

Mix it up

NEWS, TIPS, REVIEWS, ADVICE AND MORE

BY JENNIFER HARRIS



ULTIMATE HOLIDAY
GIFT GUIDE, page 12



Top 5: Innovative products we can't wait to buy

The natural foods industry is bursting with new products. One of my favorite parts of this job is getting to travel to natural products shows to taste them all. I love meeting the manufacturers and hearing how their product came to be. Their excitement is palpable and contagious.

We are always on the search for innovative products that are completely new to the marketplace, reimagine childhood favorites with clean ingredients, or are made from whole and fiber-full foods. There seems to be

no limit to how an ingredient can be used, as evidenced by that mighty vegetable cauliflower that continues to show its versatility, making every product show an adventure.

It was difficult to create this list because there are so many outstanding contenders. But when it came down to it, these are the top five products that will consistently appear on our shopping list:

I Against the Grain Gourmet's Veggie Vegan Pizza goes in a new direction for the brand. Not

only is the crust free of cheese, a departure from its signature cheese-filled dough, but it is also topped with dairy-free cheese sauce developed in house. The company decided to make a dairy-free cheddar cheese sauce over using any shredded cheeses currently available. It made this move to control the ingredient list and because it was unable to find a product that lives up to its high standards for taste. The abundant fire-roasted veggies bake up crunchy and blend nicely with the creamy cheese

sauce on a chewy crust that bakes to a gorgeous golden brown.

2 Even carnivores are lining up to buy the new line of plant-based sausages from Beyond Meat. Why? Because they taste even better than a traditional meat sausage. And they sizzle when cooking, just like a traditional sausage. Available in bratwurst, sweet Italian and hot Italian, each sausage uses peas along with fava and rice proteins as its base. Of course, they are lower in fat than traditional sausage and free of hormones, nitrites, nitrates and soy, and all their ingredients are non-GMO. An extra bonus is they are easier to digest than meat, so they don't leave you feeling too full or bloated.

3 Setting a new standard for healthy, Mikey's pizza pockets have turned portable snacking into a hot and delicious reality. Available in five flavors and made with good-for-you (and pronounceable) ingredients, each box contains two pockets filled with meat or vegetables wrapped in a Paleo crust. As with all of Mikey's products, they are grain free, dairy free, soy free and certified Paleo friendly. The cauliflower curry with butternut squash and spinach and the sausage and peppers pockets are calling my name.

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Jimmy Smits, SU2C Ambassador
Photo By: Timothy White



Stand Up To Cancer is a division of the Entertainment Industry Foundation (EIF), a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

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4 The new puff pastry dough from Schär is insane. Insane, I say! Each box contains two rolls of premade dough with baking paper, making it easy to roll out and manipulate. It bakes up golden brown with tall flaky layers that have that great tug and pull, like wheat-y pastries. The sky's the limit when using the dough because it works with sweet and savory creations. Unfortunately, it is having a hard time finding a home in the freezer set of grocery stores, so until it lands at a store near you, order it online.

5 Gluten-free and vegan food company Bobo's has launched a healthy take on vegan pop tarts called Toast'r Pastries. Made with a dough that bakes up nice and crusty, each pastry is filled with all-natural fruit fillings, such as strawberry jam and blueberry lemon poppyseed, or nut-butter fillings of chocolate peanut butter and chocolate almond butter. Known for its oat bars, Bobo's has taken a childhood favorite and turned it into a better-for-you breakfast treat using whole and natural ingredients. What a great way to start the morning!

Let's see, we have something for Alice who's gluten free, John who's vegan, Karen who eats raw and Paul who's allergic to shellfish.



CARTOON, CHRISTOPHER BALDWIN.

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GLUTEN-FREE EATERIES: Which states have the most?

Since we started building our lists of gluten-free bakeries, cafés and restaurants in 2017, we have been astounded watching the number grow. We wondered, though—which states have the most dedicated establishments?

By our count, there are 234 dedicated gluten-free restaurants and 215 bakeries in the United States for a total of 449. Only five states—Alaska, Mississippi, Oklahoma, West Virginia and Wyoming—have no dedicated offerings.

It was surprising to find that almost three-quarters of these restaurants and bakeries are in just 15 states. Adding to the gluten-free fun, out of the eight dedicated food trucks found, all except one reside in these same states.

Which state do you think has the most gluten-free bakeries? Or restaurants? My first guess was totally wrong—I thought it was New York, only to see that California has it beat with five more restaurants and a whopping 19 more bakeries.

Are you surprised by the totals?

