

GLUTEN-FREE DIET BASICS



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Introduction

The fact that you have decided to read this book is evidence that the Gluten Free movement is steadily increasing in popularity. People all over the world have decided that avoiding Gluten was not just another diet option but it was absolutely crucial for the sake of their health. This is not just another fad that will lose momentum before you get time to even research it and it is certainly not another crazy crash diet. This change has been regarded as one of the most practical ways for a lot of people to shed pounds, take charge of their health and start feeling like themselves again. But make no mistake, this diet is not for everyone.

Sticking to a Gluten Free diet will lead you down a path that may be viewed as wrought with adversity. The problem lies in the fact that Gluten is everywhere! Trying to eliminate an ingredient that is included in such a wide array of foods is bound to cause some challenges. The first challenge will be finding the willpower to stop eating quite a bit of the food you have grown to love. This is much easier said than done when the 'healthier' substitute is not as tasty. The next challenge will be learning how to get sufficient amounts of the nutrients you need to stay healthy without compromising your decision to avoid Gluten. And if that wasn't

enough, most of the foods labeled “Gluten Free” may be more expensive than their counterparts.

Whatever you decide, always remember that your body is your home. If you do not take the time to take care of it, where will you live? Taking the time to eat right, get sufficient rest and exercise will always be in your best interest. Performing efficiently and at the highest level of your proficiency will only be possible if you take care of yourself. This might require a little bit more time and a tad bit more effort, but it will certainly be worth it. Unfortunately, there is no ‘one size fits all’ when it comes to our health and well-being. You have to put in the work yourself and evaluate your own unique needs. You will never, ever be able to pour from an empty cup. So trust me, take some time to find out what your body needs and you will not regret it.

By now, you should be wondering if all the fuss is really worth it. And once again, I encourage you to think carefully about whether this diet is really right for you. This diet may not be quite what you need. If it is, however, the benefits will far outweigh any challenges you face as a result of this decision. I hate to sound dramatic, but cutting Gluten from your diet may even save your life. In order for you to be sure this diet is right for you, please continue to read on and learn more about Gluten and why avoiding it is such a big deal. This may very well end up being one of the best decisions you have ever made.

Chapter 1 – What is Gluten?

Put simply, Gluten is one of the proteins found in cereal grains such as wheat, rye and barley. Gluten is produced by a combination of two different Proteins. These Proteins are Gliadin and Glutenin. The plant relies on its supply of Gluten because it serves as food for the plant during development. When these grains are ground into flour, the Gluten is responsible for the elasticity of dough mixtures. It is this elasticity that gives our food a certain “chewiness.” Individuals who suffer from Gluten intolerance are often encouraged to avoid oats as well. This is because oats can easily be contaminated by foods that contain Gluten since it is often processed in factories that produce food using wheat and other foods that contain Gluten. Some examples of gluten-free grains are millet, sorghum, brown rice, buckwheat, wild rice, quinoa and corn.

Wheat is often used to make the following foods:

- Bread
- Pasta
- BakeD goods
- Sauces
- Cakes
- Soups

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- Salad dressings
- Battered meat, poultry and fish

Rye is used to make foods such as:

- Pumpernickel bread
- Cereals
- Beer

Barley is often used to make:

- Beer
- Food coloring
- Yeast
- Malt milk
- Malt vinegar
- Soups

Many of the foods we eat may also contain some amount of Gluten as a result of being contaminated during the manufacturing process. These foods include:

- Dried fruit
- Candy
- Flavored coffee
- Caramel color

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- Food starch
- French fries
- Processed cheese and meats
- Vegetable and meat stock
- Bouillon cubes
- Dietary Supplements such as multivitamins
- Ice cream

This list is not exhaustive. Time will not permit me to list all the foods that contain or do not contain Gluten and even if I had the time, you would find it quite boring. The only efficient way to determine if your food contains Gluten is to read the label carefully. This will require a lot of your time in order for you to be accurate. This exhaustive process may not be right for everyone. The next chapter will help you to determine whether we are making too much adieu about nothing.

