

# The secret to eating bread and not feeling bloated, according to a top chef

[Kashmira Gander](#) Friday 8 September 2017 12:19 BST



Whether hot from the toaster and slathered with butter, cooked on hot stone to wrap halloumi and salad, or torn up to mop up jalfrezi sauce bread is a staple of people's diets in many countries, has been for millennia. But thanks to our aversion to starchy foods in recent years, it's fallen out of favour.

Demand has been slowly dropping in the UK for decades, and last year sales of bread 50 million fewer loaves of bread were sold in UK

supermarkets. *The Grocer* consumer magazine linked this to shoppers dodging carbs on (possibly spurious) health grounds.

And the so-called "clean eating" trend which shuns processed foods including [bread](#) and those containing [gluten](#), global sale of gluten-free products have [skyrocketed](#). That's despite the fact that studies show those who unnecessarily cut out gluten are missing out on vital nutrients. Still, we can thank *The [Great British Bake Off](#)* at least for breathing new life into home baking and causing a rise in the sale of bread ingredients.



**Francisco Migoya has researched the history of bread for almost half a decade at The Cooking Lab in the US**

Now, a team of chefs and scientists at the US-based The Cooking Lab are trying to transform attitudes with their soon to be published

series of books: *Modernist Bread*. The five volumes take into account four years of research. The books document the history of bread, as well as recipes, techniques, equipment and ingredients.

“Bread is one of those things that has been hand in hand with mankind since mankind has been mankind,” award-winning pastry chef and co-author Francisco Migoya says. “It didn't look like it does now but there have always been forms of bread that man has used to sustain himself.”

Migoya goes on that gluten is likely not the cause of discomfort for people who have ditched bread on the grounds of an assumed intolerance. He stresses that coeliac disease, where the small intestine becomes inflamed when it comes in contact with gluten, is a serious health condition. So, those who are coeliac or have a gluten intolerance diagnosed by a doctor are right to entirely cut out bread and gluten products from their diets.

“Other people will eat bread and they don't feel so great but that could be for a variety of reasons, but it's likely not the gluten. What matters here is that flour has different proteins, two of those when you mix water into the flour – gliadin and glutenin – will bind and form gluten chains. That is what is responsible for the structure of the dough.” Studies have linked wheat proteins amylase-trypsin inhibitors and agglutinin with inflammatory molecules that affect the immune system.

Those who are sensitive to bread generally find that sourdough bread is more digestible, adds Migoya, because it is of the process of acidification of the flour as the dough is fermented over several days.

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"It's about how your body breaks it down. White bread that utilises commercial yeast is fermented very quickly so your body takes a lot longer to digest it. Your body can digest sourdough fast and easily," he explains. "If you are typically buying bread from a grocery store read the label. If you have an artisan bread from a bakery it will say what's in it and that's generally salt, water flour and yeast. If it says 'wild yeast' that means it's sourdough. If it's commercial yeast it won't be sourdough because that's a different form of fermenting."

Migoya insists that he doesn't want to vilify certain types of bread like the classic sandwich loaf. "There are a lot of people who tell you not to eat supermarket bread because of what they put into it, but our position is not to take the moral ground. White sandwich bread has its time and place. It's the best for a grilled cheese, for instance – it's just not the same with a brioche bun or sourdough. We have a recipe for white sandwich bread with four ingredients in our book."

The decline in Google searches for gluten intolerance between 2013 and 2017 is welcomed by Migoya, however.

"We're not sure what happened but after that it started to go down. I think people are starting to embrace bread more than they used to five years ago. I think that people are understanding that gluten isn't the enemy and they miss good, well-made bread. It's such a staple and people are looking to it again." He now hopes that people will treat bread with the same reverence that they do artisan coffee and chocolate.

"People see bread as something cheap and disposable. If it's stale, you throw it away. It's not seen as this precious thing that it really is."

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