

Oh What, Oh What Can I Eat That is GF?

There are really tons of foods you and your family can eat. If you think in terms of what can I eat instead of what I can't eat it becomes much easier.

I like to think of shopping from the perimeter of the grocery store and staying away from the center aisles.

Produce aisle – I haven't found anything to date that is not in a package in this aisle that contains gluten. Do watch for dried fruits and trail mixes that may contain additives that are gluten. Here pick lots of fruits and vegetables, fruit leathers, dried fruits, jarred fruits, nuts and seeds.

Meat Section – Most meats are GF. Stay away from anything marinated, injected or breaded. Fresh cut is best and safest. Sausage and hot dogs can contain additives and fillers so be careful when buying those.

Deli Counter – Look for meats in the case that have labels on them so that you can read the ingredients for yourself. Once you know a brand is safe then ask to have it sliced on a dedicated slicer or you can buy prepackaged brands that are safe to save time.

Frozen Foods – Most foods in the freezer sections are processed and are not GF. Stick with plain or 100% juice popsicles, yogurt, frozen vegetables, potatoes and fruits. Be cautious of vegetables in sauces or seasonings and packaged tater tots, processed soups and meals.

Baking Aisle – Some items are safe and this aisle should not be overlooked. Pantry staples for baking are found here like sugars, dry active yeast, salt, canned pumpkin and pie fillings, extracts and flavorings, spices, seasonings, baking powder and soda, honey, molasses, dry pudding and Jell-O mixes and marshmallows. Just be sure to check labels.

Bakery, Cookie, Cereal, Pasta Aisle – Just skip right by these except for the GF brands of cereal, pasta and cookies but be careful items such as oat flour, spelt or kamut are not ingredients.

Condiments – Safe brands of olives, pickles, vinegar, oil, mustard, ketchup and salad dressing can all be found but do check labels for gluten. The items to be cautious of are barbeque sauce, soy sauce, dry soup and gravy mixes, Worcestershire, bouillon and chili sauces.

Beverages - Many beverages are safe including 100% juice, juice boxes, wines and distilled spirits, GF beer, soda and bottled water. Just be cautious of juice blends, herbal tea bags, flavored tea blends, instant coffee or anything that is artificially flavored and not 100% pure.

Staples Section – In this section the foods to pass over are things that are processed which usually come in a box, bag or with a seasoning packet. Many canned vegetables, fruits, spaghetti sauces (watch for wheat added in form of crumbs), peanut butter, jelly and syrup are GF. Rice comes in many varieties just stay away from the ones with flavor packets.

Snacks - Here you can find a variety of potato chips, nacho chips, nuts, candy, chocolates, fruit snacks and corn chips. Be cautious when purchasing microwave popcorn, flavored snacks, rice cakes, jelly candies, chocolates with additives and formed potato chips in a canister.

Dairy – Eggs, juice, milk, cream and butter are all safe. Many cheeses and yogurts are safe as well but there are exceptions so labels must be read. Beware of items such as butter, chocolate, flavored or malted milk drinks, sour cream, puddings, gelatin desserts, cream and cottage cheese, dips and creamers.

Ethnic Foods – This section holds quite a number of GF items. Things such as rice noodles and crackers, candies, soup bases, corn based items such as tortillas and salsa and kosher for Passover foods*. These sections can actually be fun to search through looking for new items to discover.

***Many kosher-for-Passover foods are made without wheat, rye, barley or other grains that contain gluten. Not all Passover food is gluten-free. Some kosher-for-Passover products contain matzo and matzo-meal, both of which are made of wheat and contain gluten. The period right after Passover ends is a good time to shop because many stores reduce the prices of the holiday food.**