Chapter 2 – Why the Big Deal?

A recent survey highlighted that about a third of all Americans are actively trying to eliminate Gluten from their diet. This is an awful lot of people when we think about the fact that there are over 325,000,000 people in the US. But why are they making such a fuss? Let us take some time to examine a few of the reasons so many people have decided to live Gluten Free.

1. Celiac Disease

Studies have indicated that the number of individuals who currently suffer from Celiac Disease is on the rise. Although no official numbers have been published, it is estimated that well over 1% of the world's population suffer from this disease. Celiac Disease is especially common among the elderly. Even worse is the fact that many cases of individuals who suffer from this disease have gone undiagnosed. In fact, about 80% of the people who suffer from Celiac Disease are not even aware that they have it.

But what exactly is Celiac Disease you may ask? As highlighted in the previous chapter, Gluten is composed of two main proteins, Gliadin and Glutenin. Individuals with Celiac Disease react

negatively to the Gliadin component. Celiac is classified as an autoimmune disease. That is because the immune system of these individuals will confuse Gluten with something dangerous like some sort of Bacteria. As a result, their bodies try to defend themselves against the Gluten and end up attacking itself in the process. This attack can result in the degeneration of the intestinal wall and can be life threatening if not treated.

Other symptoms of Celiac Disease include:

- Nutritional deficiencies
- Anaemia
- Chronic fatigue
- Vomiting
- Abdominal bloating
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Digestive issues
- Decreased appetite
- Itchy skin rashes
- Irritability
- Depression
- Osteoporosis
- Damaged tooth enamel
- Joint pain
- Acid reflux

2. Gluten Sensitivity

Others, who do not suffer from Celiac Disease, have chosen to avoid Gluten or cut it out of their diet altogether because they suffer from Gluten Sensitivity. These individuals may have even gotten a negative result when they did a blood test for Celiac but simply do not feel well when they consume foods that contain Gluten. They may even suffer from symptoms that are quite similar to those of someone with Celiac Disease. Suffering from Gluten Sensitivity means that the individual reacts negatively to Gluten even though their immune system is not attacking their bodies, as is the case with Celiac Disease. The symptoms of Gluten Sensitivity are usually not related to the gastrointestinal tract or cause any damage to the intestines at all. On the contrary, these individuals are more likely to experience fatigue, joint pain, abdominal pain or even 'brain fog.' Thankfully, Gluten sensitivity is not life threatening.

3. Gluten Intolerance

Gluten intolerance is also not life threatening. It will, however, cause quite a bit of discomfort. Individuals with this condition simply cannot process or digest foods that contain Gluten. This can be for a variety of reasons. That individual's body may simply be unable to produce the enzyme needed to digest foods that contain Gluten. Symptoms of Gluten Intolerance are usually digestive related and may include

gas, bloating, diarrhea or nausea. Just think about the result of consuming dairy when you're Lactose Intolerant.

You should now be able to appreciate that living Gluten Free is a very serious matter for some individuals and it is not a decision to be taken lightly. You will be able to appreciate the seriousness of the matter especially if you suffer from these symptoms as well. Chapter 3 of this book will highlight how to determine if you have any of the serious Gluten related conditions that have been mentioned.

Chapter 3 – How is Celiac Disease, Gluten Sensitivity and Gluten Intolerance Diagnosed

The major issue with diagnosing whether you have Celiac Disease, Gluten Sensitivity or Gluten Intolerance is that the symptoms look a lot like those you would have if you suffered from other diseases. And because Gluten is included in such a wide variety of foods, it is easy to confuse these ailments with your body simply reacting negatively to a particular type of food. That is why I would never encourage anyone to try and diagnose themselves. Celiac Disease can prove fatal if left untreated and if the appropriate steps are not taken to alleviate its effects.

Although Gluten Sensitivity and Intolerance are not life-threatening conditions, ignoring the symptoms can cause harm to your body in the long run. Leave the testing to the professionals. Think about how dangerous it would be if you ‘under diagnosed’ yourself as being Gluten Intolerant when you actually have Celiac Disease. Despite the fact that you will be leaving the final diagnosis to the professionals, it still wouldn’t hurt to learn more about the process.

