

Top 5: Reasons a gluten-free diet rocks

Nobody likes being told what they can and can't eat, but following a gluten-free diet is the only treatment for celiac. While omitting gluten is effective, many people find it challenging and disheartening because they focus on what they can't eat anymore. And, of course, the added expense of gluten-free products doesn't help the negative mindset. For those of you frustrated by the restriction—and in honor of Celiac Awareness Month—we've compiled our top five positive aspects of following a gluten-free diet.

1. You choose where to eat.

When planning a dinner out with friends or family, you are in the driver's seat. This presents a prime opportunity to introduce others to fantastic gluten-free cuisine. Take advantage of the chance to find new places to grab a safe bite to eat.

2. Grocery shopping becomes an adventure, not a chore.

I enjoy grocery shopping, taking my time to look up and down each aisle to find new products. Stores continually add items to their shelves, so it kind of feels like going on a treasure hunt every time I shop. When traveling, I visit stores we

don't have at home to find brands and locally made products that I haven't tried yet.

3. You relish the gluten-free-friendly skies.

On international flights, passengers who request meals to meet their dietary restrictions, including gluten free, always receive their food first. On a full flight, this can cut your wait time by at least 20 to 30 minutes, and the food is piping hot, not lukewarm. Airlines like Delta have added numerous gluten-free options to their complimentary snacks on domestic flights.

4. Your energy returns!

Feeling better is the first step to solving any problem. Once your body starts healing on the gluten-free diet, you have the time and energy to return to the things you love. Traveling tops the list for me, both by car and plane. I don't get as fatigued as I used to, so I can keep up with my daughter and enjoy our experiences together. I used to barely have enough energy to drive to and from work. After cutting out gluten, the sky's the limit. I now frequent food shows and



blogging events, and take fun trips to see family and friends

5. New experiences await you.

Since being diagnosed with celiac in 1997, my world has changed dramatically. Not only do I feel great, but I also have had the opportunity to hear incredible speakers, meet awesome bloggers, start my own blog, work as a gluten-free buyer; attend industry food shows, become a restaurant consultant, join a writing group and take on the role of news editor for *Gluten-Free Living*. I would never have dreamed that being diagnosed with an autoimmune disease would lead me to a new career path, especially one that fills me with such joy and allows me to help others.

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