



## Entertaining Gluten-Free Guests

*A resource from the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness (NFCA)*

When you're planning a dinner, party, or special event, a gluten-free guest can present a challenge. But fear not hosts and entertainers, NFCA's printable guide to **Entertaining Gluten-Free Guests** is here to help.

Cooking and entertaining, especially for guests who have trouble eating safely outside their own kitchen, can be an especially rewarding endeavor. Whether you're preparing a completely gluten-free affair, or just a few options for your special celiac guest(s), these rules of thumb can help make planning your next event an easy and DELICIOUS gluten-free experience!

### Be The Perfect Host

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**Do Your Homework.** Thoroughly educate yourself on the gluten-free diet, even before you select a menu. Research safe ingredients, recipes, certified gluten-free products, and where you can purchase the items you'll need. If you're new to the gluten-free diet, have your guest recommend resources, products, and stores where gluten-free items are plentiful. NFCA's **Getting Started Guide** provides a comprehensive overview of safe and unsafe ingredients and celiac friendly retail locations.



**Communicate.** Establish open and honest lines of communication with your guest(s) – and right from the start! Be sensitive to their dietary needs, understanding of their concerns regarding ingredients and cross-contamination, and forthright in your mission to be a great host and gain their confidence. Exchange contact information so you both can communicate easily and directly throughout the process.

**Ask Questions.** Asking questions throughout your meal preparation can be reassuring for your special diet guests. It's also the best way to streamline the process and avoid any dinner party disasters – so ask as early and as often as necessary!



### Preparation

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**Select a Menu that's Easy and Enjoyable...For Everyone.** There are so many naturally gluten-free ingredients and delicious menu ideas out there, cooking gluten-free can be simpler than you think. From mouthwatering options like chicken lettuce wraps, crab cakes

and lasagna, chocolate chip cookies and hazelnut torte - it's very easy to create a 100% gluten-free meal that all your guests can enjoy!

And if you're not planning a completely gluten-free affair, consider making all your appetizers and/or side dishes gluten-free. Not only will this ease your workload and grocery needs, but also enable your celiac guest to enjoy more than just one special entrée. Looking for ideas? Visit [www.CeliacCentral.org/recipes](http://www.CeliacCentral.org/recipes) for simple and tasty gluten-free recipes.

**Start From Scratch.** Gluten is latent in many commonly used cooking products: salad dressings, marinades, rice mixes, even cooking sprays. Cooking from scratch will help you avoid any hidden gluten without difficulty, an important factor to consider when planning your gluten-free menu. The KISS principal (Keep It Simple Stupid) is one that certainly applies to gluten-free entertaining. And it's almost always safer, easier and HEALTHIER!

Broil, grill or pan-fry meat, fish and vegetables in olive oil or light butter. Bake or roast potatoes, and toss salads in homemade balsamic vinegar dressing - Voila, a delicious, nutritious, gluten-free meal!

**Shop Savvy.** When picking up the gluten-free ingredients you'll need, it's important to ensure that each product you plan on using have been CERTIFIED gluten-free or made in a dedicated gluten-free facility. You can visit [CeliacCentral.org](http://CeliacCentral.org) to find a directory of trusted brands and manufacturers.

**Invite Your Guest To Help.** At a loss or a little overwhelmed? Involve your celiac guest in the menu planning, or ask them to bring their favorite dish - most are more than willing to do so. Invite them to shop with you as you gather supplies, or ask to borrow a specific ingredient, like gluten-free tamari or soy sauce (Yes, soy sauce can contain gluten!), from their own kitchen.

## In The Kitchen

Identifying and purchasing your gluten-free ingredients is easy part. Preventing cross-contamination, especially in a shared kitchen, is the biggest challenge when it comes to entertaining gluten-free guests. Any food that comes into contact with the tiniest speck of gluten will become contaminated, a serious health risk for someone with celiac disease. Fortunately, identifying your cooking strategy ahead of time and being mindful of a few cross-contamination hazards in the kitchen can help you execute everything safely and easily!