Diagnosing Celiac Disease

A blood test is often used to confirm whether your symptoms are as a result of Celiac Disease. Remember that Celiac Disease results when your body confuses the protein in Gluten known as Gliadin as a dangerous substance and attacks it. Your Immune system is designed to produce a protein known as an antibody in order to fight off any organism your body suspects to be dangerous. This is also the case when you suffer from Celiac Disease. Your body will produce specific antibodies in order to defend itself against Gluten. Blood tests are thus performed to test if your body is producing the antibodies that are specific to fighting Gluten. Doctors often test for high levels of the antibody known as Immunoglobulin A (IgA) anti-tissue transglutaminase.

Diagnosing Gluten Sensitivity or Gluten Intolerance

One of the easiest ways for doctors to determine if you suffer from Gluten Sensitivity or Gluten Intolerance is to ask you to eliminate Gluten from your diet for a period of about 30 days. If your symptoms disappear or become less significant during the time you avoid Gluten, and these symptoms reappear when you reintroduce Gluten to your diet, then it is obvious that your body is reacting negatively to gluten. A blood test can also be used to determine if you suffer from either one of these conditions.

Deficiencies of the Medical System

Gluten was not a very big deal ten years ago. Doctors are far more concerned about improving their technique for diagnosing Cancer and Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Far less time is devoted to researching negative responses to consuming Gluten. As a result, even well-meaning doctors simply confuse the symptoms of Celiac or Gluten intolerance with something else. Testing for Celiac is probably going to be one of the last things your Doctor will recommend. Additionally, there has been a notable amount of cases of Doctors under diagnosing their patients' symptoms. Chapter 4 of this book will explain how you can help your Doctor to accurately diagnose your symptoms.

Chapter 4 – How to Help Your Doctor Make a Diagnosis

As highlighted in the previous chapter, your Doctor is not perfect. I am not encouraging you to discredit any medical professional who has extensive training and years of experience. I am, however, encouraging you to give them a hand. About 10% to 15% of all diagnoses are incorrect. And despite the best efforts of our hard working Doctors, this is also true of cases which involve a negative reaction to Gluten. Thankfully, there is a lot you can do to help your Doctor make the best diagnosis.

Here are my suggestions:

Keep a Food Diary

By now, it should be somewhat obvious that your symptoms are related to your diet. This is almost always the case when your symptoms are related to your gastrointestinal system. Keeping a food diary requires that you keep track of the foods you eat and how often you eat them. In an effort to be as accurate as possible, I would also encourage you to record the quantity in which you consume these foods. This kind of information will give your Doctor a clear idea of the type of food which may or may not be causing your symptoms. I would encourage you to do this for about two weeks before your appointment. This will save you a lot

of time because most Doctors often recommend that you keep an accurate food diary before they make a diagnosis.

Document Your Symptoms

Your Doctor might be empathetic, but they certainly cannot literally feel your pain. They will not be able to make an accurate diagnosis if they cannot isolate your symptoms. That is why you need to help them understand what you are feeling. Documenting your symptoms will be an invaluable gift to your Doctor because it will help him or her rule out a number of unrelated ailments in a matter of minutes. Prepare a list with all your symptoms and the frequency of their occurrence. It would also be good to include whether these symptoms occur at a specific time such as when you engage in some form of physical activity.

Be as specific as possible. For example, please do not tell your Doctor that your stomach hurts. Where hurts? Is it your lower abdomen? Is it a sharp pain? How long does the pain last? When was the last time you felt this pain? Anticipate the kind of questions your Doctor will need to ask and document the answers to the questions as precisely as possible. Volunteering this kind of information will save both you and your Doctor a lot of time.

Sometimes it is when we mention one specific symptom or series of symptoms that helps the Doctor piece together the puzzle of your illness. And isn't it true that we sometimes forget to mention some of our symptoms to our Doctors? This will ensure you say

all that you need to say without having to spend all day with your Doctor.

