



Here's the thing about... **Lupin**

By Michael Hughes

Unless you've been living under a rock, you are well aware that 'new' foods are a big thing right now. It seems like we can't go a day without being informed of new, healthier, ways to eat *and* be introduced to a range of foods we've never heard of before. While the advances in food and diet are a positive thing, it's equally important to understand exactly *what* it is you're putting into your body. Thankfully, Australia's Food Standards Code has already done some of the heavy lifting for us regarding the topic of this article – LUPIN.



So, what exactly IS Lupin?

Lupin is a small legume seed that's actually been around for a long time. It comes from a common flower, *lupine*, that can be found in many gardens and is recognisable from its long stem covered with small, colourful flowers. Pickled lupin seeds are a popular snack in parts of the Mediterranean and lupin flour is used quite widely in Europe. Lupin is becoming increasingly popular across the world as people become aware of its nutritional value. Lupin is very high in protein (30-40%) and dietary fibre (30%).



What foods can I find Lupin in?

Lupin flour was introduced to Australia in the early 2000's to be used in bakery products, biscuits, pasta, sauces, and beverages. It is also present in imported goods of the same nature. As lupin contains no gluten, it is becoming increasingly popular as an alternative in gluten-free products. Food additives made from lupin may also be used in a wide variety of processed foods.



Melbourne Quality Assurance

ABN 46 975 405 936
PO Box 308, FAIRFIELD VIC 3078 AUSTRALIA
janette@melbourneqa.com or www.melbourneqa.com
Mobile 0466 377 371

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Lupin: An allergen

While the benefits of lupin are great, it also comes with an inherent risk to a certain percentage of the population in the form of an allergic reaction. Being related to the rest of the legume family (peanuts, peas, lentils and beans), lupin may trigger an allergic reaction including anaphylaxis, which can be fatal.

Allergy vs Intolerance

It's important to note that lupin may trigger an allergic reaction with effects from mild to severe. Unlike a food intolerance, which can have many of the same signs, a food allergy causes a reaction in the body's immune system that can affect multiple organs. If you are concerned that you might have a food intolerance or allergy, speak to your GP about a referral to a specialist.

Legislation

On 25 May 2017, the Food Standards Code was changed to require lupin to be declared when present in a food as an ingredient or component of ingredients including food additives and processing aids. However, there is a 12-month transition period to allow food businesses time to comply with the mandatory declaration. From 26 May 2018, all foods must comply with the new requirement.

Lupin looks to be making an increased impact in Australian food manufacturing, so if you're allergic to peanuts, nuts, legumes or the rest of the family, be aware you could suffer the same allergic reaction when eating any food products containing lupin.

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