



Have Your Cake and Eat it Too

BonBon Collections turns to MenuSano to provide easy nutritional analysis to better serve their food-restricted customers



Motherhood is difficult enough with the crying, diapers, feeding, burping, and exhaustion. But for Thao Nguyen, her experience was more challenging than others. After discovering her second child suffered from severe food allergies, Thao needed to find a way to make her daughter healthy and strong. Along the way, her journey of discovery led to the creation of a new business, a Montreal-based allergy free bakery called [BonBon Collections](#).

“When my second child Olivia was born, we knew she had some sort of medical condition, but nobody knew what it was. After several months, we discovered that Olivia has severe food allergies. Because she was only a week old, she had very bad symptoms. Seeing her constantly in pain was heartbreaking.”

After pinpointing some of the allergies (milk, veal, lamb, dairy, soy to name just a few) Thao, the daughter of two gourmet chefs and a self-proclaimed ‘foodie,’ wasn’t left with many menu options. “When a mother is breastfeeding her baby, she needs to keep in mind that if she eats the baby’s allergens, it passes through to the baby. I had to be very careful with my diet, and there was nothing on the market that I could have. There was no way that I could keep my job, which involved a lot of travel because I had to cook everything from scratch. It was tough. I’ve travelled around the world, eaten the best food in every country, and I have worked for different chefs.”

Thao explains that her struggle is not unique. Three percent of the Canadian population has declared food allergies. This number does not include those people with food intolerances and sensitivities which can vary from mild to severe without becoming a full-blown allergy. In less than a year, she discovered that hundreds of thousands of mothers -- people just like her -- suffer from challenging diets.



400 UNIVERSITY AVE,
MEZZANINE.TORONTO
ONTARIO M5G 1S5

1-866-640-2345
MENUSANO.COM

“It was important for me that everything would line with my vision. At BonBon Collections, we don’t use any artificial colouring or flavours, instead, we use real berries or natural fruit juice for colour. We keep up with environmental trends by using all recyclable and compostable material for our packaging.”

So she began experimenting with recipes in her own kitchen - looking for that magic combination of non-allergenic ingredients that would satisfy her sweet tooth, while not causing any harm to her young child.

In September 2016, Thao opened her first BonBon Collections counter with cupcakes, cakes, and pies, all free of the top ten major allergens.

“It was important for me that everything would line with my vision. At BonBon Collections, we don’t use any artificial colouring or flavours, instead, we use real berries or natural fruit juice for colour. We keep up with environmental trends by using all recyclable and compostable material for our packaging.”

Customers vary from people with dietary restrictions due to allergies and intolerances, people with vegan diets, and people who find value in healthier ingredients.

Because BonBon’s products are free from GMO’s, the top ten major allergens, and are made with fresh ingredients, Thao’s business has grown quickly. In just nine months, BonBon Collections is set to open its second location in Montreal. It is also piloting its allergy-free products with grocery stores Provigo and Metro. It is also now providing a number of restaurants with desserts fulfilling rising demand for gluten-free options. “It’s amazing that BonBon is expanding so quickly,” says Thao, “but I understand why it is. When I first started having to watch my diet so strictly, there were only about five bakeries in Canada that were free from the top ten allergens. It’s hard enough to find products that are gluten free, dairy free, egg free, let alone free from any contact with allergens.”



400 UNIVERSITY AVE,
MEZZANINE.TORONTO
ONTARIO M5G 1S5

1-866-640-2345
MENUSANO.COM

To maintain its ingredient integrity it is critical for BonBon Collections to keep track of each of its recipes' ingredients.



“We are responsible for people’s lives,” says Thao.
“Hiring a nutritionist can be costly, especially since we make seasonal foods, like pumpkin pie and apple crisp in the fall in order to use natural ingredients. Sending our recipes to a nutritionist, or out to a lab and having to wait three weeks for results is timely. By the time I’d get a recipe back, it wouldn’t be apple season anymore. And it’s not only that I’m doing seasonal recipes, I am constantly changing my recipes in general to improve them. Every time an ingredient was changed, or even the amount of it being used changed, I would have another expense. Instead of using timely and costly methods to provide consumers with our product’s information, we use MenuSano, a web-based nutritional calculator. It really has made this journey easier for me.”

Seeing the results of using fresh ingredients is outstanding. After only nine months of being cautious of her diet, Thao’s skin was completely clean, and Olivia was perfectly fine.



400 UNIVERSITY AVE,
MEZZANINE.TORONTO
ONTARIO M5G 1S5

1-866-640-2345
MENUSANO.COM



“It was important for me to provide my daughter with a normal childhood. I didn’t want her to feel like an outsider. Children don’t understand why they can’t have the same desserts as their peers. The reason we called our shop BonBon Collections is that I want my daughter to have her cake and be able to eat it too. The cake will be a little different, but it will be better. BonBon Collections is about providing children with a childhood full of sweets, but free from allergens. Nobody should feel different because of something as small as an allergy or intolerance, and now they don’t need to.”

BonBon Collections is opening their third store in September 2017 where people can buy main ingredients like flour, and pre-made foods like sandwiches and different bowls that are free from the top 10 allergens. It also hopes to expand into the province of Ontario in the near future.



400 UNIVERSITY AVE,
MEZZANINE.TORONTO
ONTARIO M5G 1S5

1-866-640-2345
MENSANO.COM