Inform your Doctor of Other Medical Conditions

If you suffer from other illnesses, you could have symptoms that may lead your Doctor to make an incorrect diagnosis. Giving him or her, the clearest understanding of your current medical status is the best way to help him or her to make the best diagnosis. You will also help your Doctor not to waste time exploring treatments for a condition for which you have already received medication. Giving your Doctor a list of your current medication is also a good idea. That will ensure that your Doctor does not prescribe something that will react negatively with your current medication. Your Doctor may thus need to adjust your current medication in order to treat whatever new condition he has identified. Your Doctor may also need to recommend some adjustments to your diet if Gluten is, in fact, affecting you negatively. He or she will need to have a clear picture of how adjusting your diet will affect how your body reacts to your current medication and make the best recommendation.

Inform your Doctor of your Family's Medical History

Your family's medical history serves as a map to your own medical status. You are quite likely to suffer from ailments that are common among your relatives. This is especially true in the case of your parents who have the strongest influence on your health. Don't be afraid to ask them. Our relatives, especially the males,

may like to appear strong in our eyes but learning about their illnesses can save yours.

Be on Time for your Appointment

Although this is slightly unrelated, I think it needs to be said that we are often not too considerate of our Doctor's time. Showing up for an appointment late will put your Doctor in a very awkward position. They will either have to force you to wait or infringe on the time of another patient. Either way, this is a very inconsiderate act and I strongly denounce such behavior. We are all very busy people. But deliberately wasting the time of the people responsible for saving lives is quite reprehensible. If you must be late because of some unavoidable catastrophe, I strongly encourage you call the Doctor's office and inform them as early as possible. This will allow them enough time to carefully rearrange their schedule in order to accommodate other patients who may be waiting. The Doctor may even be able to use this time to take a well needed and certainly, a well deserved break.

Be patient

Waiting for a diagnosis may seem to take forever. Some have even described it as the longest wait of their lives. The minutes, hours or even days that may pass by may be agonizing, but please be patient. Pestering your Doctor for a decision will get you nowhere. Some things, like the queue of blood samples waiting to be tested at the lab, are simply out of your Doctor's

control. Allow them the time and peace of mind needed to arrive at the most accurate conclusion.

Thus far, we have explored what Gluten is, how it negatively affects some individuals and even how to identify if it is harming you. Next, we will turn our attention to the benefits of sticking to a Gluten Free diet.

Chapter 5 – What are the Benefits of Living Gluten Free?

It goes without saying that eating a Gluten Free diet will be highly beneficial to those of us who suffer from the Gluten related illnesses mentioned in the previous chapters. For some, this might be as simple as avoiding those itchy bumps and stomach pain or as serious as saving your life. Whatever the case may be, the benefits will speak for themselves. But eating Gluten free goes far beyond helping us avoid whatever symptoms we may have when we consume Gluten. Let us examine these benefits from a different perspective.

Firstly, cutting Gluten from your diet will force you to pay very careful attention to the foods you have been eating. Once someone decides to avoid Gluten at all costs, they will need to start reading labels and asking pertinent questions. As mentioned in chapter 1, it is easy to identify the foods which obviously contain Gluten, such as bread, but how will you know if your dried fruits have been dusted with an ingredient that contains wheat in order to improve the flavor? Do you think Restaurant Owners and Supermarket Attendants will rush to your side when they think you are about to purchase or consume something that contains Gluten? Do you think they want you to stop buying their products?

Of course not! Your very life is in danger, so you need to step up and take all the necessary precautions.

Once you begin to scrutinize the labels of the foods we eat a little more diligently, you will begin to see how terrible some of the ingredients in our foods are. Some foods contain harmful preservatives, artificial flavors and chemicals you would rather not consume. You will be shocked to see that Gluten is not the only enemy in your food. These harmful additives are often carcinogenic or can cause serious harm to our bodies over time. These shocking discoveries will push you to seek out organic alternatives and therein lays another benefit of the Gluten free diet.

