

Food

People with food allergies must shop carefully

Most of us take for granted that we can eat a wide range of foods and never need to worry about allergic reactions. But for those who suffer from food allergies, planning even the simplest meals can be an arduous task. That's certainly the case for people with celiac disease, an allergy to gluten, the protein found in wheat, rye, barley and oats that helps bread and other baked goods stick together and stay moist.

Fortunately, flours which do not contain gluten can be made from other ingredients. In many parts of the world, the flour that is used most frequently is not wheat, but is more likely to be corn, potato or rice flour. In Canada, these products are available in most grocery stores.

According to the home economists at McCormick Canada, you can use potato flour, rice flour and tapioca (which McCormick markets under its Club House brand) to make a wide variety of sauces, baked goods and desserts.

Throughout history, people have milled various cereal grains to make flours. Rice, which is the basic food of more than half the world, was soaked, ground and fermented to make a flour. Then it was combined with other ingredients to form a dough which was steamed rather than baked.

Rice flour is excellent for thickening sauces, gravies and cream pies because it heats well and does not tend to separate. It is particularly good at preventing the separation of frozen gravies and sauces when they are reheated. If you are using rice flour for thickening, use two-thirds the amount of wheat flour - two teaspoons rice flour for each tablespoon wheat flour called for in the recipe.

Baked goods and pastries made with rice flour tend to be melt-in-your-mouth tender. You don't need to worry about overhandling the dough because it contains no gluten. Pastry made with rice flour is very delicate. It may break in handling, but does repair easily. If you want to bake

with rice flour, the home economists at McCormick Canada advise using recipes that specifically call for it as an ingredient since rice flour cannot be substituted directly in most

wheat flour recipes. (Rice flour can be substituted one-for-one in recipes that call for ground rice.)

Potato flour, which is made by grinding dry, sliced potatoes, is the oldest commercial form of

processed potato. It is widely used by the baking industry, and small amounts of potato flour are often added to breads as a flavor enhancer and to help retain freshness.

You can add potato flour to fruit and egg sauces, gravies, soups, breads and cakes. Potato

flour cooks quickly and smoothly, turns transparent after heating and mixes well in cold water. It is an excellent thickener for sauces, gravies and puddings - use one-third the amount of wheat flour called for (one teaspoon potato flour for every one tablespoon wheat flour).



CHEESECAKE

INGREDIENTS:

For the crust -
1/4 cup melted butter
1 cup graham cracker crumbs

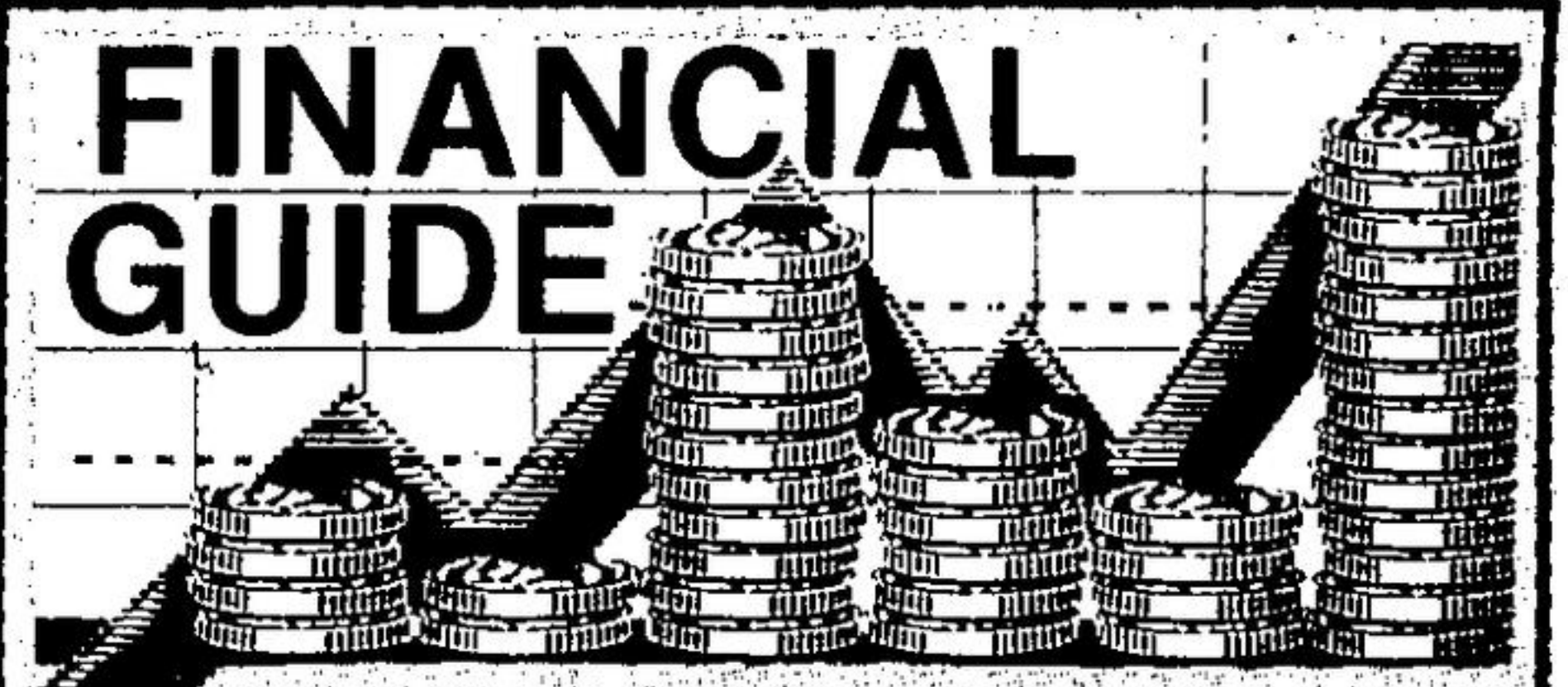
For the filling -

2 lbs. cream cheese
1 cup white sugar
4 large eggs
1 cup table cream (18%)
2 tsp. vanilla extract

For decoration -
strawberries, kiwi, mandarin, oranges, grapes, raspberries, whatever you like best.

METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 325° F.
2. Combine melted butter and graham cracker crumbs. Pat this in the bottom of an 8 1/2" springform pan. Bake in the oven 8 minutes. Remove and set aside to cool.
3. With an electric mixer beat the cream cheese until fluffy. Gradually add the sugar and beat until smooth. Set the mixer speed to medium, add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each. Scrape the sides of the bowl occasionally.
4. In a steady stream, add the cream and vanilla and beat until thoroughly mixed; pour onto the graham cracker bottom. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes in the preheated oven, until set. (It may still be a bit wobbly in the middle but it will continue to cook when it comes out - if it's really soft leave it a little longer). Remove from the oven and refrigerate overnight before removing from the pan.
5. Remove from the pan carefully and decorate with whichever fruit you like best. If you wish to glaze it, melt a few ounces of fruit jelly (red currant, peach, etc.) and a couple of teaspoons of water. Brush this over the fruit. Serves 10 or more.



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