

How to Order a Gluten-Free Meal

Going out for a dinner? Communication is the key ingredient to every successful gluten-free restaurant meal. When diners, chefs and servers are able to collaborate on what is required and what can be reasonably delivered, there is cause for celebration.

The following is a list of suggested questions to help get you started when you dine out. Start anywhere and in very short order, the responses you receive will allow you to gauge any given restaurant's degree of gluten awareness – and willingness. For the very best outcome, call ahead or take your host or server aside before ordering.

Ingredients

- What ingredients will be used to make my order?
- How do staff know whether ingredients are really gluten-free? Says so on labels? Checked product website? Called the manufacturer?
- Will pure spices, prepared seasonings or soy sauce made from wheat be used to make my meal?
- What other food items are cooked in the oil that gluten-free items are cooked in?
- How are sauces and dressings thickened?

Procedures

- How will my server communicate with the kitchen that a gluten-free order has been placed?
- How are gluten-free orders prepared in relation to the regular flow of the kitchen?
- Will staff wash their hands / change gloves / change aprons clean surfaces before preparing my order?
- Will fresh toppings be used to dress my order? How do staff ensure that all utensils used in preparing my food are free from any trace of gluten?
- Separate or scrubbed frying pan? Griddle scrubbed? Aluminum foil barrier? Dedicated pots? Dedicated colanders?
- What other precautions do staff take to minimize / prevent cross contamination?
- How will my server confirm with the kitchen that the order they are collecting has been prepared gluten free?
- How will my server confirm that the order they are delivering to me is gluten free?

Questions Specific to Pizza Restaurants

- Are gluten-free crusts prepared on-site?
- During regular operations? Before regular production? During downtimes / days?
- See questions in Ingredient section above.
- Are pre-made gluten-free crusts purchased from a dedicated gluten-free manufacturer? Who is the manufacturer?
- How are gluten-free sauces and toppings prepared? During regular operations? Before regular production? During downtimes / days?
- How do staff ensure that all utensils used in preparing gluten-free orders are free of any trace of gluten?
- How are utensils, crusts, sauces and toppings protected from cross-contamination with gluten while waiting to be used?
- How will my order be protected from cross-contamination with gluten once it has been prepared and/or while waiting to be served?



The Celiac Scene™
Guides for the Gluten Free

Ellen Beyens operates The Celiac Scene™ in Victoria, Vancouver Island & the Gulf Islands and is a source for gluten-free diners in the region.