

Worry-Free Travel

Arne Barfield and her husband, Joe, loved to travel. The San Antonio couple would take trips throughout the United States, Europe, and the Far East for both business and pleasure. Then Barfield was diagnosed with celiac disease and prescribed a gluten-free diet.

“It changed my life,” she says. “I didn’t realize how drastic it was at first. But it dawned on me that everything I put in my mouth had to be gluten free—every meal and snack and even each piece of gum and pill.”

The pair had already planned a trip to France with two other couples when Barfield was diagnosed. She immediately canceled over concerns about what to eat, especially since she didn’t speak French, but her husband still took the trip with their friends.

“I felt so sorry for myself,” she says, “that I arranged another trip a few months later for just the two of us so I could figure out how to eat gluten free. It wasn’t easy and it was a lot more work in terms of planning ahead, but it paid off. I found that I didn’t have to sit at home for the rest of my life.”

TO GO OR NOT TO GO

Barfield’s story isn’t uncommon.

Almost half of people with celiac disease, food allergies, and other food intolerances travel less than they did prior to managing their special diets, according to research published in 2008 and sponsored by the Chicago-based AllergyFree Passport and GlutenFree Passport.

Anger, dejection, and denial upon diagnosis, says Melinda Dennis, MS, RD, LDN, nutrition coordinator at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center’s Celiac Center in Boston, “as well as a resistance to making a scene and a lack of confidence in knowing what to ask for all make some people feel it’s just easier to stay home.”

Yet the GlutenFree Passport research reveals that 47% of consumers following special diets travel both in their own country and internationally.

THAT FIRST FORAY

What’s the best way to become a fearless traveler? Go out to eat in a local restaurant, says Dennis.

“You can search for restaurants that have gluten-free menus or learn what questions to ask so that you can order off a regular menu. For example, ask whether vegetables are steamed over a pot of boiling pasta or whether the marinated chicken is floured,” she explains.



One of the safest ways to take that first getaway is to go on a gluten-free weekend retreat. Dennis has set up and led adventure outings for groups of about a dozen people with celiac disease, gluten intolerance, and wheat allergies and their partners at the Joe Dodge Lodge, a rustic retreat along the Appalachian Trail in the White Mountains of New Hampshire.

“The peacefulness of hiking in the woods, bonding with other people on a gluten-free diet, and participating in the workshops create a climate in which people feel comfortable and quickly start to learn,” she says.

Dennis worked with the lodge chef, who was already attuned to accommodating guests with food allergies, to plan six gluten-free meals. The menus included warm rolls, Moroccan lentil stew, roast beef and fish dishes, savory quinoa pilaf, homemade muffins, brownies, and raspberry tarts. There was also a specially catered lunch from a health food café that included super kale salad, homemade hummus, high-fiber crackers, organic fruit, and a quinoa side dish.

Dennis has also hosted three workshops on maximizing nutrition that included cooking demonstrations using the “super six” gluten-free grains—quinoa, amaranth, millet, buckwheat, teff, and sorghum.

For those who want or need to go it on their own, gluten-friendly accommodations are a boon. That’s what visitors will find at Chicken Paradise Bed & Breakfast, one of only a few gluten-free bed and breakfasts that cater to people with gluten intolerance. Run by the Barfields in their San Antonio home, the idea began when the couple enjoyed a farm-stay visit in Italy years before.

“We stayed with an American with celiac disease and her Italian husband, so there were no language problems,” Barfield says. “She had a huge pantry filled with gluten-free ingredients and had assembled a binder of all the restaurants in the area that offered gluten-free menus and those that could accommodate gluten-free requests. It was like having our own gluten-free concierge.”

Similarly, Barfield offers her guests a gluten-free breakfast. “We’ll start with coffee or tea,” Barfield says. “Guests can have it plain or with milk or soy, almond, hemp, or coconut milk. We then serve a large platter of seasonal fruits and omelets or eggs over easy. We raise chickens, so the eggs are fresh each morning. Omelets are our specialty—for example, an omelet with goat cheese and dill or fresh herbs from our garden. There’s a choice of bacon or sausage and gluten-free muffins or scones. We have a wonderful gluten-free bakery in San Antonio, and I always keep some of their bread in my freezer.”

Barfield also shares with her guests a binder that features suggestions for places to eat in the San Antonio area, which were culled during the several years she wrote the “Defensive Dining” column for the Alamo Celiac support group’s newsletter.

