complexity to a date and nut cake. Ricotta cheesecake gets bonus flavor from a chestnut flour crust; teff is used to make a chocolate layer cake that can replace any birthday cake with equally pleasing results. All of the nearly 125 recipes—including Double Oatmeal Cookies, Buckwheat Gingerbread, Chocolate Chestnut Soufflé Cake, and Blueberry Corn Flour Cobbler—take the flavors of our favorite desserts to the next level.

The book is organized by flour, with useful information on its taste, flavor affinities, and more. And because flavor flours don't react in recipes the same way as wheat flour, Medrich explains her innovative new techniques with the clarity and detail she is known for.

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Monica says

I've tried and enjoyed several recipes from this book, and gained insights into devising variations on those recipes as well. The recipes work beautifully and are delicious and impressive. I'm looking forward to serving a batch of the paper-thin delicate and delicious almond tuile cookies to my friends and family for Christmas!

Sweta Agrawal says

Just skimmed the book really, but overall a disappointment. Too many recipes require a blend of flours, and a lot of them are the same or more elaborate than what I was looking for. I'm sure the recipes all work great - just wasn't what I was looking for.

Jhawn says

Enjoyed this book. If you are looking for how to use different flours this book will put you on the path to experimentation. Recipes begin to follow a pattern after awhile but that provides you with the ability to take other flours and use them to create what you want.

Sarah says

I had to return the library's copy. Think that means I need to buy my own. Love the way this book encourages you to play with various flours and learn their strengths instead of simply forcing gluten recipes to be gluten free.

Heather says

Flavor Flours begins with a overview of the different flours and ingredients used in the cookbook. It gives tips and tricks for successful baking with these ancient grains. Flours covered include rice flour, oat flour, corn flour and cornmeal, buckwheat flour, chestnut flour, teff flour, sorghum flour, and nut and coconut flours.

Each flour has a chapter dedicated to using it where flavor, history, and characteristics are discussed before jumping into uses for that particular flour. It gives tips on where to buy the flour as well as how to store it. Then, you get to see all the scrumptious recipes that include both weight and cup measurements.

This is gluten free at its finest using beautiful grains for full flavor and nutrients. Don't get me wrong these are sweet treats with sugar, so many of the items in the book are likely to be splurge items. Or you can use them as a base to try to create a recipe that includes a natural sweetener.

It's not all about baking. There are also puddings and gelato. There are rustic crackers and other savory delights.

The food photography is gorgeous and definitely makes me hungry and ready for cooler baking weather.

If you want to move beyond rice flour and starches in your gluten free baking, you will want to add this book to your collection.

Disclosure: I viewed a preview of this book on NetGalley.

Gabrielle says

This is a beautiful, fascinating book--and I'm not gluten-free! But I love exploring unusual textures and flavors in baking, and I'm excited to branch out beyond buckwheat flour and almond meal, which have been my go-to alternative flours for years. If I or anyone in my family were gluten-free, I would consider this book a godsend.

My only disappointment is that so many of these recipes are very closely based on traditional versions--which is part of the allure of the book, to be sure, but which means that so many of them include cream, yogurt, sour cream, or soft cheeses, and unfortunately I AM dairy-free. Subbing for butter and milk is simple, subbing for these other ingredients not so much. Now, if someone would write a genre-busting dairy-free baking book of this caliber, that would really be something (or if someone already has please let me know!).

Sally says

The first time I read it, it was interesting but all those different flours and gluten-free baking ingredients! Now that I have a grain mill it is a very useful book, though several of the desserts (especially the cakes) are more sophisticated than I would go to the trouble to make. Many of the recipes, though, are for things like cookies and feature whole grains, so the book is much more useful to me the second time around.

Courtney says

This cookbook is full of useful information and lots of recipes that I would like to try. Since gluten free flour is a must in my house, I love learning about all the different kinds out there and the different flavor profiles they provide. I haven't tried any recipes in this book yet, but I definitely plan on buying it. It is an awesome reference book as well. The pictures are wonderful. I always like a cookbook with good pictures. If I can't picture a recipe, I am often a little skeptical about making it. I am glad the author has shared her knowledge and experience. I definitely plan to utilize it in my household!

Douglas Larson says

I haven't read this, don't have a copy yet. But I attended the Northwest Chocolate Festival today in Seattle and this author was there and spoke about this book and another she wrote. I was somewhat impressed with her comments and the 3 stars I granted it are based on that impression. Once I actually have read it and tried some of the recipes, I will post again and form a more considered opinion and perhaps revise my rating.

Sarah says

Not at all what I expected. At first I was disappointed, wishing for more brand-new ideas. Then I realized that I picked up the book to learn how to work with flours I don't use often, and the book shows me exactly how to do that. Teff in brownies, rice flour in pudding, corn flour in Boston creme pie--- those are all things I would try. I am really excited to expand my baking repertoire.

