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BeFree Gluten-free Products by Žito

Q&A Guide



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BE FREE

BREZGLUTENSKI KRUH

- brez alergenov ■
- sveže pečen ■
- vir vlaknin ■

Žito
Po kruhu se dan pozna.

kruh.zito.si

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1. General Information on BeFree Products

What are Žito BeFree gluten-free products?

Žito BeFree gluten-free range offers three types of bread: classic bread, bread with seeds and buckwheat bread. There are also two types of bread rolls: classic and with seeds. All these products are the best and the most innovative solution on the market.



Why are these breads the best and the most innovative?

The products taste by far better than our competitors'. They taste just like classic bread. There is no flavour of preservatives and spirits **because the bread does not contain them!** The core is fresh, succulent and elastic. The bread does not crumble even 3 days after being baked in the shop.

These breads have many positive characteristics. They are allergen-free (no eggs, milk, lactose or soy). The bread contains a lot of fibres (the source of fibres), which are very important in the everyday diet. The fibres are also important in the diet of coeliac patients, who have to consume additional fibres due to their disease. This bread already contains fibres.

The solution is also innovative because Žito offered the first gluten-free bread that can be baked in a film in the shop. Thus, this bread is 100 % safe from external influences and gluten. This is why the consumers can purchase it at every point of sale.

What is the concept of Žito BeFree breads?

The concept of these products is to keep customers and merchants safe from gluten contamination. Žito is the first and the only provider of fresh gluten-free baked goods, which are available in every shop and taste just like classic bread. These products are ready to bake, which means that our bakers prepare them with care, and then, the products are partially baked and deep frozen. Such products are delivered to points of



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sale, where they are baked to completion, and thus, the consumer can buy a freshly baked, fragrant product.

Products have Gluten Free Certificate and are a great source of fibres. They contain no preservatives, spirits, flavourings, milk, eggs or soy. The products are hand-made, and in addition to their natural taste, they are distinguished by their long-lasting freshness, soft dough, crisp crust, and succulent core that does not crumble.

For whom are the products intended?

The BeFree products are first and foremost intended for coeliac patients, people who are gluten-intolerant, and those who have a gluten-free diet. Žito tries to make life easier for them, as it is the first company to offer gluten-free products at numerous points of sale. Thus, they do not need to worry about bread-making. Instead, they can enjoy their active lifestyle and be in their best shape thanks to their diet. The BeFree products are available to everyone who likes to enjoy quality bread and bread rolls. The products are also available to public institutions and customers from the HORECA sector.

You claim that these are the best gluten-free breads on the Slovenian market. How do you support this claim?

On the Slovenian market, there are currently no other freshly baked gluten-free products that the consumers could purchase daily in all large shops. These are also the only gluten-free products that taste just like classic baked goods, have a crisp crust and succulent core that does not crumble.

Several awards testify to their quality - the Superior Taste Award 2020, and golden awards received at the 20th Assessment of Bread, Bread Rolls, Pastry, Pasta, Biscuits and Fresh Pastry that was organised under the auspices of the Bakery division of the CCIS - Chamber of Agricultural and Food Enterprises.

These are expensive baked goods. How did you set the price?

The Žito BeFree products on shelves taste great, are the most natural, and have many benefits. They are hand-made as well as of excellent quality. The product price is reasonable.

Other gluten-free products on the market cost between 7 €/kg and 18 €/kg. The recommended sale price of the Žito BeFree products is just under 10 €/kg.

Thus, the customers get a high-quality product (with numerous benefits) for a reasonable price. The price is suitable considering the fact that this is a high-quality hand-made product that tastes great. Furthermore, the products are still more affordable than similar products abroad.

The range of gluten-free breads includes buckwheat bread. What percentage of buckwheat flour does it contain? Do you comply with the legislation that requires the products to contain 30 % of buckwheat flour?

The gluten-free buckwheat bread contains about 6 % of buckwheat flour, which helps to elevate its flavour.



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We tried to create buckwheat bread with higher percentage of this flour. However, after consumer testing, we discovered that the consumers prefer the taste of the bread with the current percentage of buckwheat flour.

2. Suitability for coeliac patients

How do you ensure that the products do not contain any gluten?

Žito's bakery in Trbovlje, where the gluten-free products are made, is intended exclusively for making gluten-free products. Thus, it is a certified gluten-free facility (with an international mark and certificate. INFO: the certification is in progress and it will be officially concluded by 1 April 2020. However, we already hold all certificates of conformity of gluten-free products.), where only gluten-free raw materials are used. The rules on gluten-free production are very strict.

When baking, the company complies with these rules. Thus, starting raw materials, internal control points and final products are subjects to stringent, regular controls and analyses. Each product bears its own certification number, and they are packaged at the bakery to ensure maximum protection.

The packaged products are frozen, delivered to the points of sale, where they are baked, and then offered to the customer in the very same packaging. Due to this innovative packaging that can withstand freezing and baking, there is no substance transmission, and thus, a gluten-free product is guaranteed.

Your gluten-free products contain oats. Are you aware that some coeliac patients are also allergic to oats?

We are aware of the fact that a small percentage of coeliac patients are allergic to oats. Oats are added to bread to ensure its freshness. Without this ingredient, the products would lack the freshness. On the packaging, the OATS abbreviation is clearly indicated, which means that the product is gluten-free but it contains oats.

When expanding the range, Žito will attempt to create new flavours of gluten-free bread. Furthermore, we are trying to find a way to give our consumers bread of similar quality but without added oats.

