

Savoring Gluten Free: Tips from Colleen

Eliminating any specific food or ingredient from your diet can feel daunting and depressing. If you are just starting out gluten-free, know that you are fortunate to be surrounded by information and products to make the transition easier! "Gluten Free" has become more prevalent and popular in the last few years, giving rise to an amazing number of websites, cookbooks, magazines, and delicious products. Your options are abundant!

The intention here is to offer you a broad overview of how to begin the process: basics on what to avoid, what's ok, where to look for information and foods. I had to limit this to quick hits...a variety to start you on a path of exploration while giving you immediate tools and foods.

If gluten is really an issue for you, the improvements you find in your health may surprise you.

What is gluten?

Basically, gluten is a generic name for certain types of proteins in specific grains (gluten gives dough it's elasticity).

What do I have to stop eating?

The grains you need to avoid include Wheat (Bulgur, Einkorn, Durum, Faro, Graham, Kamut, Semolina, Spelt), Rye, Barley, and Triticale.

Though oats are not on some gluten grains lists, they are questionable both for containing a protein similar to gluten, and for problems with cross contamination. It is recommended to remove oats from your diet for now.

Some of the books and websites listed here will give you details on both explicit and hidden ingredients to avoid. Because you are likely someone who already pays attention to your health, you are now just adding a little different awareness to your label reading as you incorporate this change into your lifestyle.

What CAN I eat then?

A broad variety of other grains and/or flours including Rice, Corn, Potato, Tapioca, Taro, Soy, Peas, Lentil, Garfava (combination of Garbanzo bean and fava bean flours), Sorghum, Quinoa, Millet, Buckwheat, Arrowroot, Amaranth, Teff, Manioc, Montina, Flax and Nut/Seed (acorn, almond, sesame, sunflower, etc...).

Alcohols - distilled beverages, as well as wines, are generally considered gluten free – there is still some debate on this so experiment and use your best judgment.

Most beer, lager, ale is not gluten free, however, there are several gluten free beers (better than you may expect!) available, and the list is growing....

And, of course you can eat a variety of meats, cheeses, (watch for purity, additional ingredients), vegetables, fruits, eggs, ...

Once you focus on the variety of foods on your "YES" list, eating is still FUN!

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A Cautionary Note: With so many ready-made, processed, gluten free foods available, watch out for the “white flour” trap (using mostly tapioca flour, potato starch, white rice flour). Opt for combinations with richer, healthier grains - most of the time. You will find there are a variety of approaches and preferences for baking with alternative flours as well. Take your time, experiment and again, aim most often for nutritious healthy grains.

As you begin, try to reduce overwhelm by replacing some of your favorite basics...Do you love spaghetti? Find pasta you like and you're back on stable ground. Are sandwiches a staple in your household? Test some bread options, and get one you (and the family) can enjoy. Take it one step at a time... you'll become more comfortable, and more informed. You will find new foods and dishes you treasure as your palate expands and shifts.

Start to be a detective. Look at ingredients lists. Pay attention to your body and how you respond to your foods. Remember that “wheat free” is not “gluten free”. Ask restaurants for clarification and details about foods. Contact companies, if you have questions. Be patient, persistent, kind and clear – with your self and others.

Wait 'til you see the yummy options in store for you! You have an opportunity to reevaluate the quality of your food choices. Make sure you not only look for “gluten free”, but quality ingredients in your foods – good food is truly good. Eat well and LOVE IT.

. . . and of course, always celebrate chocolate...☺

The lists below will give you some options for research, support, and foods.

Websites

www.living-gluten-free.com

Personalized site by woman with gluten intolerance. Also has some discussion of children and their gluten free world/issues.

www.celiac.com

Site for celiac information. LOTS of interesting articles and information. Details on what to avoid and what to eat.

www.celiac.org

Home of the “Celiac Disease Foundation”. More formal site than celiac.com.

<http://celiac.org/images/stories/PDF/quick-start.pdf>

This link is to their celiac quick start guide.

<http://www.celiac.org/images/stories/PDF/gfresources.pdf>

This particular link is for their listing of companies with gluten free products. NICE!
They also list some suggested websites.

www.gluten.net

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The “Gluten Intolerance Group” website. You can register for their Gluten Free Nutrition Guide/ Gluten Free 101. They will email you a great document that reviews nutrients you may need to watch as a gluten-free eater.

www.nourishingmeals.com

Website/blog with healthy, yummy recipes. Written by the authors of one of my favorite cookbooks (the Whole Life Nutrition Cookbook- note that I am a cookbook junkie). They “offer the latest information on Gluten Sensitivity and Celiac Disease along with healthy gluten-free recipes using whole foods.”

www.allergyeats.com

Cute site! Users rate restaurants on their accommodation for food allergy issues. Good place for ideas, though it is always wise to do your own follow up for verification.

www.triumphdining.com

You can purchase books they produce on gluten-free grocery shopping and restaurants. They also have a nice “blog” section that’s informative, with a nice “gluten-free 101” area.

www.amazon.com

As you may well imagine, if once you begin looking for “gluten-free” you will be led through a lengthy winding path of fascinating cookbooks, individual experiences, and health/science oriented books.

