

Top travel destinations in the United States for gluten-free diners

Much like the gluten-free diet itself, traveling while gluten free requires research and planning to enjoy a truly relaxing vacation filled with safe and delicious dining choices. Thankfully, gluten-free travel has become "trendy," just like the gluten-free diet, creating an opportunity for companies such as TravelSupermarket.com to attempt to do the research for you.

TravelSupermarket.com pulled restaurant reviews from 250 cities around the world to create a list of the top 10 destinations based on their gluten-free dining offerings. It began by compiling restaurant and bakery reviews by city from TripAdvisor, using the dietary restrictions filter to find only the gluten-free options. It arrived at the top cities by looking at the total number of reviews, percentage of reviews rated four or five stars, and the average rating to create the rankings.

Chicago comes in as the top U.S. city with a whopping 240 establishments, followed by **Portland, Oregon** (181); Denver; Colorado (150); Maui (132); and San Francisco (138). These destinations undoubtedly deliver gluten-free choices galore, according to the research, but what about other gluten-friendly destinations in the U.S.?

Unfortunately, the list doesn't mention the names of the establishments accredited to each city or tell you how they were compiled. (I only found out by contacting TravelSupermarket.com directly.) Since it only used one travel site for research, any reviews that weren't entered there were left out. Their findings, while intriguing, aren't as helpful or useful as they could have been with a larger set of data. We appreciate the effort, but the site left



out several U.S. cities that are "must-visit" destinations.

Some of our favorite cities for gluten-free travel include Boulder, Colorado; Las Vegas; Austin, Texas; New York City; and Asheville, North Carolina. These destinations are known in the gluten-free community for accommodating those following a gluten-free diet, as well as other allergens.

Boulder is home to Udi's Gluten Free manufacturing and bakery, New Planet Brewery and a gaggle of restaurants with gluten-free menus. In Las Vegas, many buffets label gluten-free options, gluten-free baked goods and pizza rule, and there is an In-N-Out Burger. With a motto of "let's keep Austin weird," Austin serves up barbecue and Tex-Mex cuisine that is like nothing

you have ever had—seriously! In New York, homemade pasta, grilled cheese sandwiches, macaroni and cheese, and baked goods are readily accessible. Make sure to enjoy a meal at Senza Gluten, a dedicated gluten-free restaurant. New York is also home to G-Free NYC, a gluten-free retail shop carrying national and local brands. In Asheville, you can't throw a rock without hitting a restaurant with gluten-free options: stop by Posana,

where everything from bread through dessert is gluten free; the chocolate creations at French Broad Chocolates (dairy free, too) are a must; and don't leave without trying the Spanish tapas at Curate. Schedule a tour and tasting at Urban Orchard Cider Company and nosh on their creative pub grub while sipping cider.

When it comes down to having a successful trip, research and planning are the keys, but they don't have to be

as time consuming as they once were. Start by searching for local support groups and bloggers in the area and tap into their resources when looking for safe places to eat and shop. They are the 'on the ground' resource with true experience at these places. The hotel or bread and breakfast in which you are staying is another great resource. Let your fingers do the walking and use apps from Find Me Gluten Free, Gluten-Free World or Gluten Free Passport to read reviews on cuisine and service. Do not overlook the service aspect of research—it can be a real time saver.

The top travel destinations in the U.S. are, in the end, subjective and what you make of the experience. With some planning and research, you can enjoy a stress-free, yummy vacation.

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