Are you cooperating with Slovenian Society for Coeliac Disease?

Yes, we are cooperating with Slovenian Society for Coeliac Disease. Its members welcomed our products, and they will present them at their events. Societies support us, they love our products and their characteristics.

We are also cooperating with different Slovenian societies for coeliac disease. With our help, the societies can present important information about the products to their members. Furthermore, we invited their experts to cooperate with us. They performed an independent testing of our breads, reviewed our entire concept and expressed their opinions, which we considered in our communication.

3. Packaging

Why are gluten-free breads and bread rolls packed in plastic packaging?

Šmartinska cesta 154, 1000 Ljubljana
Phone: +386 1 58 76 100, Fax: +386 1 54 04 175
www.zito.si, www.podravka.si, info@zito.si



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This innovative packaging can withstand freezing at -30 degrees and baking at 180 degrees Celsius. This is the only way we can provide the customer with 100 % safe, freshly baked BeFree bread in every shop.

The packaging was specially designed for this type of use, it is perfectly safe, and it underwent several tests as well as analyses. When baking, the packaging does not change in such a way that it would affect the bread or the customer.

Even though the packaging can be recycled, we are looking for and developing packaging that would be biodegradable. Thus, we are following our strategy to protect the environment and to reduce the consumption of plastics.

Why do drops form on the packaging?

The drops inside the packaging are a part of a natural process. Water usually evaporates from the product during baking in the packaging. To explain further: the drops are water that is not bound in chemical bonds. When heated, the water evaporates, and the drops form inside the packaging. When it cools down, the drops are absorbed back into the bread, which ensures that the products are fresh and succulent once the packaging is opened.

This process is inevitable. If we want to provide 100 % safe and freshly baked bread in every shop, it must be baked in the protective packaging. Without it, we cannot guarantee the complete absence of gluten.

Why is the text on the front of the packaging in English if Žito is a Slovenian company?

The text on the front of the packaging is in English. However, there is also a declaration in Slovenian on the back side. The text is in English because the products will be mainly exported, as Slovenia is a small market. The innovative packaging, which allows freezing and baking as well as 100 % safety for coeliac patients, is expensive, and having a Slovenian version would be too costly. Due to freezing and baking, it is impossible to use labels, and this is why the text is printed on the packaging.

The English text is clear, short, and as we checked, understood by the majority of consumers. Any communication on the BeFree bread is in Slovenian. All markers, posters, leaflets and TV commercials will be in Slovenian. We are also preparing a website for our consumers. There, they will be able to find all information about the range and the products in their native language. If they have any problems or questions, they can always contact us via phone, e-mail or other communication channels.

4. Sales

What are your plans regarding the sales volume of the gluten-free products?

In the EU, this market is expected to experience 9-12 % growth per year. Last year, the growth in Slovenia was 12 %. We are estimating that the quality of the products will create sufficient demand.

The product is being introduced on markets and to merchants abroad, and we have been getting a truly positive feedback. Everyone praises the quality and the



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innovativeness of our products, and most of them would like to have such bread in their range.

5. Miscellaneous

What will you do with the unsold gluten-free products?

According to the law, merchants are responsible for the disposal of unsold products. However, these gluten-free products are ready to bake, which means that the merchant can monitor the demand and then adjust the amount of baked goods accordingly. Thus, the minimum amount of products is discarded.

Because bread is a daily fresh product, we recommend that it is sold on the day it is baked. However, we also tested the expiration date of the products. We can guarantee that you can eat this bread at home just like any regular bread, even 3 days after the purchase.

Žito has already been selling gluten-free bread, but it was discontinued. Why did you decide to sell these products again?

This is true. Žito is still selling gluten-free bread that is available only on order and in certain shops. Because we launched much better bread, we decided to eventually discontinue the old one.

The old bread is not comparable to our new gluten-free products, which taste natural and remain fresh for a long time due to our unique recipe. We believe that our new products are of high quality and tasty, which will be reflected in the demand.

How do you ensure that the merchants are handling the bread properly?

Because the bread is baked in the shop and merchants are responsible for it, we had to make sure they were properly trained. We prepared detailed instructions and provided them with practical training on our premises. Soon, video materials will become available, which will clearly show how to handle our gluten-free products.

We laid down the exact instructions on how to handle the frozen products, defined the proper procedures to defrost the bread and to bake it according to the prescribed programs. When the bread is baked, it must be cooled down, and then the merchant must check the suitability as well as airtightness of the packaging and seals.

If the bread is suitable, then it can be put on the appropriate shelves. We recommend shelves that are adapted for the gluten-free product in a film, which means that they must have smooth, flat surfaces that cannot damage the packaging. We also recommend special shelves for the gluten-free bread. However, this is not necessary. Why? Special shelves, surfaces at the cash register and shopping baskets can be contaminated with gluten. The film protects the products from the contamination.

Usually, coeliac patients have to clean or remove the packaging of the products bought in the store if their medical condition requires them to do so. Thus, gluten cannot come into contact with the work surfaces they use to prepare their food at home.



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Can we refreeze the purchased bread at home?

We do not recommend refreezing the products after baking. However, the process is exactly the same as if we purchased fresh bread at the shop and then froze the leftover bread at home in order to save it for later. This somewhat reduces the quality of the bread.

Nevertheless, the consumers will soon be able to purchase frozen bread and bake it at home when necessary. Baking at home is easy. The bread should be defrosted at room temperature for 2-3 h. Then it should be baked without packaging for 20-24 minutes at the temperature of 170 degrees Celsius.