The best option for this type of diet is to avoid overly processed foods. Most bread and pastas, for example, are made with bleached wheat and other dangerous substances. Many of the Gluten Free alternatives will be made from other, more wholesome whole grains that have been processed just enough for the food to be enjoyable but not too much so that they have preserved as much of the nutrients in the food as possible. Overly processed foods are also notorious for containing unhealthy oils as well. Thus, a Gluten Free diet, when given careful thought, will help you to also avoid the host of illnesses associated with eating too much overly processed carbohydrates and oils.

Many who have decided to stick to a Gluten free diet have found themselves eating far more fresh fruits and vegetables than they would have consumed had they not been on this special diet. A diet rich in a medley of natural foods is always one that comes highly recommended. Consuming more fruits and vegetables will help to strengthen your immune system and give you an incredible amount of energy to face each day. Consuming a diet this wholesome will also help you maintain a healthy body weight if you also take the time to get regular exercise and sufficient rest.

People who are new to a particular diet, often complain that they face the most temptation and the most challenges when they decide to eat out. Often times, the Waiter is too busy or uninformed to explain whether your meal will contain Gluten. Additionally, cross-contamination is a very strong possibility in these situations and can pose a serious risk especially to those with Celiac disease. These issues become even more problematic when you are eating in a group. You do not want to feel like the odd one out and you certainly do not want to piss off the Waiter that will be serving your food. As a result of these challenges, many Gluten Free enthusiasts have made the decision to eat out less. Eating at home more often will give these individuals full control over what they eat. You now have the option to make delicious meals that will have no annoying side effects. I am not encouraging you to be antisocial, I am simply explaining what has worked for others who are in our shoes. Plus, eating home cooked meals will be quite beneficial.

Benefits of eating at home:

- Saves Money
- Puts you in control of the portion sizes of your food
- Excellent opportunities for family bonding while the food is being prepared and consumed
- You can rest assured that your food is prepared in a sterile environment

There is also some groundbreaking researching that is currently taking place which highlights that there is a correlation between Autism and eating Gluten Free. Studies have shown that eating Gluten Free has alleviated the symptoms of Autism for some children. There is still a lot of conflicting reviews about the findings of research of this nature. It is however quite noteworthy, that many children's hospitals have reported seeing an improvement in the behavior and social skills of children with Autism who have been switched to a Gluten Free diet.

There is no doubt in my mind that eating Gluten Free is a great idea if you suffer from any Gluten related ailment. Hopefully, you too will be convinced that this is a good idea for yourself as well. Please however pay careful attention to the warning in the next chapter of this book because, as with any decision, there are also disadvantages to cutting Gluten from your diet as well.

Chapter 6 – Dangers of Eating Gluten Free

One of the major issues with embarking on the journey of a Gluten Free diet is that many who embark on this journey simply do not understand what they are getting into. They simply dive head first into this decision, thinking it is just another weight loss diet fad or another healthy diet option. While the benefits of this diet are obvious, you need to carefully assess whether this is right for you. Even if you suffer from a professionally diagnosed Gluten related illness, careful forethought should be given to your next moves.

Two of the dangers associated with not carefully planning your Gluten Free regime that are often highlighted are:

1. Missing Out on Essential Nutrients
2. Consuming Unhealthy Gluten Free foods

Individuals who have decided to join the Gluten free regime for whatever reason without carefully considering their options, often end up missing out on key nutrients. Despite whatever medical ailments or aspirations you may have about your ideal body, good health should always be our main focus. It is impossible to remain

healthy without a balanced diet. An individual is said to have a balanced diet when they take the time to consume the recommended amount of the essential nutrients our bodies need daily. Consuming too much or too little of any one nutrient will not serve to your advantage in the long run, even if you achieve the goal of losing some excess weight.

The risk of ending up being deficient in certain nutrients becomes very real to those who stick to a Gluten free diet because they have significantly reduced their options. Gluten is included in such a wide variety of foods that eliminating it from your diet will require drastic changes. Many of those who endeavor to avoid Gluten are very busy people and have many conflicting responsibilities. This fast-paced world demands quite a lot of our time and we often have to sacrifice sleep just to get everything done. Eating a balanced diet was already very difficult and now you have decided to further complicate your routine by deciding to live Gluten free.

