

Gluten-Free Kitchen Checklist

Your step-by-step guide to a safe, organized gluten-free kitchen, including one you share with gluten. Print it and check off each item as you go. Updated September 2026.

The one rule not to bend: fresh water for gluten-free pasta

In controlled testing, every sample of gluten-free pasta cooked in water already used for wheat pasta went over the 20 ppm gluten-free limit (12 of 12). Washed utensils and a shared toaster tested far lower. Start the gluten-free pot with fresh water, every time.

Step 1: Declutter & Deep Clean

- ☐ Empty your pantry, fridge, and cabinets completely
- ☐ Toss all expired foods and open grain products
- ☐ Check sauces, seasonings, and condiments for hidden gluten
- ☐ Wipe down shelves, drawers, and counters with vinegar or a gluten-free cleaner
- ☐ Clean or replace sponges, towels, and scrub brushes
- ☐ Deep-clean appliances (toaster, blender, mixer, air fryer, etc.)

Where crumbs collect: toaster trays, silverware drawers, stand mixers, cutting boards.

Step 2: Sort Your Tools — Dedicate, Wash, or Retire

- ☐ Give gluten-free food its own cutting board, color-coded, and replace it once it's deeply scored — boards were never tested, and knife scores are hard to clean
- ☐ Wash wooden spoons and colanders well between wheat and gluten-free food — in testing, washed ones stayed under the limit; retire any with deep cracks
- ☐ Keep a clean ladle for the gluten-free pot — the serving ladle carried the most wheat DNA in testing
- ☐ Retire flaking non-stick pans and deeply scratched plastic from gluten-free cooking — untested, but you can't tell by looking whether they're clean
- ☐ Optional: a dedicated gluten-free toaster for peace of mind — a shared toaster tested far lower than its reputation, but a second one ends the guesswork
- ☐ Label gluten-free tools with colored tape or stickers
- ☐ Use color-coded bins or drawer organizers for gluten-free items

Step 3: Organize Your Gluten-Free Space

- ☐ Create a dedicated gluten-free prep area on the counter
- ☐ Store gluten-free foods above gluten-containing items
- ☐ Use clear, airtight containers for flours, cereals, and snacks
- ☐ Label all containers clearly ('GF Flour Blend', 'GF Pasta', etc.)
- ☐ Set up a gluten-free snack bin for kids or guests
- ☐ Keep separate sponges and cloths for gluten-free cleaning only

Step 4: Stock Up on Gluten-Free Essentials

Category	Gluten-Free Options
Flours	Almond, coconut, oat (certified GF), or GF all-purpose blends
Breads	Canyon Bakehouse, Udi's, Simple Kneads
Pasta	Brown rice, lentil, or chickpea pasta
Sauces	Tamari, coconut aminos, Primal Kitchen marinades
Snacks	Siete chips, Simple Mills crackers, KIND bars
Baking Mixes	Pamela's, King Arthur GF, Cup4Cup

Check the label on every flavor you buy — recipes change, and not every product in a line is gluten-free.

Step 5: Prevent Cross-Contamination

- ☐ Cook gluten-free pasta in fresh water — never water used for wheat pasta
- ☐ Always wash hands before handling gluten-free foods
- ☐ Use separate jars or squeeze bottles for condiments
- ☐ Wash knives and spoons between wheat and gluten-free food — in testing, an unwashed knife pushed 2 of 30 samples over the limit; a washed one, none
- ☐ Never share fryer oil with breaded or battered foods
- ☐ Clean cutting boards and counters thoroughly after use
- ☐ Keep gluten-free utensils in their own drawer or container
- ☐ Replace or wash dishcloths daily

Step 6: Family & Guest Communication

- ☐ Post 'Gluten-Free Rules' in your kitchen — fresh pasta water goes at the top
- ☐ Teach kids and guests which tools and shelves are gluten-free
- ☐ Use friendly reminders like 'GF Zone' labels
- ☐ Encourage handwashing before cooking or serving food

You're Done!

Take a step back and admire your clean, organized, gluten-free kitchen. Every checkmark brings you closer to peace of mind — and meals you can truly enjoy.

Pro Tip: Save this checklist digitally or laminate it for your fridge. For the research behind these steps, see letsgoglutenfree.com/blog/can-you-get-cross-contamination-from-shared-utensils/.

Sources: Weisbrod VM et al., *Gastroenterology* 2020;158(1):273–275. Studerus D et al., *J Food Prot* 2018;81(10):1679–1684. Both are small studies that measured gluten in food, not reactions in people; sensitivity varies. This checklist is general guidance, not medical advice — talk to your doctor or dietitian, especially if you're newly diagnosed or still having symptoms.