

# Mix it up

NEWS, TIPS, REVIEWS, ADVICE AND MORE



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## Take it on the road: Travel tips for the 21st century

BY JENNIFER HARRIS

When you are gluten free, researching vacation destinations takes on a whole new level of importance and precision. Whether you are traveling in the United States or abroad, a little planning and research goes a long way toward ensuring the entire family has a great time.

Here are our best tips for enjoying a safe and tasty vacation free of gluten and full of memories.

### Book it: Find a room with a kitchen

If possible, look for a hotel room with a kitchenette, or stay at a bed and breakfast. A kitchenette allows you the flexibility to prepare meals in your room. I like to find a grocery store and pick up eggs, breakfast meat, cereal and milk, and frozen gluten-free meals just for that comfort of being able to prepare a safe meal if needed. A room with a refrigerator and microwave also equals leftovers when dining out. Bed and breakfasts can adhere to your dietary

needs and prepare a filling breakfast that sets you up for a productive day of fun.

### Research it: Look to local support groups and bloggers

A quick search for local bloggers and support groups will save you hours of research. These are the best-tapped resource when it comes to dining out and shopping. And their websites usually offer lists of their favorite restaurants and dishes. Many are more than happy to put together a list of recommendations based on the type of cuisine you want to eat. And they can point you in the direction of dedicated bakeries, food tours, cidery tours and the best places to dabble in dessert.

### Pack it: Foods and tools to tote

Packing isn't just about what foods to pack. Remember to bring reusable utensils, condiments, salt and pepper, wet wipes, bag

clips and resealable bags for leftovers. Refrain from packing your whole kitchen, but do pack foods that travel well and will fill you up when hunger hits. Start with shelf-stable options like cereal, nuts, protein bars, nut butter, jerky, dried fruit, pretzels and crackers. If space allows, include instant soup cups, ready-to-eat meals, snack packs, instant oatmeal and a loaf of your favorite bread.

### Apps: Let your fingers do the walking

There are several apps designed to assist travelers looking for places to eat and places to shop when they are home or away. Free apps from Find Me Gluten Free, AllergyEats Mobile and Dine Gluten Free include user reviews, consumer ratings, links to menus and customizable search features. The Gluten-Free Scanner and ShopWell apps scan barcodes, read the ingredients for you, and let you know immediately if an item is gluten free. The Is That Gluten Free? app offers a searchable database full of manufacturer-verified gluten-free products from more than 500 brands.

### Test it: Nima Sensor's mobile testing

A mobile testing device from Nima Sensor allows users to test their food while dining out. Nima uses antibody-based chemistry to test samples of food for gluten. Place a small amount of food in one of the disposable test capsules, insert the capsule into the sensor, push a button and wait three minutes for the results to appear on the screen. If Nima detects gluten at any level, even below 20 parts per million, the screen will read "Gluten Found." If it is gluten free, a smiley face will light up the screen.

You really packed a lot of clothes for just a weekend trip.


I packed for survival: one spare outfit in my purse, and two suitcases worth of dairy- and gluten-free food.




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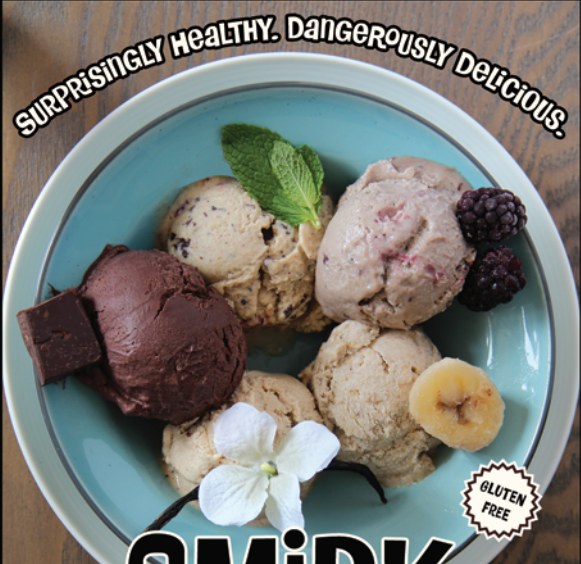


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## No diagnosis needed

It's not your place to diagnose, just serve me—safely!

In an informative lecture, part of the Addressing Allergies in Food Service event organized by the Allergy & Asthma Network at the World Food Championships in Orange Beach, Alabama, Michael Pistiner, MD, insisted that restaurants need to stop diagnosing customers who disclose a food allergy or intolerance. Not only should staff not ask diners if they are avoiding allergens by choice or out of medical necessity, but also they should not inquire as to the severity of an allergy. Simply serve a meal free of the stipulated allergen(s) and assume that strict avoidance is required.