The result of this combination of having too much to do and not many options will result in one of three things. The individual may end up eating a lot of 'Gluten free fast foods.' They may also end up simply eating the same things over and over again. They may also end up just quitting altogether. If you embarked on this journey because you suffer from Celiac disease or another Gluten related ailment, quitting is just not an option. You have to find a

way to make this diet work for the sake of your health and sometimes even your very life.

Unfortunately, the other options that I mentioned weren't such good ideas either. Eating the same things over and over again will mean that you are consuming the same nutrients all the time. This kind of monotony will make sticking to this diet very difficult because you simply will not enjoy eating the same thing so often. Eating the same foods all the time may not sound like such a bad thing, but just think about the nutrients that are missing from the foods you consume. Sometimes it is that one nutrient that is lacking from our diet that makes the difference in your health. For example, many of the Gluten free substitutes for bread often use alternatives to wheat which contain far less dietary fiber. Dietary supplements might help to alleviate the effects of those kinds of eating habits but this is never the most recommended option. It will take some amount of planning on your part to get the right mix of nutrients.

Another major challenge many individuals face as a result of deciding to live Gluten free is that they become confused about the kinds of foods that are actually beneficial to their health. Because this movement is gaining momentum, sneaky Marketing executives have been labeling everything Gluten free. I have even seen Gluten Free labels on bottles of water. You read correctly. They are trying to sell Gluten free water! As hilarious as that might

sound, this is a serious problem. Sending such a deceiving message can only serve to the disadvantage of the consumers.

To make matters worse, a lot of the foods which are being sold as Gluten free are actually very bad for your health. In order to make these foods more palatable, the producers often include a lot of fat or sugar. A lot of these Gluten free foods are often over processed as well. That is why I cannot stress enough how important it is for you to read the labels of everything you eat. Check the caloric, fat and sugar content of each item. Do not make the mistake of assuming these items are good for your health simply because they are labeled 'Gluten free.' As highlighted in a previous chapter, you have to look out for your own best interest. These sneaky suppliers often do not have your best interest at heart.

This information is in no way designed to scare you. But your health is a very serious matter. If you are not careful, your very life could be at stake. You can never be too careful with what you put into your body. Take the utmost precaution with anything you intend to eat, no matter how nutritious it might appear to be. Take the time to do some research on anything new or that might appear questionable. When in doubt, stick to natural alternatives. You can never go wrong with fresh fruits, ground provisions and vegetables. But it can be very difficult to figure out how to enjoy eating natural foods. That is why the final chapter will provide you with a few simple recipes to help you get started.

Chapter 7 – How to Enjoy Eating Gluten Free

Eating a Gluten free diet does not have to be boring. As previously highlighted, sticking to any diet will become more cumbersome if you force yourself to eat the same things over and over again. This will not motivate you to stick to your diet. And the moment you see anything that even slightly resembles a challenge, you will give up. Unfortunately, giving up is not an option if you have Celiac Disease, Gluten sensitivity or Gluten Intolerance. Your health and your life are in danger and you need to keep on going.

Here are my suggestions to keep yourself motivated to stick to this diet:

1. Mix it Up!

This is the number one step to enjoying your Gluten free journey. Don't be afraid to try new things. If you are in doubt, read the label or do some research online. Once you are certain it does not contain any Gluten, dig in! Incorporate it into meals you already enjoy. Mixing it up will also require that you try new recipes as well. Your meals should be like a work of art. This does not mean they have to be elaborate, they simply need to be appealing to the eyes. Incorporate a variety of different colors, flavors and textures. Don't be

alarmed if you fail a few times before you get it right. This is all part of the adventure.

2. Don't Cut the Carbs!

This might seem like a logical step to include in any diet. That is however when you are making the mistake of assuming that eating Gluten free is just like any other diet. Always remember that your aim is simply to avoid foods with Gluten. Carbs are not the enemy. Once you have done your research to determine that the food is safe, dig in and pig out.

