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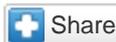


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Personal chef adds gluten-free items to her menu



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Fallan Patterson fpatterson@tribune.com

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After six years as a personal chef, **Delray Beach** resident Shelley Nachum is shifting her focus to gluten-free cooking.

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye and barley products that can cause issues in people with autoimmune disorders such as Celiac's disease.

After being diagnosed with Hashimoto's thyroid, an autoimmune disorder, in 2012, Nachum has followed a gluten-free diet. She also cut out dairy, soy and corn — food that is known to cause allergies and other issues.

"I noticed a lot of changes," said Nachum, owner of Short on Thyme. "A lot of people say this is a fad or trend but there's a serious need for this."

While she's done her own research on the subject, she's currently in the final weeks of a gluten-free training certification offered by the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness, which is geared toward hospitality professionals.

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"It's pretty comprehensive," she said. "Between that and my own knowledge, I feel pretty confident."

Nachum said she's prepared to take on clients who need to learn how to readjust their eating due to their illnesses.

Photos: Notable deaths from 2014 and 2013

"You have to be so careful with this, especially with Celiac's because they could end up in the hospital or die from even a bread crumb," she said. "I really enjoy helping people."

Nachum also asks potential clients about their needs, if they've been tested for any diseases or have been put on an elimination diet to pinpoint the cause of their symptoms.

She's purchased a separate set of cooking equipment for gluten-free clients and is changing

her logo to reflect her new vision.

While she hasn't booked any gluten-free clients yet, she's received interest through social media and has experience handling the special dietary needs of some of her other clients.

Nachum has cooked for Renaldo Pensa, 87, for more than two years, catering to his special dietary needs. Pensa is on a strict, simple diet that includes limited meat, no spices and sometimes the need for pureeing his food for gastrointestinal and digestive issues.

"I have [Gastroesophageal reflux disease]. That is the reason I cannot eat regular food," the **Pompano Beach** resident said.

Monthly, Nachum prepares dishes such as fish, pasta, rice and a few legumes that Pensa freezes and heats up when needed.

"I'm used to not having any flavor. It's all right for me," Pensa said. "When you have this condition, you really don't have a favorite (food). Mainly fish is what I like."

In addition to her new gluten-free menu, Nachum still plans to cook the traditional, nutritious dishes she's built her career on.

"It's my passion, health and nutrition," she said. "It comes naturally to want to help people this way."

Part of that nature includes donating 10 percent of her sales to The Caring Kitchen of C.R.O.S. Ministries in **Delray Beach**, a tradition she's kept up since opening her business in 2008.

"Being in the food business, I work for people who can afford a personal chef so I decided to give back to people who can't afford to eat," Nachum said. "It's something I can do to help."

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