Such music to my ears. It is annoying to get asked why I am avoiding gluten (or any other ingredient), and it makes me think two things: 1. The staff doesn't believe me, and 2. The kitchen has two different ways of preparing a gluten-free meal, depending on the reason for the request. It also puts me on the defensive, a horrible start to a dining experience.

### One set of rules

Regardless of the reason behind it, a gluten-free meal request should alert the kitchen to follow a set of safe-handling procedures to prevent cross-contamination with wheat, rye, barley and oats. No second set of instructions should even exist. Yes, some people choose to eat gluten free, but there is no need to treat their orders differently. Why add confusion to the mix when it can only lead to mistakes by the kitchen staff?

### Implementing a GF menu

For restaurants undertaking the process of creating a gluten-free menu, make sure it is accurate. As a consumer and consultant, I know the work it takes to create a gluten-free menu, and I applaud

all restaurants going that extra mile to make dining out a relaxing and safe experience. Just please do it right.

Label reading is key, along with understanding the labeling law and its limitations. Only wheat is included in the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act—not barley, rye or oats. Barley and rye can hide in malt, dextrin, flavors and seasoning, and only certified gluten-free oats are acceptable.

Some rookie mistakes made on gluten-free menus stem from incorrectly thinking that gluten is a type of bacterium, not a sticky protein that can burn off at high heat. Fryers and utensils need to be dedicated and pizza cannot come into direct contact with a pizza stone—plus, a dedicated cutter needs to be used. When baking in a shared oven, gluten-free food needs to go on the top rack to prevent anything from falling onto it.

So, if you don't have a dedicated fryer, then all fried foods are off limits. Gluten-free pasta must be cooked in fresh water (not shared) using a clean strainer and utensils. Cook pizzas on a small baking rack on top of a pizza stone. And use dedicated ingredients to prevent crumbs being transferred from gloved hands.

### Setting up for success

Consumers, too, bear a responsibility when dining out. Visiting a restaurant for the first time at 7 p.m. on a Friday isn't the ideal situation because it will be busy; dealing with special requests may be difficult. Call in advance and respect the restaurant's limitations. Support those restaurants doing it right, and offer guidance to those who aren't there yet.

Dining out should be a fun and enjoyable experience—working together, we can ensure a success. —Jennifer Harris

ABOVE: LOLOSTOCK/SHUTTERSTOCK. RIGHT: CATCHASNAPI/SHUTTERSTOCK

## Probiotic cooking and snacking

By now, most of us know how good probiotics are for our bodies. Yes, they help maintain gut health, but they also promote clear skin, boost the immune system, and can reduce anxiety and stress.

While it is common to take probiotics in the form of a pill, they do exist naturally in fermented foods like kimchi, sauerkraut, miso, kefir, tempeh and kombucha tea. I love the taste and texture of kimchi, but not everyone does.

What if there was a way the taste of these probiotic-rich foods? Would you willingly add them to your daily diet?

Restoring your digestive system's function with food has never been tastier than it is now with a wealth of delicious products created just for this purpose. Here are some easy ways to work probiotics into your diet:

➤ **Marinate in miso** Use a blend

of miso paste, honey and gluten-free soy sauce to create a marinade for salmon, tilapia or tuna. Marinate for at least 30 minutes before cooking.

➤ **Make a sandwich** Layer pickles and spread fermented mustard on your favorite sandwich. While you are at it, swap in Farmhouse Culture's kraut chips for a tangy and crunchy probiotic punch. Wildbrine's coleslaw and salsas make great additions to sandwiches—and snacks.

➤ **Eat kombucha** Thank you, Vegan Rob's, for creating a way to eat (not drink) kombucha. Its new line of shelf-stable grain-free Kombuchabars come in four flavors (banana, cranberry, cacao and cranberry) that aren't overwhelmed by the taste of kombucha.

➤ **Make hash out of sauerkraut** Sauté onions, garlic and bacon until tender;



then add in wildbrine's raw sauerkraut and simmer. I like to add in a splash or two of apple cider vinegar to mask the bitter flavor of sauerkraut, but the onions, garlic and bacon accomplish that task nicely.

➤ **Make a smoothie with kefir** Use kefir as a base for smoothies. Add in fruits like bananas and strawberries, and sweeten with honey.