Beyond breakfast, Barfield accommodates guests who are in town on business to attend day-long meetings. “I’ll make a box lunch—chicken, rice, and a fresh vegetable salad with lettuce, arugula, avocado, and tomato—so they don’t have to worry about finding something to eat,” she says.

Likewise, for guests who have to catch an early flight, Barfield sets out a gluten-free continental breakfast and foods that can be easily packed for travel.



SEE THE WORLD

Bob Levy, who created Bob & Ruth's Gluten-Free Dining & Travel with his wife, was diagnosed with celiac disease in 1995. He started organizing gluten-free dinners at restaurants in the Baltimore area, and later planned a trip to an all-inclusive resort in the Bahamas. His knack for working with chefs at restaurants and resorts to accommodate gluten-free travelers has let him, his wife, and hundreds of fellow travelers take trips ranging from mini getaways to the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, to one-, two- and three-week vacations to the Orient, Russia, Africa, Monaco, Greece, and South and Central American countries such as Argentina and Costa Rica.

"We've found chefs and travel agents are willing to work with us when we're a group of 20 to 50 people," says Levy, who lives in Havre de Grace, Maryland, and while traveling, personally "blesses" the food or assures that it is gluten free before each meal. "For example, we just came back from Club

Med in Cancun, where the executive chef, with whom we've worked before, made us all kinds of goodies like fried onion rings."

The travel, Levy says, "is easy. It's preparing for the dining out that can be a challenge. We do a lot of work pretrip. Cruises are easy. There's one executive chef. The most difficult is a 10-day trip during which we travel to a different place each day. Ten days means 30 meals and requires that I work with 25 to 28 chefs ahead of time."

Levy doesn't take the easy route—in other words, he doesn't accept a basic banquet menu. "Dining is a big part of any trip, and I just won't accept bland, tasteless food," he says. That's why he and his fellow travelers have enjoyed delicacies such as crocodile and kangaroo in Australia, chicken feet and pickled sea nettles in Asia, and a native cheese bread made with yucca flour in Peru and Ecuador. "This kind of dining really opens up your mind to all the possibilities on a gluten-free diet," Levy says. "After all, the world is our oyster and we intend to sample it all, as long as it's gluten-free."



In the works for 2012:

European river cruise,
Greek Islands cruise,
India's Golden Circle,
& mini-getaways.

Check our website
for the latest updates

Go Away...

on exciting GLUTEN-FREE GETAWAYS 2011 / 2012

You are about to enter a world of gluten-free tours & cruises you probably thought could not exist:

- Oct 2011 **China & Hong Kong incl. Yangtze River cruise**
- Dec 2011 **Las Vegas at the spectacular Mirage**
- Feb 2012 **Club Med Punta Cana**
- Mar 2012 **South Africa Safari + Capetown**

*So much to see & do. So much scrumptious gluten-free food.
Join us for a trip of a lifetime!*

For reservations & information, contact:

Bob & Ruth's (est. 1998)

Gluten-Free Dining & Travel Club

(410)939-3218 • info@bobandruths.com • www.bobandruths.com

TRAVEL TIPS

There are five top concerns that those on gluten-free diets have when traveling, according to research sponsored by AllergyFree/GlutenFree Passport: eating out in restaurants (89%), the availability of gluten- and allergen-free meals and snacks (85%), airline travel (56%), hotels and accommodations (52%) and communications in foreign languages (48%).

Kim Koeller, president of GlutenFree Passport, remembers one alarming experience in restaurant dining while traveling for work. “It was in the United States and at a well-known chain,” she says.

“I explained that I was on a gluten-free diet, and they told me they had nothing I could eat. I was shocked. I said, ‘How about a salad? Do you have vinegar and oil? I ended up staying, because I was meeting colleagues, and I did have the salad. But it’s scary. It’s a survival thing. Your first concern is what happens if you have to rely on restaurants.”

On the other hand, Koeller says, “One of the best meals I ever ate was in Paris. I ordered a filet without sauce. The chef said he just couldn’t serve me a plain filet, so he went the extra mile to make gluten-free bordelaise sauce. French is one of the

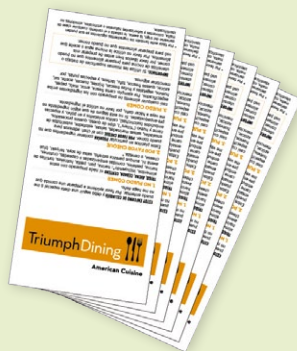
RESOURCES

GlutenFree Passport offers a variety of indispensable tools for gluten-free travelers, from easy-to-use apps for the iPhone, iPod touch, and iPad (iCanEat OnTheGo & Allergen Free Fast Food, and iEatOut Gluten & Allergen Free) and an award-winning book series, *Let’s Eat Out*, the mainstay of which is both a primer on eating out gluten free and a guide to ingredients, techniques, and information about restaurant and airline dining. It also offers free, downloadable dining cards to help you order food safely in other countries.

