

LS PICK

# Gluten hideouts

Gluten free food, gluten free ingredients and gluten free recipes have all been on the radar of health conscious foodies for quite a while and now it is more of a concern for many than ever before. Even healthy people with gluten tolerance are starting to cut it out of their diets, and all for good reasons.

So what do we know about gluten? Gluten is simply a protein that can be found in all our daily groceries from wheat to barley to oats. It is also the material which gives dough its elasticity. However, people with celiac disease have a hard time digesting gluten and some people even have allergic reactions to it. If you are looking to avoid gluten, take a note of the following food where gluten is hiding.

## GRAINS

Wheat, rye and barley are the most common grains that come packed with gluten. Anything and everything that is made with these grains --from breads to pasta, breakfast cereals to biscuits, and even certain energy bars-- contain a significant amount of gluten. Although there are speculations as to whether oats contain this protein or not, yet cross contamination can occur and your oats just might have gluten in them. For people with celiac disease or who are strictly allergic to gluten, oats should be avoided, to be on the safe side. For those who are simply looking to avoid gluten for other reasons, the negligible amount in oats will not pose a threat. Alternatively, rice noodles or white rice can be substituted for such gluten-containing food.

## SAUCES

From the large isles filled with a more than a hundred flavours of sauce, to the homemade dips we treasure, most of these sauces and gravies contain gluten, even

soy sauce, which contains wheat. Numerous sorts of flour are added to gravies and sauces to thicken them up, which means the thicker your sauce, the more the gluten. Luckily for all of us, tomato ketchup is gluten free.

## PROCESSED PROTEINS

Meat naturally does not contain any form of gluten, however, processed meat that are bought over the counter come with the possibility of containing gluten



from their seasonings, fillers or through cross contamination from machines. The best option is to go for unprocessed fresh meat so even gluten intolerant people can enjoy it just as much.

## BAKERY GOODS

From pastries to bagels, croissants to muffins, almost everything that can be found at the local bakeries

contain a sizeable amount of gluten, as it is the protein which helps glue together cakes, breads and all other baked products. The trouble with gluten is that even the smallest amount can bring out allergic reactions in people who are intolerant to it or who have celiac disease. Thankfully, nowadays gluten-free baking ingredients can be found in markets and thus it is one less worry for those who are gluten intolerant.

## COSMETICS AND BODY CARE

This is another place that gluten cheekily hides. Most of us cut out a lot of food from our diet, but tend to overlook cosmetic products such as lotions, soaps, shampoos, and worse of all lipsticks, which a lot of times are ingested. So before purchasing your next cosmetic or skincare product, take a good look at the labels and avoid products that have wheat germ, hydrolyzed wheat or vegetable protein, Avena sativa, or Triticum aestivum which is another name for wheat.

Some other common foods that contain gluten are noodles, waffles, dumplings, brewer's yeast and anything that contains wheat as an ingredient, so keep an eye out for these during your everyday meals.

Because people are becoming more aware of gluten every day, there are more gluten free goodies in the market. Going gluten free does not necessarily mean giving up on your favourite dishes; all it takes is a little creativity and label reading.

By Anisha Hassan

Photo: Collected



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