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RECENT TWEETS

Down in the Valley Gluten-Free Bakehouse

By: Nancy Crotti



Valley's Bakehouse team: Joanne Lamb, Jill Webster, and Mark Hamer.

Necessity may be the mother of invention, but the hassle factor comes in a close second.

CO+OP DEALS



[Check out the current specials!](#)

EVENTS CALENDAR

Raw Food Demo

Location: Valley Natural Foods
Demo Kiosk

Date: March 13, 2014

Time: 3:00pm

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Gluten-Free Day

Location: Valley Natural Foods

Date: March 20, 2014

Time: all day

 **Valley Natural Foods** 54m
@ValleyNatural

What a line-up
[@sewardcoop](#). Butternut Squash Enchilada Verde? Sounds like a winner!

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 **Valley Natural Foods** 1h
@ValleyNatural

It's the [@MNFoodShare](#) [#MarchCampaign](#). Help us reach 1500#s of donations for [@360Communities](#) [#foodshelf](#). YellowBins standing by at store exit

 **Seward Co-op** 1h
@sewardcoop

Join us for lunch today:

Butternut Squash Enchilada Verde;
Jerked Chicken;
Veracruz Rice;
Catalan Roasted Vegetables;
Cuban Black Beans

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POLL

What is your favorite winter warmer?:

- Hot cocoa
- A steaming mug of tea
- Homemade soup
- Anything spicy

When Joanne Lamb was baking gluten-free goods in Valley Natural Foods' deli in 2007, she was constantly wiping down equipment to avoid cross-contamination with gluten-containing products. For people with celiac disease and gluten intolerance, ingesting the protein in wheat, rye and barley can cause numerous symptoms, including digestive disturbances and skin disorders.

"We figured out it was really difficult to do gluten-free in a kitchen where wheat flour is used," said Lamb. She returned to the co-op recently to develop Down in the Valley Bakehouse, a dedicated gluten-free bakery. "I had to mark products 'not prepared in a gluten-free kitchen.' It was less than ideal, yet we sensed that it was a real need."

Jill Webster, Valley Natural Foods' deli and bakehouse manager, figured out a way to do it better. In July, the bakehouse opened at a separate location in Burnsville to supply not only Valley Natural in Burnsville but several other food co-ops in the Twin Cities area with gluten-free bars, bread, cakes, cookies, muffins, and buns. Working in the bakehouse has challenged Lamb and veteran baker Mark Hamer, who had abandoned baking and was working as a sales representative until a few years ago when he tasted one of Valley Natural's oatmeal-ginger-chocolate-chip gluten-free cookies.

"I told people it was one of the top five cookies I had ever had in my life," Hamer said. He went to work in the deli, and eventually began baking again, but gluten-free baking was new to him until about a year ago.

"It's still baking, but there is a lot more chemistry involved," he said. "We're making it possible for people to enjoy tasting things who never knew what they were or never had the opportunity to taste something [gluten-free]."

He recalled a teenage girl who had recently been diagnosed with celiac disease and had come to Valley Natural searching for gluten-free alternatives. "I had her taste some of the stuff, and she literally was in tears and said, 'I can't eat anything anymore and this is really good.' It's very exciting."

Lamb has been developing recipes that omit other allergens, such as dairy, eggs and even canola oil. She's also sensitive to the reputation that a lot of commercially available gluten-free baked goods have.

"I didn't want anything that was dry, gritty or crumbly, or bread that's like a foam yoga brick," Lamb said. "No one wants to eat it."

Hamer's personal goal is to bake gluten-free products that the whole family will want to eat. "By and large, the feedback that we're getting is, we're hitting it," he said. "People are saying that they can't believe this stuff is gluten-free, dairy-free or whatever other allergen-free that there is."

She and Hamer continue to develop recipes. "Right now we're getting ready to launch pies," Lamb said. "We're working feverishly on them for the holidays."

Nancy Crotti is a freelance writer and editor based in St. Paul.

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Juicing -- A tasting/cooking demo with Sheryl

Location: Valley Natural Foods

Date: April 5, 2014

Time: 12:00pm

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