The number of blogs and websites discussing experiences and recipes for gluten-free/ceciac is mind boggling. Once you start to play, you will have a whole new internet addiction! Here are a few fun sites to get you started: www.glutenfreegoddess.blogspot.com ; www.glutenfreetasteofhome.blogspot.com ; www.glutenfreecookingschool.com ; www.glutenfreemom.com ; <http://glutenfree.wordpress.com> ; www.gluten-free-around-the-world.com ; <http://gluten-dairy-sugarfree.com/> ; www.gflinks.com/books ; www.the-gluten-free-chef.com

A few restaurants with gluten free options (usually a GF menu)

Beets Living Food Café – raw foods

Brick Oven Pizza – gluten-free crust: highly praised by many!

Chipotle – Mexican

Galaxy Café – variety, casual (great fish taco)

The Grove– any pizza can be made gluten free, plus several pasta options.

Mother’s Café & Garden – vegetarian/vegan. An Austin staple. Yummy!

My Fit Foods - variety of healthy selections and they note what is gluten free.

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Mr. Natural – vegetarian (some gluten free), yummy desserts dairy-free, some gluten-free, usually honey sweetened.

P.Terry's – very casual burger joint (they will make the burger bunless and wrapped in lettuce)

Pei Wei – Asian (various influences)

Tarka – Indian

Wildwood Café – variety of lunch type items, breads, and desserts. Gluten free and some dairy free.

Zen – Japanese inspired

Stores with a larger gluten free selection

Austin Farmers Markets – sometimes have local businesses with gluten free items

Central Market (HEB also carried a selection)

Natural Grocers

Sprouts – Excellent gluten free labeling, great g-f sales.

Sun Harvest

Wheatsville Co-op

Whole Foods

Magazines

Living Without – includes suggestions for several food allergies (I am dairy free as well, so partial to a broader perspective). Magazines are helpful to see advertisements as well; great way to find new products we might not have around here yet.

Gluten Free Living

Idea Books (not just about gluten free)

Celiac Disease: a Hidden Epidemic (Green and Jones) - Highly recommended by a patient.

Living Well with Celiac Disease (Claudine Crangle) - Positive personal approach.

Retraining Your Tongue (Lindsey Berkson) - Humorous and informative look at nutrition and eating; helps you think outside the box!

Green's Glorious Greens (Albi and Walthers) - Wonderful information on simple, healthy and tasty ways to incorporate a variety of greens into your diet.

The Whole Life Nutrition Cookbook (Segersten and Malterre) - Gluten-free, dairy-free, egg-free cooking with whole foods.

Simply Sugar and Gluten Free (Amy Green) - A variety of fun recipes.

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Meat Club Cookbook: For Gals Who Love Their Meat - Charming book about choosing and cooking fun recipes with beef, pork, and lamb.

Make It Paleo (Stanley & Mason) – With the popularity of Paleo, grain-free cookbooks, websites and blogs are storming the internet. These are great for meat eaters looking for quality, unprocessed, tasty dishes. You can always choose to add your own gluten free bread or grain option. This book is one of many fun choices!

Raw foods “cookbooks”

(for example: Living Cuisine, Renee Loux Underkoffler; Ani’s Raw Food, Ani Phyo)

I eat a variety of foods not just “raw”, but I do like incorporating raw foods in more interesting ways than just cut up on salad. Raw books can have great suggestions on using vegetables as pasta, reducing processed ingredients - more thinking outside the box!

** A few of the many books primarily for baking, if you have the urge!**

The Spunky Coconut Cookbook (Kelly Brozyna)

The Gluten Free Almond Flour Cookbook (Elana Amsterdam)

Gluten Free Baking Classics (Annalise Roberts)

**And lest you think I forget to be literal in my cookbook options, check this out:*

The Gluten Free Asian Kitchen, The Gluten Free Italian Cookbook, Artisanal Gluten Free Cooking, Cajun and Southern Gluten Free Cooking, and more showing up all the time!

Breads

There are some good ones! Often frozen or refrigerated and sometimes toasting is a benefit.

Udi’s breads - nice white and whole grain, good bagels!

French Meadows breads - nice light grain, good size slices.

Glutino - many of their products are more like white bread texture; their pretzels are great!

Julian Bakery: Smart Carb GF #3 (they also make regular breads) – over time I have developed a deep fondness for grainy breads. This is organic, yeast free, low fat, high fiber and high protein bread. I keep grains to a minimum. I personally love this one!

Kinnikinnick - makes tasty donuts, not really “bread”, but a yummy treat!

Grain Options

Amaranth

Brown Rice

Buckwheat

Corn and quinoa pasta (Ancient Harvest is very popular)

Millet

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Quinoa

Rice pasta (Tinkyada is my favorite)

Baking (mixes)

Better Batter GF Flour – nice 1-t-1 substitute in many traditional recipes.

Betty Crocker - yes, it's true, they now have gluten free. I generally prefer other mixes, but it's helpful if you have children and need a quick "regular tasting" baked good.

Cherrybrook Kitchen

Namaste

Pamela's

Bob's Red Mill (good individual g-f flours too)

Alcohol

Gluten free beer: Redbridge, Bard's

Wine

Distilled Hard Liquor

☺ Colleen