	Restaurants	Bakeries	Total	Food Trucks
California	30	39	69	The Bakery Truck, Los Angeles
New York	25	20	45	
Oregon	20	5	25	Elegant Elephant Baking, Co.
Pennsylvania	12	13	25	
Florida	14	9	23	
Washington	13	6	19	I Love My GFF, Seattle
New Jersey	5	12	17	
Ohio	6	9	15	
Texas	10	4	14	
Colorado	11	3	14	Quiero Aepas, Denver
Georgia	5	8	13	VegoBistro
Michigan	5	8	13	
Virginia	6	5	11	GF Sugar Shack Donut Truck, Richmond
Illinois	5	6	11	CheSa's Gluten Tootin' Free
Connecticut	5	6	11	

Did we miss any?

If we have missed a dedicated eatery in our searches, please let us know!

Facebook: @gflivingmag

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Please note

- » Only bakeries with brick and mortar locations are included.
- » Bakeries and restaurants with more than one location are counted individually.
- » Grabbagreen restaurants have been removed due to the use of a wheat tortilla at some of the independently owned franchise locations.



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TOP 6: Ultimate holiday gift guide

It is never too early to make that list and check it twice when it comes to shopping and holiday gift giving. While it may seem difficult to come up with a good gift for your friend or loved one following a gluten-free diet, the possibilities are limitless. Here are our top six ideas for gluten-free gift giving.

1 Meal-delivery subscription For those of us who don't like or have the time to cook, these meal-delivery services provide delicious and convenient certified gluten-free meals:

» **FRESHLY** is certified gluten free by the Gluten-Free Food Services (GFFS) Certification Program. This subscription service delivers healthful and fully prepared meals directly to customers' doors, each ready to eat in only three minutes.

» **GREEN CHEF'S** certified gluten-free meal kits include meat, seafood and vegetarian options. Signing up is easy. Choose either a two-person or family plan and specify protein choices and delivery time. All ingredients are premeasured and largely prepped to keep time in the kitchen to 30 minutes or less. And there is no commitment, so you can skip weeks or cancel at any time.

» **PALEO ON THE GO'S** certified Paleo, dairy-free, non-GMO meals are made in a certified gluten-free kitchen

and include autoimmune protocol (AIP), keto and Strict30 meals. Buy that special someone a gift certificate to pick out whatever tickles his or her fancy.

2 Drinks Celebrate the gluten-free way with a bottle of wine or champagne...and maybe one of these recommendations.

» Founder Peter Smith spent two years in Spain developing a vegan and nut-free liqueur that blends Spanish brandy and tiger nut milk-based horchata. Available in two flavors, **BESOS DE ORO** and **BESOS DE CHOCOLATE**, this cruelty-free liqueur delivers a rich and smooth flavor that the owner says rivals Baileys Irish Cream.

» Created by bartenders from a short list of ingredients, these cocktail mixers from **BARCOOP BEVY** can turn anyone into a cocktail champion. Available in refreshing flavors like piña colada, Ginger Smash, cucumber mojito, Spicy Strawberry and grapefruit margarita, they require you

to simply add a spirit of choice and ice to mix your way to the perfect cocktail.

» **BOM BOM'S** approach to blending Caribbean rum with chocolate, cookies and brownies takes adult beverages to a deliciously creamy level. Consumers can "have your cake and drink it too" with the Coco Mochanut coffee liqueur, Nilli Vanilli almond milk liqueur and Fully Baked hemp milk liqueur creations. All are low in calories with no artificial flavors or preservatives. Can you say boozy sweet tooth?

3 Gift cards They are not lame and really are your best friend. Here are some of the best ways to approach a gift certificate purchase:

» Buy one to a chain restaurant with a gluten-free menu, such as Outback Steakhouse, P.F. Chang's, Carrabba's Italian Grill, Wildfire Restaurant, Legal Sea Foods and Maggiano's.

» Most dedicated restaurants and

bakeries sell them because they allow the receiver to pick out their favorites.

» Another option is picking up gift cards for a favorite grocery or health food store. Your loved one might be more likely to splurge on something he or she otherwise wouldn't when shopping on a budget.

4 Send sweets

There isn't always enough time for holiday baking, so why not take advantage of these options:

» The gorgeous gift towers from **CHERYL'S COOKIES** are filled with their signature gluten-free brownies and soft cookies. Their snickerdoodle and frosted sugar cookies are sinfully delicious and can push away all that holiday stress. We promise!

» Choose from more than just fruit and cheese at **HARRY & DAVID**. This well-known brand has added prepared gluten-free cookies, muffins, cakes and pies to its selection that are sure to impress.

» Cookies and brownies and blondies,

oh my! Let **TATE'S BAKE SHOP** craft a gift tower full of tasty goodness. With five flavors of buttery crunchy thin cookies, customize a sweet gift tower that no one will suspect is gluten free.

5 Gadgets

A new kitchen gadget or a good knife with a cutting board makes a great fit. Some of the more interesting gadgets we have seen are:

» The **WHISK WIPER** can be used on a standard whisk or an electric mixer to save 95 percent of the batter. It doubles as a bowl scraper and whisk holder to keep it off the counter, making clean up a breeze.