3. Treat Yourself

Further to my suggestion that you 'dig in,' I also strongly recommend that you treat yourself and pig out every now and then. This is another way to avoid making this diet feel boring or burdensome. Gluten free treats are quite easy to find and are just as enjoyable. Now that your options are a little bit more limited, you might also want to consider various fruits and nuts as a treat. Dried fruits and yogurt treats, for example, are simply divine and there are a lot more options to choose from. You might even include options like these as regular snacks between meals.

4. Don't Starve Yourself!

This new diet will not require that you eat fewer calories per day. Please do not starve yourself. You might even find

yourself consuming a little more. Some Gluten free alternatives, especially those made from natural ingredients, often contain a lot fewer calories that we are used to. The result is that we will need to eat a little more of these types of food in order to be satisfied. Once again, there is no shame in that once you have done the necessary research to determine that this food is safe.

5. Don't be Shy!

There is no need to be shy about eating Gluten free. Speak up and tell your friends, family members and even the Waiter serving you that you have chosen this diet and explain the seriousness of your decision. Once they understand the gravity of the situation, they too will become quite vigilant and help you monitor the foods you eat as well. They will have your back and serve as an extra pair of eyes too.

Remember, two heads are better than one. And trust me, it is always better to just speak the truth than to try and hide your illness or your decision. You will appear pretty strange when you start avoiding the foods you once loved. Your friends might even become a little worried and assume you are one of those dangerous crash diets. Calmly explaining the logic behind your choice will gain their trust and support.

What you should take away from this chapter is that living Gluten free can be fun and exciting. Think of it as a challenging new food journey. You will be boldly stepping

outside your comfort zone and exploring uncharted territory. Some have even described dieting as a way of feeling more in control of their lives and are excited to have developed such amazing self-discipline. Why should this be any different? Developing the discipline needed to cut Gluten from your diet can give you the inner strength needed to take charge of your life in other ways too. Whatever the case may be, enjoy the ride. The next chapter will help you to learn a little more about the foods you can eat.

Chapter 8 – So... What Can You Eat

Do not make the mistake of assuming that once you switch to a Gluten free diet your life is over. Even if you are a foodie, you can still enjoy a wide variety of delicious and of course, nutritious meals as well. All you need to do is change your perspective. Instead of looking around and imagining roadblocks, look at all the new possibilities. This is an opportunity for you to learn to become more selective and more creative with your food. First, take a careful look at all the things that you can eat with full assurance that they are Gluten free:

- Unprocessed Beans
- Unprocessed Seeds (eg. chia, flax and pumpkin seeds)
- Vegetables
- Raw nuts
- Eggs
- Most dairy products
- Meat
- Fish
- Poultry
- Fruits
- gluten-free flours (these can be made from potato, beans, rice, soy or corn)

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- Hominy corn
- Quinoa
- Tapioca
- Millet
- Potatoes
- Olive oil
- Coconut oil
- Ghee
- Sorghum
- Rice
- Soy
- Teff
- Cider
- Wine
- Sherry
- Port

Alternatives to Bread products:

- Millet chia bread
- Brown Rice Bread
- Bhutanese Red Rice Bread
- Ciabatta bread

Alternatives to Pasta:

- Quinoa Pasta
- Corn Spaghetti

- Spaghetti al Riso
- Rice-flour penne

Despite the fact that these foods are naturally Gluten free, you still need to be cautious. This is especially so if you have not prepared the food yourself. You still need to pay attention how much calories you consume and how much sugar and fat you are eating. Please remember that not everything that is labeled Gluten free is actually good for you. Avoid any meat, fish or poultry that has been marinated, coated, breaded or battered. You can never be too sure what they included in that mixture. It would also be a good idea to steer clear from legumes and nuts that have been processed or read the labels carefully before you consume them. You can never be too certain what was used to enhance the flavor.

Thankfully, eating out is still an option. Because of all the attention the Gluten free diet is getting, several Gluten free restaurants have been popping up. Do a quick Google search to try and identify if there are any in or near your community. You could even consider starting a business of your own as well. Gluten free dining or even Gluten free support groups are sure to attract people to your establishment.