Go ahead and try one of these ingredient swap outs for a new way of consuming gut-healing probiotics. Your taste buds won't be disappointed—and your body will thank you. —Jennifer Harris

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## Eat up: Dairy-free on-the-go options

Dairy-free product manufacturers are forging a new path that allows consumers to take their products “to go.” A wide variety of items, including milk, smoothies, sweets, cheese, pudding and yogurt, are available in on-the-go formulations—and their improved texture, taste and nutrition really resonate.

Who has the time to sit and eat in these days? While convenient on-the-go options are not especially noteworthy, portable nosh-worthy snacks or thirst-quenching beverages made from nutritious ingredients are a bit harder to come by. To help you satisfy your cravings, here are some of our favorite portable health-forward dairy-free products:

### Drinks

- **Avonut** smoothies are made from a blend of avocados, coconuts and tropical fruit. Sweetened with coconut nectar and available in guava and dragon fruit flavors, they provide a creamy and nutritious alternative to typical dairy-based smoothies.

- **Odwalla**'s rich almond milk protein shakes made with pea protein and sweetened with cane sugar come in three indulgent flavors: mocha latte, snickerdoodle and spiced pumpkin (seasonal).

- **Remedy Organics**' superfood fuel beverages are designed by a nutritional health counselor to go beyond hydration and nutrition. The plant-based drinks blend nut milks with superfoods, ayurvedics, herbs and probiotics to help with inflammation, digestion and gut health.

- **Ripple Foods**' Milk Kids Packs are shelf-stable pea milk singles free of the top allergens, including dairy, gluten, nuts and soy. Available in original, vanilla and chocolate flavors, they are perfect for lunchboxes and drinking on the go. And they contain more calcium and iron than dairy milk.

### Sweets

- There's no need to feel guilty when scarfing down **Because Cookie Dough**'s single-serve line of edible cookie doughs because they are made with whole-grain flours and sweetened with coconut sugar. Each 2-ounce serving contains less than 200 calories and can be eaten raw or heated for a warm, gooey treat. Choose from chocolate espresso, chocolate chip, brownie batter, cinnamon snickerdoodle and oatmeal chocolate chip varieties.

- The plant-based brownies and chocolate chunk blondies from **Rule Breaker Snacks** are made from a base of chickpeas and beans—and they taste sinfully delicious. Packed with fiber and protein, these delectable treats have been reformulated to contain fewer calories. They are shelf-stable too.

- Protein cookies are all the rage, but the ones from **NuGo Nutrition** taste like a soft-baked cookie. Packed with 16 grams of pea protein and no dairy, soy or eggs, these cookies make it more than OK to bite into a dark chocolate chip, double chocolate, peanut butter or oatmeal raisin treat.

- **Zemas Madhouse Foods**' cookies, which are made with better-for-you whole-grain ingredients, now come in snack packs. Available in four flavors (chocolate chip, double chocolate chip, oatmeal cranberry and Peruvian sweet potato spice), these crunchy cookies are free of gluten, dairy, rice, GMOs and the top eight allergens.

### Cheese

- **Follow Your Heart**'s provolone and American snack cheeses are just what your snacking routine has been missing. Creamy and smooth with a mild flavor, these plant-based cheeses are highly portable and free of artificial binders.

- Tangy white American and white

cheddar with meatless bacon snack bars are new from **GO VEGGIE**. These seriously addictive flavors could easily take center stage on a cheese tray or in a lunchbox.

### Chocolate

- All **Enjoy Life Foods**' chocolate bars come in bite-sized minis. Choose from dark chocolate, rice chocolate, rice milk crunch and a variety pack. These dynamite dairy-free chocolates are free of the top eight allergens.

- **Nutiva**'s hazelnut spread travel packs are perfect for an afternoon pick-me-up and keep portion control on point. This creamy spread, available in classic or dark, is made with organic and non-GMO ingredients and full of nutritious ingredients like flaxseed flour and chia seed oil. It also contains 40 percent less sugar than other brands.

### Pudding

- When you soak chia seeds in coconut milk, add in wholesome non-GMO ingredients, a pinch of salt and natural sweetener, then you have **CHIA VIVA** puddings. Loaded with protein, omega-3s and calcium, they have six flavors. You only feel like you're indulging, knowing your body is being treated to a nutritional punch.

### Yogurt

- **Kite Hill**'s yogurt tubes and drinkable yogurts are all about health and convenience. Made with cultured almond milk, the strawberry banana and wild berry yogurt tubes are sweetened with cane sugar. Its smooth yogurts, available in plain, mango, vanilla and summer berry, have been adapted into drinkable treats full of nutrients and active cultures that make maintaining gut health effortless and delicious. —Jennifer Harris