

# Passionate about new food trends

By LILY RAY

Dec. 30, 2014, 9 p.m.



CLEAN FOOD: Leanne Wilson's enterprise Made2Make is based on a "back to basics" approach to eating. Picture: Marina Neil

THIS year's food fads included kale, quinoa, the Paleo Diet, gluten-free, and organic produce of all kinds.

It doesn't look like these trends will be changing in 2015, but we'll see a few new fascinations in the mix.

Coconut sugar is popping up in cafes all over the country, hailed as slightly less bad for your health than regular cane sugar.

While the jury is out on whether this trendy sweetener is as healthy as it's made out to be, it's less processed and more natural and available in healthfood stores and many supermarkets.

Jam-packed with antioxidants and said to possess mood-enhancing qualities, cacao nibs are also experiencing fame. Eaten as an alternative to chocolate, cacao nibs are pieces of the cacao bean that have been roasted, hulled and broken into pieces.

They are in their last non-chocolate stage, and they're touted as being a natural energiser and source of fibre, as well as tasting reminiscent enough of dark chocolate to gain worldwide popularity.

Cacao nibs can be found in healthfood stores and supermarkets, and are routinely eaten in handfuls or added to various baking mixtures.

Green tea has been rising through the ranks of hot and healthy drinks, with reported benefits including a boost to mental performance and a reduction in the risk of some diseases.

Fermented crazes include products such as kombuchas, kefir and krauts, which are said to have an impressive range of probiotics and good bacteria beneficial to bowel health, better digestion and improved immunity.

Vitality Junction Natural Health Centre in The Junction stocks a range of fermented foods, from locally made water kefir to sauerkrauts from Byron Bay.



FERMENTED FOODS: Helen Harvey, from Vitality Junction Natural Health Centre, with a selection from their range of fermented food products. Picture: Phil Hearne

Store owner Ian Bell said the foods offered “more and better gut flora” to the body, with one serve of kefir holding 10 billion micro-organisms.

“Fermented foods are sustainable,” he said. “Fermenting was once used instead of refrigeration, and it was part of the traditional diet.”

Goodness Me Organics in Adamstown holds a huge range of kombuchas, kefirs, both water and milk-based, krauts and kimchis.

Store owner Anna Ward said the krauts had been selling particularly well, and the Imbibe water kefirs just flew off the shelves.

“I love fermented vegetables and probiotic drinks,” she said. “They’re full of good bacteria.”

The store has been open for two years, and has increased its range of fermented foods and other organic goods to match demand.

“New parents who want to clean up their diets for the kids make up a lot of our customer base, as do those who have had health scares or who have dietary intolerances,” she said.

“They’re people wanting extreme good health, and people are starting to care more about having healthy diets rather than diets that will help them lose weight.”

Already sought after, seeds and nuts are predicted to increase in popularity this year.



GOOD BACTERIA: Anna Ward, of Goodness Me Organics, says fermented foods and probiotic drinks are attracting increasing demand. Pictures: Simone De Peak

---

Ancient grains are on the tip of every foodie's tongue, with demand for gluten-free and low-level gluten grains through the roof and showing no sign of waning.

Leanne Wilson of Made2Make meal packs has created a fast-growing business based on these old but newly trendy parcels of protein.

Just when we finally got used to quinoa, and learned to pronounce it, amaranth and freekah are on the scene along with spelt, black barley, teff and kamut flours, farro, millet and sorgham.

"I started experimenting with these after travelling all over the world and being inspired by all sorts of foods that were hard to come across in Australia," Ms Wilson said.

"It began when I was looking to eat cleaner and to eat mostly plant-based proteins and it's really about being adventurous.

"My products are ideal for people who are interested but might be overwhelmed or don't have time to research it all."

Ms Wilson said the grains had many health benefits and were a "back to basics" approach to eating. "I create preservative, additive free, clean food," she said.

Made2Make products have predominantly locally sourced organic ingredients, with a few imported components, which Ms Wilson is looking for closer to home. The business began in October, with sales through Newcastle's Olive Tree Markets and online.



Newcastle Herald 

 Like 57,484