

Is It Gluten Free?

A Basic Diet Guide for People Living with Celiacs or Gluten Intolerance

Getting the gluten-free diet right is not as difficult as it seems when you know the ground rules to follow. Below are guidelines that will help you to live a healthy, happy, gluten-free life.

YES

Foods made from grains (and grain-like plants) that do not contain harmful gluten, including: Rice in all forms (brown, white, basmati, and enriched rice). Corn in all forms (corn meal, grits, corn flour, etc.). Also Montina, buckwheat (Kasha), quinoa, amaranth, tef, sorghum, and soy.

The following ingredients:

Glucose syrup, lecithin, annatto, maltodextrin, plain spices, oat gum, silicon dioxide, food starch and vinegar (only malt vinegar might contain gluten), starch, lactose, dextrose, and sucrose, and also citric, lactic, and malic acid.

The following baking products: arrowroot, cornstarch, potato starch and potato starch flour, guar and xanthan gums, vanilla, and tapioca flour (manioc).

The following foods:

Butter, margarine, milk, plain yogurt, real cheese (not processed), and vegetable oils including canola oil.

Plain fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, and canned), eggs, seafood, meat, nuts, beans and legumes and flours made from them.

NO

All forms of wheat including the following: durum, einkorn, spelt, farina, kamut, semolina, matzo (or matzah), triticale (a combination of wheat and rye), couscous, and cake flour.

Ingredients that have “wheat” in the name including hydrolyzed wheat, wheat starch and modified wheat starch, pregelatinized wheat protein. One exception to this rule is Buckwheat, which is gluten-free.

Barley and any Malt products (which are usually made from barley). Malt flavoring, malt vinegar, malt syrup, and malt extract.

Any vegetable, meat, seafood, or poultry product that has been breaded or floured. Also if they have been marinated in a mixture containing gluten (soy or teriyaki sauce), or are served with a sauce that may contain wheat.

Commercial beer, which is made from barely. Gluten free beer may be available from certain companies.

Licorice, imitation crab meat, and nuts (if they are made with a gluten-containing ingredient).

MAYBE

Dextrin, which is not used that often, but can be made from wheat (this should be noted on the label). A more commonly used ingredient is plain maltodextrin, which is made from rice potatoes, or corn. If wheat is used, the product label should read “wheat maltodextrin”, or “maltodextrin (wheat)”.

“**Real**” cheese is gluten free; any processed cheese, such as spray cheese, may contain gluten so always check the ingredients.

Flavorings are usually gluten free, but in some rare instances they may contain malt or wheat. By law, wheat would have to be labeled, but malt would not.

Distilled alcoholic beverages are gluten free because the distillation process effectively removes gluten from wheat. However, if gluten-containing products are added to the beverage after distillation, they will not be gluten free. This rarely occurs.

Pharmaceuticals may contain gluten, although most are gluten free. If you take the medication on a regular basis it may be a good idea to check with the pharmaceutical company.

Oats used to be considered unsafe, but recent research has shown that a moderate amount of special pure oats is safe for most celiacs. There are also several companies who produce oats for those who are on a gluten-free diet.

Spices are gluten free as long as there are no other ingredients listed on the container. If more ingredients are listed you must check to see if they contain gluten.

Seasonings and seasoning mixes are not officially considered gluten free. By law companies do have to list wheat if it is found in any ingredient.

Soy Sauce is commonly fermented from wheat. Always check the front and back label.

SPECIAL CASES

Hydrolyzed vegetable protein is a phrase that may not be used in food labeling. Food processors must specify the vegetable used. You may read “hydrolyzed wheat protein”, which is not gluten free, or “hydrolyzed soy protein” which would be gluten free.

Caramel Color can be created from malt syrup, but there is no known instance of a caramel color being produced this way. You may consider caramel color gluten free, as most companies in North America use corn.

Mono and diglycerides are fats and therefore gluten free. There had been unverified concern that wheat may have been used with them as a carrier. By law, a wheat carrier must be labeled.