



# Gluten-Free Starter Guide

Your family's roadmap to eating well, feeling great, and living gluten-free with confidence

**Branded Edition • Let's Go Gluten Free • Est. 2025**

Label-reading basics

Kitchen safety

Quick swaps

Eating out

Meal planning



## Welcome

Hey there, friend — I'm Katie, and I'm so glad you're here. If you or someone in your family is new to eating gluten-free, take a deep breath — you've got this! The beginning can feel overwhelming, but with a few smart steps, you'll be shopping, cooking, and eating with confidence in no time. This guide will walk you through what gluten is, how to avoid it, and how to make your kitchen and daily meals truly gluten-free — without losing your sanity (or your favorite foods).

**Quick-start:** Skim the chips on the cover for what's inside, then use the checklists and swaps as you go. Save the Resources section for later reference.



## What Is Gluten and Why It Matters

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, barley, and rye. It helps dough stretch and gives bread that chewy texture. For people with celiac disease, gluten sensitivity, or wheat allergy, gluten can trigger inflammation, digestive issues, fatigue, and more. Simply put: removing gluten helps your body heal and function better.

**Tip:** Gluten hides in unexpected places — sauces, soups, candies, even supplements. Always double-check labels.



## Gluten-Free Food List & Hidden Sources

### Build meals around these staples

- Fruits and vegetables
- Meat, poultry, and fish (unbreaded)
- Eggs
- Beans and lentils
- Rice, quinoa, corn, buckwheat, millet, and potatoes
- Nuts and seeds

### Common hidden sources

- Malt, malt extract, malt flavoring
- Modified food starch (unless labeled gluten-free)
- Soy sauce (use tamari instead)
- Seasoning blends and gravies
- “Natural flavorings” (unclear sources)

### Quick swaps:

- Regular soy sauce → Tamari
- Wheat pasta → Brown rice or chickpea pasta
- Breadcrumbs → Crushed gluten-free crackers or oats



## Setting Up a Gluten-Free Kitchen

Your kitchen is the heart of your gluten-free lifestyle. Keeping it safe is easier than you might think.

### Essentials

- Separate cutting boards & utensils
- Dedicated toaster & strainer

### Hygiene

- Wipe counters before cooking
- Color-code GF containers/tools

### Avoid

- Shared nut butters & butter sticks
- Unlabeled pantry bins



## Smart Grocery Shopping

- Stick to the perimeter — produce, meat, dairy, whole foods.
- Check labels every time — brands change ingredients.
- Look for Certified Gluten-Free/GFCO/crossed-grain symbols.
- Compare prices — store brands often have GF options.

Choose naturally gluten-free foods over processed ones. They're typically healthier and cheaper.



## Eating Out Safely

### Before you go

- Check the GF menu online
- Call to ask about cross-contamination
- Speak with your server clearly

### Order wisely

- Avoid fried foods (shared oil)
- Simple grilled meats, salads (no croutons), rice, steamed veggies



## Gluten-Free Meal Planning Basics

Meal planning makes gluten-free life so much easier, especially for families. Start simple and plan ahead.

### Breakfast

- Scrambled eggs, fruit, gluten-free toast

### Lunch

- Turkey lettuce wraps, rice crackers, apple slices

### Dinner

- Baked chicken, roasted veggies, quinoa

**Batch & Freeze:** Double up on rice, soups, casseroles — freeze for busy nights.

Resource: [letsgoglutenfree.com/recipes](https://letsgoglutenfree.com/recipes)



## Overcoming Common Challenges

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### Mindset

- **Feeling restricted:** Focus on what you can have.
- **Social events:** Bring a GF dish to share.

### Safety

- **Cross-contamination:** Educate family on prep rules.

**Pro move:** Keep a few trusted GF snacks in your bag.



## Helpful Resources & Tools

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- Gluten-Free Recipe Generator – <https://www.letsoglutentfree.com/recipes/>
- Gluten-Free Checker – <https://www.letsoglutentfree.com/is-it-gluten-free/>
- [Celiac.org](http://Celiac.org) – Verified medical information.
- [Gluten Intolerance Group](#) – Education and certification standards.

*“Progress over perfection. Each label you read and each safe meal you cook is a win.”*



## Closing Encouragement

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Transitioning your family to a gluten-free lifestyle is a big change — but it's also an opportunity. You'll discover new foods, better energy, and a deeper awareness of what fuels your body. Remember, it doesn't have to be perfect. Progress is the goal.

Each small step — reading labels, cooking a safe meal, finding a new favorite snack — is a win. You've got this.

— Katie Wilson, [LetsGoGlutenFree.com](http://LetsGoGlutenFree.com)