### Always Remember:

From purchasing ingredients to cooking in the kitchen, if you ever have any doubts as to whether something is 100% gluten-free - do NOT serve it to your guest.

**Fresh & Clean.** Yes. Cooking in a kitchen where gluten-containing meals are regularly prepared can be done! No. You do not have to purchase separate cooking tools in order to cook a safe gluten-free meal!

Wash everything you plan to use completely with soap and hot water, or run it through the dishwasher prior to getting started. Pots, pans, utensils, dishware, measuring cups, and food processors - you name it. Make sure to wipe kitchen counter tops and appliances down as well. Gluten can hide in tile crevices, or stick directly to any surface when wet - so use disinfecting sprays and wipes, or soap and hot water when you clean your cooking area.

**Get Organized.** Identify a plan for avoiding cross-contamination before you start. Designate certain kitchen supplies, even a special area of the kitchen, for preparing gluten-free foods only. Labeling or color-coding supplies is another easy way to prevent you from accidentally contaminating anything as you are cooking. Customize your strategy to your kitchen and cooking habits - there's no right or wrong way, as long as your gluten-free food stays 100% safe from start to finish!

**Avoiding Cross-Contamination.** Once you have a plan, take a deep breath and get cookin'! There's no need to be scared, just stay conscious and aware at all times. And above all, remember that if you have any doubts as to whether something is 100% gluten-free – do NOT serve it to your guest. Start over, or prepare something else.

Here are a few tips for preventing cross-contamination as you cook:

- **Don't Rush.** Being diligent and careful is the best way to ensure the safety of your meal. While allotting extra time to cook sounds simple and easy enough, when you're crunched for time and hurrying to prepare your menu, it's much easier to make a mistake.
- **Enlist a Su Chef.** Preparing 2 separate menus in an effort to accommodate your special diet guests is a large undertaking, especially for just one chef - so enlist a friend to help you in the kitchen. Or better yet, invite your gluten-free guest to help you cook! Appoint one chef to the non-gluten-free dishes and the other to the gluten-free meal. You can greatly minimize the risk of cross-contamination if only one person is responsible for cooking your gluten-free items from start to finish.
- **Prepare Gluten-Free Foods First.** Many people don't have enough kitchen supplies to cook your gluten-free meal separately using designated pans, colanders, or utensils. Should you need to use something to prepare both your gluten-free and non gluten-free items, use your clean tools to prepare the gluten-free items first. This also goes for kitchen surfaces, appliances, etc. If you accidentally use any gluten-free utensil, such as a spatula or carving knife, on something that isn't gluten-free, replace it or clean it thoroughly before you continue cooking your gluten-free dish. Once gluten has touched something in the kitchen, it cannot come in contact with gluten-free foods again.
- **Lids & Foil Are Your Friends.** If you decide to prepare everything together, keep your gluten-free foods completely covered and separated. Lids and aluminum foil are easy ways to protect your gluten-free foods, in the oven, on the grill – wherever you're cooking.

### Red Alert

Be sure to watch out for these sneaky (but common) cooking hazards:

- ✓ **Condiments.** Make sure not to 'double dip' when using condiments. To avoid this, start with a brand new product/jar, dipping and spreading condiments onto gluten-free foods first. Or, consider purchasing products like ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise in squeeze bottles.
- ✓ **Toasters.** Toasters are a HUGE cross-contamination hazard and often too hard to clean. If you plan to toast any gluten-free items, doing so in a broiler is a safer option.
- ✓ **Cutting Boards.** Cutting boards (and certain utensils) made from porous substances like wood can soak up gluten particles. Even intense cleaning often cannot remove gluten particles trapped deep inside, so stick to items made from plastic and metal when cooking.

### Need Help?

For recipes, hot products, gluten-free dining tips & more visit,

[www.CeliacCentral.org](http://www.CeliacCentral.org)