Decadent Desserts: 3 Holiday Classics You'll Love

Gluten-Free Living
8 Holiday Recipes
Green bean casserole & more on the menu

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Diet-based dating

TACKLING THE CHALLENGES of a gluten-free lifestyle with someone who understands the diet is what Massaeli Romano and Steve Grandi had in mind when they founded Gluten2Glutes.com dating website.

The pair wanted to connect individuals with similar dietary needs. They hope to build relationships with the common goal of a healthy, fulfilled life.

"We're faced with all kinds of issues when you're dating," Romano says. "It's not just about finding love. You have to be compatible in diet and lifestyle."

"Eating is a big part of dating," Grandi adds. "It's a big part of any relationship."

Although it just launched in July, the site has already attracted more than 5,000 members seeking companions on their gluten-free journeys. Not just a dating site, Gluten2Glutes allows users to share gluten-free recipes, videos, blogs, local events and cooking classes. The founders plan to host cooking events, group meet-ups and other social activities throughout the country.

A major goal of the site is to spread information about celiac disease and gluten intolerance, Grandi says.

Romans and Grandi learned the value of sharing a gluten-free lifestyle with a friend. Soon after Romans was diagnosed with celiac disease, her longtime friend Grandi discovered she was gluten intolerant. The two found each other through the hard times, Romans says.

"We support each other, and we help each other through the hard times," Romans says. "We're a good support group for each other."

The friends believe that similar diets increase compatibility between potential partners and feel it's important that gluten-free singles find others, such as through adoption and dating.

But some wonder if the gluten-free diet is the best interest to share with a partner.

"I'll say one scenario: person with celiac disease and the relationship is enough!" Nicole Taliani commented on Gluten-Free Living Facebook page, noting she's the one who can't eat gluten.

"While this might make dinner a lot easier, it's not true that this is necessarily the common ground we need to bond with a partner over," Allison Greer-Titta wrote. "Some food-related symptoms aren't exactly made for stimulating conversation, if you know what I mean."

Another Facebook follower wrote that the children of two individuals with celiac disease would carry a much higher genetic risk of developing the disease.

But others like the idea of dating someone who is also gluten free. "At least you wouldn't have to explain for the millionth time about what gluten free and gluten intolerant means!" Michel Blouin said.

"Sure, anything that speaks a common language is a good start. Almost everyone you know has at least one thing in common," Enny Garcia wrote.

Despite varying opinions, Gluten-Free Living is generating buzz with its rapidly growing membership.

"You know there's a need," Romans says of the website's users. "They're just hungry for a diet!"

— Susan Cohen

Delta Air Lines is joining with UDI's, a respected gluten-free company to improve its gluten-free options. The airline recently started offering UDI's products when complimentary meals are served on a flight and a passenger requests a gluten-free meal. Trainers will find UDI's double chocolate muffin, plain bagels, chocolate chip cookies and whole grain seeded dinner rolls. All four are individually wrapped to prevent cross-contamination.

"UDI's is excited to partner with Delta Air Lines to provide gluten-free food options to travelers," says Denise Savickas, vice president of marketing at UDI's.

"With more than 1 million Americans with celiac disease and more than 40 million with gluten sensitivity, Delta's gluten-free offerings will become more prevalent in all aspects of day-to-day life, including travel."

Gluten-free meals must be reserved 24 hours in advance. In addition to in-flight meals, Delta says it is also selling more gluten-free options in meal boxes that can be purchased on flights.

"Delta is the only airline that is making the skies a little more gluten-free friendly. Let Delta offer these gluten-free options among its complementary snacks: Popcorn, Popcorn Chips, Terra Finaes Potato Chips and Because Toasted Corn Chips.

However, stock a flight from flight to flight and the gluten-free choices may not always be available.

The airline's Shape Up box, which is available for purchase is gluten-free, kosher and vegetarian and includes Cranberry Almond cookies, a Parmela cookie, hummus, cheese, raw nuts and a mint.

Flying with celiac disease or gluten intolerance still has its perks, but like leg room, a little more makes a big difference. For a listing of the gluten-free meal policies of a variety of airlines go to glutenfreeairports.com.

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