

How to travel and vacation safely and confidently with Celiac

I am not the biggest traveler so this section is not going to be too detailed. But I have been to Mauritius and New Zealand since being diagnosed and done plenty of local vacations in my home country.

I am going to give you my top tips:

Flights:

When you book your flight, always **book your meals** for all flights, including return flights. You can request a gluten-free meal online. I do however, suggest you always take **carry-on snacks** with you for just in case.

Car Traveling

I always prepare **healthy meals and pack snacks** for the car. I find traveling long distance the hardest especially because convenience stores really aren't convenient for people with Celiac Disease. And nobody wants to live on packets of crisps and chocolates when traveling. It is one way to feel horrible and cue constipation.

Hotel accommodation

This is something you will have to do your **research** on. Search online and read reviews. Look at google maps, go to the websites and check their online menu's. Also phone hotels and ask them about gluten-free options and if they can safely cater for Celiacs. Remember it is more than gluten-free options. In this instance if you are staying in a place where you will eat at the hotel, make sure you can eat. All it takes is a bit of planning and research to book a place that will be safe.

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Self-Catering

I find self-catering to be the easiest when it comes to vacations. You can purchase your own food and bring from home. In the beginning this is the **safest option** until you get used to life with Celiac and can confidently navigate cross contamination and dining out.

Just be careful about using appliances like toasters, convection ovens. Clean everything thoroughly first, like microwaves, fridges, handles of cupboards etc. Bring your own wooden spoons, chopping board and strainer.

There is no problem using ceramic, glass or stainless steel cutlery, crockery and pots and pans.

Holidays in Foreign countries

These days you are unlikely to struggle with gluten-free options and a lot of places are very Celiac friendly.

Paris now boasts dedicated Celiac-safe restaurants. Apparently **Italy** has many places safe for those with Celiac. **New Zealand** is one of the BEST places to go on holiday with Celiac disease. Just about Every single place we stopped at were totally clued up about celiac disease, even having a **dedicated area in their kitchen** to cater for our needs. Just about every town I went to had gluten-free options (and they were delicious!) It was Celiac heaven. They take all allergies very seriously there.

In today's modern technological world, it is very easy to search online and prepare your trip before you go, down to the last detail, like where you will eat. **With online menu's** and being able to send an email or phone, you can easily find out information beforehand which is my biggest take away tip.

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Just do your **homework, plan and research** and you will be fine. I know not everyone likes to do this, but with Celiac Disease, you have to get used to planning ahead.

Fortunately for me, I love research and planning, so for me personally this part of adjusting was not hard, but for you, you may be a spontaneous person and this can be frustrating and annoying.

There are plenty of **social media pages and blogs** that give detailed reviews and tips on traveling with Celiac Disease for specific places, even restaurants to eat at. You can search for them on **pinterest and google**.

Another tool I use is **google maps**. I search "Celiac safe" or "gluten-free restaurants" and tap "search this area" on a particular location I am interested in. This always gives me good options. That way I can find the address, website and see the menu as well as read reviews to make my decision.

One of the most successful (food wise) trips I ever did was when I planned a 7 day road trip for a friend of mine that came from England to stay with me. I took her on a road trip to a part of my country that is stunning. I planned every single restaurant by searching online and booking for each evening. She was dairy intolerant and with me being Celiac, it was challenging, but I can tell you now, it **saved time, frustration, and stress** knowing it was all planned and that we could both eat safely at each place without having to go through the steps over and over again. Of course, I still informed the waiter at each occasion. I did not experience being glutened once because of my **diligent planning**.

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Another tip that really helps me when traveling is this: When you get to the town you are staying in, find a local store or supermarket and stock up on **gluten-free snacks**. Also purchase **fruit and yogurts**. You want to stay healthy and regular after all, so limit the processed stuff.

That is why I like self catering. It gives you much more control of your diet and just takes the worry and stress away about what food is safe and what is not, especially if you are visiting a place where English is not the main language.

Here is a breakdown of my top tips:

- Research, plan, book ahead
- Book your gluten-free meals for flights
- read reviews
- find blogs and social media pages of people who have celiac that have already done the research for you and have eaten safely at places to which you are going.
- take your own food with
- shop at the local store for gluten-free options
- Always take with your Dining out card
- be careful of cross contamination and remember to ask about it when dining out
- look at menu's and website online first
- call ahead always

Traveling with Celiac is doable and does not have to be stressful. Take with your supply of feel good items for in case you get glutened. I also don't recommend street food at any stage of your trip. It is just too risky. Have fun!