Punk says

It took me a while to check this out of the library because nowhere on the cover does it say *gluten free*, but it is. Medrich's goal was to showcase these flours rather than use them as substitutes for wheat, and every chapter focuses on a single flour as the "hero" flour, either on its own or maybe with a little rice flour for support. It features rice, oat, corn, buckwheat, chestnut, teff, sorghum, nut, and coconut flours. Xanthan gum is used, though rarely, and flaxseed meal is used only when its flavor fits with the finished product. There's no added starch, either, no tapioca, no potato, no corn. I believe this means baked goods will take longer to go stale. Many of them have notes that say the flavor actually improves after a day or two of rest. Compare this to other gluten-free cookbooks that say an item is best eaten on the day it's made and if you can't eat an entire bundt cake in one sitting that's your problem.

The recipes are a nice mix of homey and classy, with cakes, cookies, tarts, crackers, and bars. It also throws in a few pancakes and crepes, as well as a couple of gelatos and some frostings, glazes, and fillings. Measurements are in U.S. volume and metric (grams). Each recipe has storage advice and helpful head notes, many have flavor variations, but only about half have a color photo. There's an index by hero flour and then a more general index, which is usable, but not comprehensive. I had to find gelato under "ice cream," for example, and when I went to look up "Thai rice flour" it's not in the index at all, which is a problem because there are a lot of words in this book and I couldn't remember if it was covered in the introduction to the rice chapter, or the introduction to the book itself.

With that small exception, the book is beautifully organized and comes with a thoughtful introduction by Medrich where she describes her process of experimenting with these flours and what she learned. She goes on to say we don't need to know everything that went wrong, but it's in our best interest to follow her instructions exactly, especially when it comes to buckwheat, which is fussy and needs to be stirred the appropriate length of time or it gets weird. I often skip all the talking in a cookbook—especially those that cater to special diets because they can get preachy—but I think in this instance it's important to read the introductory text. It's all about process, so it's relevant to the recipes, and there's not a word about health.

If I could eat dairy, I'd be all over this book like ants on a log. Even with that limitation there are a few recipes that are dairy free (sponge cakes, chiffon cakes, the carrot cake, a pecan cookie), and a couple more where you could experiment with replacing the butter. Other recipes use yogurt, milk, clarified butter/ghee, and cream and would be harder to mess with, and because the flours are the star of the show, there's no discussion about how to substitute for them, but because the flours aren't usually mixed together you can just skip that chapter—if you can't do corn, for example—and not run into it elsewhere.

Highly recommended, even for folks who aren't gluten free. The recipes make it easy to experiment with alternative flours without having to buy a lot of wacky ingredients to support them, and Medrich has an approachable tone and lots of tips for how to deal with the trickier aspects of baking.

Rachel Pollock says

The introduction is well worth it for the information about different flours and how they function in baking. I'm primarily an improvisational cookie-baker so I doubt I'll try out most of the recipes for cakes, pies, and pastries. The basic pancake, waffle, and crepe recipes are helpful, and I look forward to testing the cookie and cracker recipes.

Beth says

As someone who is always trying to diversify her diet for nutritional benefit (but is also allergic to a lot of things), I found this educational, inspirational, and beautiful to read.

The recipes are all dessert-type things, which was the only disappointment. But I feel like I now understand what to expect when working with each of the non-wheat flours in this book, so that I'm better prepared to adapt wheat flour recipes.

Also, the layout is great- it's easy to read, the color pallet is appealing, and the photos are engaging without being overwhelming or too posh. I can't wait to try some of these recipes, and I feel confident I can make a success of them!

Sandra Lassiter says

I love cooking healthy for my family, though I acknowledge that I don't do it as often as I should. I do try to stay away from refined, white flours so was looking for recipes using different, healthier flours. We are not gluten intolerant nor do I try to cook gluten free, so I was not looking for recipes that mix multiple flours to mimic wheat, but rather tasty recipes using healthier flours. I was very disappointed, therefore, when I realized as I browsed through this book that what seemed to me to be the majority of the recipes lean on white rice flour. Maybe it's just me, but there's not exactly a lot of nutrients in white rice flour. White rice has been bleached and pretty much everything good about it is gone, so it stands to reason that white rice flour isn't going to have much good going for it.

I love the idea of this cookbook. I would love to learn to cook with other flours such as sorghum, buckwheat and more, but it feels like cheating if in your section on sorghum, for instance, you call for 1/4 c of sorghum

flour and 1 c of white rice flour or a scant 1/2 c sorghum and 1 1/3 c rice. The same thing happens over and over in all of the sections (each flour or flour family has its own section). There are some delicious looking recipes in this book, but I probably won't be cooking out of it much as to me I'll be healthier with wheat flour than white rice. I'm sorry, but this book just didn't work for me.

I received a copy of this book from Artisan Books for my honest review. All thoughts and opinions are my own.

Samantha says

My mother, a cookbook aficionado, flipped through the cookbook (twice) and then proclaimed, "This might be the best cookbook you've gotten." My dad sampled a chocolate chip cookie and went back for more - not once did he say, "this tastes gluten-free," which is honestly something he says all the time. I personally like mixing my own flour blends so this book suits my preferences and needs perfectly. It honestly makes sense - stop treating wheat flour alternatives like wheat - mind blown.
