

## Gluten-Free Basics

Gluten is a generic name for a group of proteins found in some grains. It is not a grain itself, nor it is a carbohydrate as many people think.

Remembering this will allow you to make more informed decisions and better understand the controversy around some “tricky” ingredients, such as “wheat starch.” For example, a “wheat” naturally contains gluten, but the word “starch” indicates here that this is just the carbohydrate portion of a grain. In other words, strictly speaking, wheat starch was processed to remove all proteins (including gluten) and therefore should in theory be “gluten-free”. However, scientists say this is not always the case, as it is difficult to completely separate grain components and that is where the debate originates.



### **COMMON FOODS UNSUITABLE FOR GLUTEN-FREE DIET** **(avoid foods that list these ingredients, unless labelled as gluten-free):**

Wheat (gluten)	Brewer’s yeast (residual gluten)
Barley (gluten)	Most beers, ale, etc. (malt)
Rye (gluten)	Regular baked goods (gluten)
Malt (gluten)	Some Salad Dressings (grains, soy sauce with wheat)
Semolina (gluten)	Regular pasta (grains)
Triticale (gluten)	Regular stuffing, crumbs (gluten)
Spelt (gluten)	Some French Fries (gluten cross-contamination)
Graham (gluten)	Some sauces/gravies (added grains)
Prepackaged soups (added grains)	Deli meats and hot dogs (added grains)

\*Oat remains a controversial food when it comes to gluten. Many studies show that oats are safe for people with celiac disease, gluten intolerance and wheat allergy, as they are naturally gluten-free; however, many say they need to be avoided as they are commonly packaged in the same facilities that gluten-containing grains. As such, the current standard advice is to eliminate oats from the diet unless labelled as “gluten-free”.



### **COMMON FOODS SUITABLE FOR GLUTEN-FREE DIET:** **(assuming no cross-contamination happened)**

Fruits/vegetables	Natural coffee and cocoa powder
Legumes: Beans, lentils, peas	Chocolate (check label for chocolate bars)
All fish and seafood	Spices and herbs w/o additives
All Unprocessed Meats and Poultry	Maple syrup
Eggs	Fats and oils

Nuts and seeds (be careful with granola bars)	Gluten-free grains (see separate resource with detailed list of grains and pseudocereals)
Cheese	Distilled alcohol
Milk	Beers from rice or other non-gluten sources
Natural Yogurt, Sour cream	White vinegar
Cottage cheese	Chewing gum

All of these foods are naturally gluten-free. However, for canned/packaged/processed varieties, always check labelling for cross-contamination warnings.

For example, potatoes are naturally gluten-free; however, ordering French Fries in a restaurant can be unsafe, because the same fryer can be used to prepare fries, wheat breaded fish/chicken patties, etc. Another example is ordering scrambled eggs when dining out. Eggs don't contain gluten; however, some recipes call for pancake mix to enhance the structure and flavour of a scrambled eggs dish.

As such, always ask detailed questions about methods of preparation when dining out. And of course, follow @smartbitesolutions for tips and tricks! 😊

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