

How to order a gluten-free meal

Help start the conversation on celiac-friendly dining

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

Following is a list of suggested questions to help Start the Conversation on Celiac-Friendly Dining. In short order, the responses you receive will allow you to gauge a restaurant's degree of gluten awareness – and willingness. For the very best outcome, call ahead or take your host or server aside before ordering.

NOTE: Restaurants that have carefully researched how to serve us love going into detail. If your questions are met with impatience and exasperation – go with your gut. And when restaurants get gluten-free right, reward them generously!

How to start the conversation

Can you tell me about the meals that you recommend to diners who need to eat gluten-free?

Ask about 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?

Ask about 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? Grid-dle 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?

What to ask at pizza restaurants

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

The Celiac Scene is your premier resource for fabulous gluten-free living in Victoria, Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. Owned and operated by celiacs, the Celiac Scene guides you to trusted restaurants and local gluten-free products they love! They'll even tell you where to purchase them, at the very best prices. Learn more at theceliacsScene.com and [@theceliacsScene](https://twitter.com/theceliacsScene).



Find gluten-free in-store

What is celiac disease?

In recent years, many people have questioned the impact of gluten on our nutrition and overall wellness. For people with Celiac Disease, however, there's no question at all.

Celiac Disease is a permanent intolerance to gluten, a protein found in various wheat, rye, barley and triticale.

For people with the disease, gluten consumption damages the small intestine and can result in malnutrition, anemia, nutritional deficiencies and an increased risk of other autoimmune diseases and some cancers of the gut, explains the Canadian Celiac Association.

An inherited condition that can appear at any age, the disease affects an estimated one in 100 people.

Symptoms can vary greatly from person to person, and the similarities between symptoms of Celiac Disease and other conditions often lead to misdiagnoses of irritable bowel syndrome, lactose intolerance, chronic fatigue syndrome or diverticulosis, the association notes.

Symptoms include: indigestion, nausea and other gastrointestinal issues; anemia and vitamin deficiency; extreme fatigue; migraine; bone/joint pain; swelling of ankles and hands; mouth ulcers; menstrual irregularities and more.

Celiac Disease has no cure and the only treatment is a strict, life-long gluten-free diet to help the gut recover and hopefully reduce the risk of developing other associated diseases and complications.



Looking for delicious gluten-free meal ideas to cook at home? Check out Country Grocer's library of recipes at countrygrocer.com/category/gluten-free-recipe – filled with options for snacks, meals, treats and more!

While more gluten-free products are coming on the market all the time, scouring the grocery store shelves can be a struggle.

That's why Country Grocer works with the Celiac Scene to help make the search easier. In addition to offering a list of gluten-free products you'll find in your local store, they also identify gluten-free products with an easy-to-spot label! (See left)

Looking for lunch or dinner ideas? Head to the recipe section at CountryGrocer.com to search lots of delicious options.

And at theceliacsScene.com, browse the numerous resources for more recipes, fast-food options, celiac-friendly restaurants and more!



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