

# Dining out just gets better and better

**Margaret Clough from Ainslie, ACT shares her dining experiences whilst visiting her family in Newcastle, NSW.**

## A VERY SPECIAL TASTE OF ASIA

Every few months I visit my son and his family in Newcastle, NSW, and it has become a family tradition to go out to dinner together. This is a tradition I heartily approve of as my son and daughter-in-law, who move around a lot, always manage to discover great restaurants wherever they live. On a recent visit I was eagerly anticipating another wonderful meal and we set off in high spirits to a mystery restaurant my son assured me I would love.

My anticipation turned to dismay as we approached the restaurant and I read the words 'Sesames – A Taste of Asia' above the door. I've had some sad experiences in restaurants that offer a 'taste of Asia' or 'Asian style'. These restaurants frequently offer a large, hybrid menu with soy sauce or gluten-containing sauces already added to every dish, and wheaten cornflour used as a thickener.

'Ah well,' I thought. 'Make the best of it. At least the company will be good.' The menu certainly looked varied and quite fascinating. Obviously this was no ordinary restaurant. Surely the chef would be flexible enough to adapt one of these dishes to make it gluten free, I thought. When the waitress came to take our orders I began to make the usual request, hoping that at least she would know what gluten was. 'Oh', she said, quickly interrupting the familiar patter. 'I'll get you the gluten free menu.' And there it was – my very own gluten free menu! It offered a generous range of choices, each one more mouth watering than the one before.

- Oyster shooters in a spicy Laksa broth;
- Prawn and green mango salad with a lime and chilli dressing;

- Diced chicken mixed with mandarin, young ginger and crushed nuts on betel leaves
- Seared yellow fin tuna with grapefruit, avocado and wasabi on sushi rice with a black sesame and orange dressing
- Sashimi beef fillet finely sliced and served with a Cambodian style lemon, lime Spanish onion and coriander dressing
- Thai basil, chilli and garlic with capsicum, beans and bamboo shoots served with chicken, beef, prawns or seafood – and more.

Hard to choose with so many enticing options. In the end we all chose from the gluten free menu and I enjoyed being able to sample from each dish - a rare treat for a coeliac. The food was excellent – fresh, natural ingredients, subtly blended flavours, beautifully prepared and presented. Without a doubt it was the best Asian meal I have tasted in Australia. Not surprising that Sesames has a string of awards and has just won 'Best Asian Restaurant of the Year' yet again. The manager, Meisha Wiseman, is not only a delightful hostess, but thoroughly educated in the complexities of gluten free food and very committed to providing delicious meals for those with all sorts of dietary requirements. Although the food is top shelf, prices are very reasonable indeed.

You can find 'Sesames – A Taste of Asia' at 52 Glebe Road, The Junction, Newcastle, NSW (phone 4969 2033). It is open from Monday to Saturday for dinner and Wednesday to Friday for lunch.



*Sesames – A taste of Asia*

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## HEALTHY FAST FOOD, GLUTEN FREE – TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

Driving home from Newcastle, I stopped at the Caltex garage near Tuggerah on the F3 Freeway to refuel and noticed a new fast food outlet. Olivers, it was called, offering 'Real Food. Real Fast'. Knowing that the only food I could purchase at the other two outlets would be hot chips or icecream, I went in to check it out. The crisp green and white decor gave it a pleasant, fresh appearance, and the photos of food to order looked inviting. To my absolute delight they offered sushi! Now, I love sushi – it is one of the few takeaway options that we coeliacs can enjoy. It's a healthy option, it travels well and it's yummy too, even without the soy sauce in the little fish container that usually accompanies it. Then, as I stood in the queue to be served I noticed a



*Olivers*

stand of muffins at the counter, and the top shelf were labelled 'gluten free', with a choice of blueberry, raspberry or chocolate. Now that was really good news. But it got even better when I enquired about other gluten free choices. The owners/managers of Olivers, Paula and Jason Gunn, are firmly committed to providing healthy fast food options, and use only natural ingredients. They make their own stock for the soups – pumpkin or miso – so soups and the salads are all gluten free, including salad dressings. Gluten free soy sauce is used in the stir fries, and soon there will be little takeaway containers for gluten free soy sauce to go with your sushi. No preservatives, additives or artificial colours are used, making this outlet a haven for anyone with dietary problems. Paula and Jason are searching for a local supplier of gluten free bread or rolls and these will be available in the future to enjoy with your soup or salad.

I accepted the offer to have my chocolate muffin warmed, and although it was far too early for morning tea, devoured it on the spot, saving my tuna sushi for later in the journey. The muffin was moist and very delicious.

**Olivers, it was called,**

**offering Real Food.**

**Real Fast.**

Congratulations to the owners of Olivers, an all-Australian Company! I hope the two Olivers Outlets (one on each side of the freeway) thrive and grow, and the company expands to provide these sorts of nutritious, low fat, fresh food options on freeways throughout Australia. Doctors are now saying that the next generation of adults (our children and grandchildren) will be the first generation for a long, long time to have a shorter life span than their parents! Outlets like these are urgently needed, to provide healthy yet tasty alternatives to the current range of sugar and fat-laden fast foods and counter the growing tide of obesity, diabetes and chronic ill health in our country.

*Margaret Clough / Travel Editor*

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## Australian Made. Gluten Free.



### Fruit Cake

375g mixed fruit, washed & dried  
2 tablespoons sherry, rum or brandy  
3 tablespoons orange Juice  
62.5g margarine or butter  
50g caster Sugar  
1/2 teaspoon xanthan gum  
2 eggs (60g size)  
1 tablespoon orange marmalade  
1 teaspoon cider vinegar  
150g **FG Roberts Gluten Free Self Raising Flour**  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 teaspoon mixed spice

**Makes 1 x 800g cake**

All fruit should be no bigger than a sultana. Marinate mixed fruit in orange juice and sherry for 24 to 48 hours. Line loaf tin (10 x 18cm) with one baking paper and several brown paper layers. Sift xanthan gum with sugar. Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs gradually. Add sifted flour and spices with the fruit, marmalade and vinegar. Mix thoroughly but gently. Place mixture in tin. Place a baking pan of boiling water on bottom rack of oven. Bake cake, loosely covered with foil, on middle rack at 150°C for 1 1/2 hours. Remove foil to enable browning and continue to cook until done when tested. Remove from oven, cover loosely with a tea-towel. Cool in tin.



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