

Keep Your Holiday Guests Allergen Free!



The season of sharing food and spirits with friends and family is upon us. However, for many guests who need to be aware of potential allergens in their food this can be a time of discomfort. Having to decline offers to events or suffer the embarrassment of turning away food during a meal can make one uncomfortable. When extending invitations to celebrate the holiday season, consider asking if there are any dietary restrictions required for your guests. Some allergens to consider are dairy, gluten, nuts, soy, fish and shellfish, with the more common being gluten, soy and dairy.

While it may seem a bit daunting to shop and cook for dietary considerations, know that there are solutions for you that will make your guests comfortable during their visit. Gluten sensitivity is the more common concern you will be advised of by most guests. Fortunately, there are many tasty, healthy alternatives to choose from when planning your recipes.

For baking, choose from flours such as rice flour, mild flavored white rice flour for white cake recipes and brown rice flour when you want a rich, nutty flavor. To avoid a grainy feel you may want to mix rice flour with a different flour such as a small amount of quinoa flour or chickpea flour.



It is important to be aware of all potential gluten exposed foods including gravies and even turkeys. To those who don't regularly shop for gluten free foods, it can be an eye opening experience to find foods without gluten. Your best bet is to stick with whole foods and avoid packaged meals as much as possible. If you decide that purchasing packaged products is your best or only option, be sure to look for labels and certifications of gluten free.

Soy is another pervasive item used in many processed foods and shopping for soy free can be just as daunting as shopping for gluten free. If you ask a soy-allergic person they will tell you that it seems as though the small legume is in just about everything you buy.

Typical packaged foods to scrutinize for soy are:

- Bread Crumbs
- Cereals
- Crackers
- Breaded Foods
- Imitation Dairy Foods
- Meat Products With Fillers Such As Burgers
- Prepared Ground Meat Products
- Sauces Such As Soy
- Shoyu
- Tamari
- Teriyaki
- Worcestershire
- Gravies
- Prepared Vegetarian Foods
- Baked Goods
- Baking Mixes
- Cooking Sprays
- Margarines and Vegetable Oils
- Soups and Pastas
- Frozen Desserts
- Spices And Seasonings

Can you see their predicament? Soy is in many of the foods we eat. Here again, the key to looking out for your soy free guest is to provide whole foods as much as possible and when you need to purchase processed food, become a label reader.

The dairy free guest will appreciate your offering of alternative cheeses and milks. You will also want to know if there is a soy allergen as many processed cheese and milk products are soy based.



The **'Follow Your Heart'** brand of cheese is vegan, dairy free, soy free, gluten free and non-GMO. This cheese is available in many popular flavors like provolone, mozzarella and cheddar. If you need cream cheese for a special dish, **'Tofutti's Better Than Cream Cheese'** makes

an alternate that taste like cream cheese but be aware that it is not soy free. Regarding milk substitutes, coconut



milks like **'So Delicious'** seems to be the best alternative as it is soy, gluten and dairy free. They also make great ice creams! If your guest is only dairy free you will have more choices. When shopping for milk substitutes be a label reader as many rice and nut milks also have soy.



Once you have your guest list, give yourself plenty of time to plan and shop so that cooking or baking something out of your routine is not stressful. The holidays should be fun for you and your guests. Those requesting alternative products will appreciate your care and concern in providing delicious and safe foods for them during their visit this season.

At PBW, we carry many of the products you need to satisfy the concerns of most of your allergy stricken guest. However, if you cannot find what you need let one of our staff know and we will try our best to order it for you. We recommend starting your planning and shopping as early as possible in the event ordering is necessary. Thank you for being one of our preferred customers and we look forward to seeing you soon.