Your Gluten free diet will affect every area of your life. Please try to remember that some medication will also contain Gluten as well. If you are visiting a new Doctor, be sure to explain that you

have cut Gluten from your diet and the reasons for doing so. It also goes without saying that you will need to read the labels on your over the counter drugs very carefully as well.

Chapter 9 – Simple Gluten Free Meal Options

Start yourself off with a simple 7-day meal plan. There is no need to try and figure it all out at once. You have time. Think about the foods you already enjoy, identify all the possible sources of Gluten and try to eliminate them. Start simple and then progress from there.

How about this:

Monday

Breakfast: Hash browns and scrambled eggs

Lunch: Creamy potato salad with cashews

Dinner: Garlic and ginger aubergine steak and sweet potato wedges

Tuesday

GLUTEN FREE DIET BASICS

Breakfast: Banana nut Gluten free pancakes with mixed berry topping and agave syrup

Lunch: Gluten free bacon burger

Dinner: Meatballs and butter bean stew

Wednesday

Breakfast: Berry breakfast smoothie with fruits of your choice

Lunch: Chopped BLT salad

Dinner: Gluten free chicken pot pie

Thursday

Breakfast: Breakfast hash with sweet potatoes, ham and eggs

Lunch: Gluten free quinoa burger

Dinner: Grilled salmon with cilantro rice

Friday

Breakfast: Acai bowl with banana berry topping

Lunch: Gluten free fish tacos topped with avocado and Mexican cheese

Dinner: Gluten free chicken and dumplings

Saturday

Breakfast: Potato and broccoli frittata

Lunch: Cheesy chicken chili

Dinner: Garlic chicken with rice noodles

Sunday

Breakfast: Roasted potato wedges with tuna and caramelized onions

Lunch: Turkey burger made with zucchini buns

Dinner: Shrimp burrito bowl

Everything I have just listed is Gluten free. These recipes include things we already make at home. All you need to do is take some time to research the Gluten free alternatives to the bread and pastas we are accustomed to. Once again, the key is to keep it fun and just keep going. Eating a Gluten free diet really does not

have to be complicated. The best part is that making a meal without Gluten does not always have to consume a lot of your precious time. All you need to do is plan ahead and get a little of the prepping done in advance. Vegetables can be cut up and refrigerated for the week. You could even reserve your day off for meal prepping and simply reheat your meals as the week goes on. There is no need to disrupt your routine. Find what works for you and stick to it!

Conclusion

My intention was to give you the most realistic view of the Gluten free diet. Hopefully, you should be able to determine if the Gluten free diet is right for you or not. What I hope you have taken away from this book is that if you do not have a diagnosed Gluten related ailment, this may not be the best diet for you. If you are trying to lose weight, there are many other alternatives which include reducing your caloric intake and getting more exercise. But if you do decide to continue on this journey, please remember to be cautious.

If you suffer from Celiac disease, Gluten Intolerance or Gluten Sensitivity, I hope you found my suggestions helpful. Although the benefits of this diet are obvious, I know that you face many challenges. But there is no shame in asking for help. Get your family and friends involved. The support of your loved ones will give you the stamina you will need to keep going. You could even join a support group. While it is good to have your loved ones cheering you on, it would be even better to seek out people who understand what you are going through. You could get together in person or even on social media and share recipes and experiences.

Whether you have Celiac disease or not you have to keep on going. Your health is a very serious matter and you should not

take these illnesses lightly. I do not mean to scare you, but some of the symptoms associated with these illnesses can prove fatal. Remember that the first step to recovery is getting your symptoms checked out by a medical professional. It is always best to know just how serious your condition is. There are some situations where simply adjusting your diet will not be enough. You may also need other medication as well. Take the recommendations in chapter 4 very seriously because these suggestions could make the difference in whether your doctor makes the right diagnosis or not.

In conclusion, please do not ever feel ashamed because of your diagnosis. Please do not be fooled by all the crap these dishonest people have labeled Gluten free. And finally, please enjoy this new journey no matter what challenges go your way.