www.glutenfreepassport.com

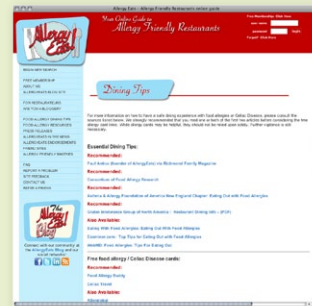
Travelers will want to arm themselves with dining cards to help them order in any restaurant. Triumph Dining offers *The Essential Gluten-Free Restaurant Guide* and *The Essential Gluten-Free Grocery Guide* to foods in stores nationwide. Check out its blog, too.

www.triumphdining.com



Find recipes based on their “allergy friendliness” at Allergy Eats!, an online guide. Just enter your food allergy or intolerance, add a location, and you’ll find recipes that cater to your special needs. Check out the Allergy Eats! blog while you’re there.

www.allergyeats.com



And when you get back home, if your travels have added some weight to your frame, take it off with some help from Gini Warner, MA, and Chef Ross Harris. Their book, *The Gluten-Free Edge: Get Skinny the Gluten-Free Way*, with its emphasis on weight management, will be a welcome addition to any library of gluten-free books. A seven-day meal plan and 200 recipes for dishes that will keep you from feeling deprived—such as Crunchy Butterflied Shrimp in Orange Sauce and Crêpes With Peach Sauce—provide the edge.

www.adamsmedia.com



— KJ

toughest cuisines, with all the sauces and flour dusting. It pays off if you take the time to explain your needs to the chef directly.”

Carry dining cards that translate key gluten-free ingredients and preparation methods in the language of the country you are visiting, Koeller adds. “You can just point to the word or phrase if you need to explain.”

Barfield’s dining cards are printed on 8½- X 11-inch pieces of neon-colored paper. “No one can ignore them at that size and color,” she says.

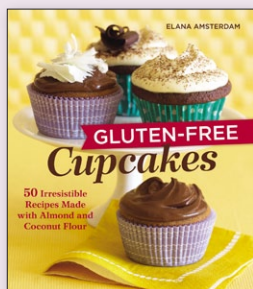
And take time to confirm how something is prepared. “I asked a chef once if the flourless chocolate cake was made with bread crumbs, and he assured me it wasn’t,” Koeller says. “Then he went back in the kitchen and checked. Indeed, the cake wasn’t gluten free.”

Some people worry that restaurant staff or chefs won’t take their special diet requests seriously. “I just tell them I’m on a medically prescribed diet,” Levy says.

Uncertainty over the availability of gluten-free meals and snacks is why Barfield always packs food. “Nuts, dried fruit, and energy bars,” she says. “That way I know I’ll have something to eat.”

Koeller agrees: “I’ll order a gluten-free meal when traveling by airplane, but things can happen. Accuracy is variable. You might have to change aircrafts. Meals might not get delivered in time. So if I’m traveling for four to six hours, then I pack one meal. If it’s for 10 to 12 hours, I’ll pack two meals. Or if I’m going all the way to someplace like Australia or New Zealand, it will be three meals.”

Educate yourself about a particular country’s cuisine so you can eat out or buy foods



Everyone loves cupcakes. But it isn’t easy for people with gluten intolerance to find a cupcake they love. But now, whether your favorite is Red Velvet or German Chocolate, Elana Amsterdam, creator of the blog *Elana’s Pantry*, shows you how to make them to die for, rather than get sick from, in *Gluten-Free Cupcakes: 50 Irresistible Recipes Made With Almond and Coconut Flour*. You’ll find everything from Zucchini to Black Forest Cupcakes. But start with this cute, sweet concoction.



Strawberry Cupcakes with Strawberry Meringue Frosting

PHOTO BY ANNABELLE BREAKEY FROM *GLUTEN-FREE CUPCAKES*

knowledgably. “Many Thai and Mediterranean dishes are traditionally gluten free,” says Koeller. “On the other hand, I was surprised to learn they add flour to the beans in Brazil, and in Mexico and Central America, they may fry the corn chips in the same oil that they cook the chimichangas.”

In the end, she says, “Successful traveling on a gluten-free diet all boils down to three things: preparation, education, and communication.” ♣

— Carol M. Bareuther, RD