» Eco-friendly reusable straws are not just trendy but also a nod to ridding the environment of single-use plastic that won't decompose in our lifetimes and harms the environment. The **FINALSTRAW**, available in November, is the first collapsible straw that comes with a compact carrying case and a tiny squeegee for cleaning. It is dishwasher

safe and BPA free.

» Reusable cutlery isn't just for camping anymore. Made from bamboo or stainless steel, it is great for everyday use, sturdy, dishwasher safe and available in a variety of colors. Some even come with their own carrying case. **PRESERVE ON THE GO'S** 24-piece cutlery set is made from recycled plastic and includes eight knives, eight forks and eight spoons.

6 Make a tax-deductible donation to a national organization in the name of your favorite person with celiac.

There are several organizations raising awareness and research funds, including Beyond Celiac, Celiac Disease Foundation and the Gluten Intolerance Group of North America.

Remember, it's the thought that counts, and each of these ideas shows how much thought and care you put into finding something special for your loved one.



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Can't we all just get along?

BY JENNIFER HARRIS

Kindness seems to be a hard sell these days, and it isn't any different in the gluten-free blogging community. For years, I have said if people knew what goes on behind the scenes, they would be shocked—maybe even horrified. Many in the community believe everyone should be of one mind and anyone who disagrees or states a different opinion is subject to attack and ridicule. Why?

Having become a member of the gluten-free community more than 20 years ago, I believe in educating readers and coming together to bring about positive change. We have seen this happen with the Gluten Free Food-Labeling Summit in 2011, when a ginormous gluten-free cake was erected to draw attention to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's inaction on finalizing standards for gluten-free labeling. As a result, the Gluten Free Food Labeling Regulations went into effect on Aug. 5, 2014, which shows we can put aside our differences and work together to achieve positive results.

There isn't any room in our community for those who are all about name calling and finger pointing. This type of

behavior has a negative impact and translates to the further spread of misinformation by the media and our community's concerns not being taken seriously.

We need to support one another. Supporting those who cater to our needs is vital to our survival. Sharing medical information and updates on products, events and restaurants is how we assist one another; and it doesn't happen nearly as often as it should.

The fact is, people follow our blogs and social media accounts who don't have celiac or non-celiac gluten sensitivity. They may have rheumatoid arthritis, Crohn's disease or another reason for avoiding gluten. I have heard from followers with celiac who consume beer they know isn't gluten free, eat "gluten-free" pizza even though they know it isn't prepared safely or allow themselves cheat days without worrying about the effects.

Choosing what to put in our bodies is always a personal decision, and no matter what information we share about the harm that unsafe foods can cause, people



may ultimately make decisions that we wouldn't. It really isn't our place to judge; we can only do our best to keep them informed. The same can be said about manufacturers of gluten-free products. Make quality products we can support, or we will take our money elsewhere.

So, what are we as a community to do? It's important to identify "bully" activity and take one simple—although sometimes difficult—course of action: Ignore it because nothing positive will come from any interaction with someone participating in such behavior.

Let's all step down from our soapboxes and learn how to work together.

How is Dunkin' Donuts' gluten-free brownie?

Dunkin' Donuts gluten-free brownie has been available in stores nationwide since July. Part of the Dunkin' Run menu featuring \$2 snacks, the brownie is the chain's first gluten-free item.

According to Dunkin' Donuts' U.S. Chief Marketing Officer Tony Weisman, "We...recognize the importance of providing alternative choices for people with dietary restrictions or who choose a gluten-free diet, which is why we're pleased our new menu offers guests a gluten-free fudge brownie, which is so chewy and

delicious we think everyone will love it."

Certified gluten free by the Gluten Intolerance Group's Gluten-Free Certification Organization, the treat comes individually wrapped, avoiding any cross-contamination risk.

How does it taste?

Never one to shirk my responsibilities as editor of a gluten-free publication, I headed to the closest Dunks—I live in Massachusetts; there is always one nearby—to try it for myself. I was a little hesitant to take the first bite. I've had my share of dry, crumbly and

otherwise-unpleasant gluten-free baked goods. My initial taste of the Dunkin' Donuts gluten-free brownie pleasantly surprised. Soft and gooey, it has a fudge-y consistency and delivers tons of chocolate-y flavor. I also didn't notice any weird aftertaste—always something to be wary of when it comes to gluten-free goodies. I probably could have split it and saved half for later as it's pretty dense, but not unpleasantly so.

If you're splurging on a brownie, you're probably not expecting an overly healthful experience. To that end, be prepared to add the brownie's 350 calories, 34 grams of sugar and 16 grams of fat to your nutritional intake for the day. —Joan Edgett

