

Source: Restaurant {Main}
Edition:
Country: UK
Date: Saturday 1, March 2014
Page: 74
Area: 532 sq. cm
Circulation: ABC 16837 Monthly
Ad data: page rate £2,250.00, scc rate £31.00
Phone: 01293 613400
Keyword: Gluugle

restaurant business

> Food allergies

Toolkit: Catering for special dietary needs in multi-site businesses

With allergies and intolerances seemingly on the rise and people avoiding some ingredients for lifestyle reasons there's no excuse for not looking after diners with dietary requirements

1 Get accredited

A number of campaigning organisations including Coeliac UK offer restaurants accreditation services. Ask Italian offers a range of gluten-free products including pizza and now has NGCI accreditation (no gluten-containing ingredients). Its procedures for catering for people include separate, sealed and labelled equipment, separate working areas, separate serving dishes and the requirement for kitchen staff to carefully wash hands and put on fresh aprons.

"Eating away from home is a huge challenge for people with coeliac disease and we have seen a growing demand from customers looking for safe and delicious choices when trying to avoid gluten. To be able to offer a full and varied menu stands us apart from other high-street restaurants," says Steve Holmes, managing director at ASK Italian.

2 Offer 'free from' options

Many dishes can be easily customised to not contain problematic ingredients such as dairy, meat, fish and gluten.

Restaurants are increasingly flagging 'free from' options as the number of people that can't (or simply don't want to) eat certain ingredients continues to rise. For example, fish dishes that include a meat element are fine but not constructing them in a manner that means they can be modified for pescetarians is an oversight. Making sure desserts are flexible is important too, as non-dairy eaters and people with wheat intolerances or coeliac disease often find it hard to navigate this part of the menu.



Source: Restaurant {Main}
Edition:
Country: UK
Date: Saturday 1, March 2014
Page: 74
Area: 532 sq. cm
Circulation: ABC 16837 Monthly
Ad data: page rate £2,250.00, scc rate £31.00
Phone: 01293 613400
Keyword: Gluugle



Ain't no topping that:
gluten-free dishes should
be prominent on menus

Words
Joe Lutrario

3 Nominate an allergen champion

Giving someone in the business special responsibility to champion 'free from' dining can pay significant dividends. The candidate doesn't necessarily have to be a chef but some knowledge of how food is produced within the operation is essential. Catering for people with allergies will get more complicated at the end of the year, thanks to incoming changes to the EU Food Information Regulation. Catchily titled FIR 1169/2011, the new rules will require businesses to have printed information on key allergens available at all times. "This has obvious implications on the freedom of head chefs to create ad-hoc specials," says Fourth's James England.

4 Make sure all staff understand the terminology

One of the biggest barriers to dealing with dietary needs is a lack of understanding at branch level. Ensure back and front-of-house staff know the difference between an allergy - which can be very serious - and food intolerances, which are usually less severe. Another common misconception is that coeliac disease is an intolerance to gluten. "It is an auto-immune condition. When the body is exposed to gluten it can cause serious problems, mainly in the gut. It should be treated seriously. Gluten-free pizzas shouldn't be produced or cooked in the same area as regular pizzas," says Coeliac UK's Sarah Sleet. Gluten is most commonly found in wheat,

rye and barley but it's also used as a food additive, so check products carefully.

5 Get listed

There are innumerable food blogs, websites and forums that publish comprehensive listings on those businesses that cater for people with special dietary needs. Listings are usually free - some organisations do charge - so ensure your business is listed if you do go the extra mile.

Apps to help people with their dietary requirements are also becoming available. Blogger Caz Roberts runs The Gluten Free Foodie site and launched an app, Gluugle, which lets users search for restaurants offering gluten-free meals nearby.



6 Rethink menus

Multi-site operators are getting better at communicating dietary information via menus but there's still work to be done. Common issues include inconsistent use of symbols. For example, having dairy-free symbols on mains but not desserts, forgetting to put symbols on set and special menus and a lack of a key that explains what things are. Restaurants should ensure allergen statements are prominent on menus. These should be worded in a friendly way that doesn't give customers the impression the business is absolving itself of all responsibility. 

Source: Restaurant {Main}
Edition:
Country: UK
Date: Saturday 1, March 2014
Page: 74
Area: 532 sq. cm
Circulation: ABC 16837 Monthly
Ad data: page rate £2,250.00, scc rate £31.00
Phone: 01293 613400
Keyword: Gluugle

THE FARM FRITES DEVELOPMENT CHEF CLUB

Restaurant's Farm Frites Development Chef Club is pitched at those responsible for food across multiple sites, including executive head chefs and heads of food and development chefs.

The series will include regular features, face-to-face events, awards and newsletters aimed at the multi-site chef community, a vital but often overlooked

part of the restaurant sector. The inaugural Development Chef Summit, which incorporates the Development Chef Awards, will take place at Westminster Kingsway College on Wednesday 19 March.

To join the club or book a free place at the summit contact
joanne.horton@wrbm.com.



In association with



Choices: restaurants are flagging up 'free from' fare