

Aisling O'Toole

Taste of Home



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Aisling O' Toole used the Covid-19 lockdown to explore her love for baking along with her daughter Catherine, who has significant additional needs. Baking provided a way of helping Catherine engage in purposeful and meaningful activity as Aisling took a step back from her role as a Paediatric Occupational Therapist in the HSE to care for her daughter. Looking back, it opened a unique opportunity for her and her family.

After some practice, they offered friends and family some of their baked brown breads, leading to positive feedback and encouragement from her close-knit circle. Aisling then entered the National Brown Bread competition at the annual Ploughing Championships. She reached the final in 2020 but went one better a year later, winning the title and awarded the exciting opportunity to stock her bread in Aldi stores Nationwide for the next 12 months.

When this period ended, Aisling approached more retailers. A major milestone was reached early on, earning a contract with the famous Dunnes Stores, with her bread stocked around the country under the Simply Better brand.

Her business has grown steadily since with breads available in Dunnes Stores, SuperValu and other smaller retailers. Aisling has since launched a second product, a brown bread using rescued grain from Irish Distilleries, supplied by Tullamore business BiaSol. The product is high in fibre and low in fat, making it a popular alternative to traditional breads.

The ACORNS programme has given Aisling the support and mentorship she needed as she discussed the challenges of running a business. She has made long-lasting friendships with other participants – ensuring they continue to provide support to each other moving forward.

Looking forward, she plans to develop her product range – including smaller, individual sized brown bread portions for the convenience market.

Providing early stage female entrepreneurs, living in rural Ireland, with the knowledge, support and networking opportunities to meet and even exceed their current aspirations.



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine