

Checklist To Cook A Safe Gluten Free Meal

These are the measures you need to take to cook a safe meal. It takes less than ten minutes to clean up the kitchen but advance planning and your understanding of cross contamination is key. I hope this list feels like going 'above and beyond' because that is what your friend wants to hear so they can happily accept the invitation.

- Before cooking wipe down all surfaces, including kitchen taps, with soapy water.
- Chose knives and other kitchen tools you'll need, wash them in soapy water. Set them on a clean towel and don't put them back in a knife block or drawer with breadcrumbs.
- Cutting boards are notorious for cracks where gluten may be hiding. Give your board a thorough scrubbing and check with your friend to decide if it is safe. Better yet, purchase a set of inexpensive, flexible cutting mats. Write GLUTEN FREE on them with a permanent marker.
- Toss all the dishcloths/towels in the laundry. Start with clean cloths.
- Use parchment paper or tin foil as needed.
- Prior to cooking a gluten free meal do not bake with wheat flour for 72 hours. When you add flour to an electric mixer it flies into the air and covers every surface within reach. Same when you toss pizza dough in the air. This just requires planning.
- Always open NEW. Whether you're using butter, mayonnaise or mustard the safest choice is to open a new container. Once you're aware of how cross contamination works you'll know if your condiments are safe.

Make A Phone Call

I guarantee your friend is wondering if you can prepare a safe gluten free meal. They're wondering how to politely ask about cross contact or how to gracefully decline your invitation. Support them by making a simple phone call days or weeks in advance. Don't send 14 texts in one day or email every other day asking questions about labels. Keep it simple & safe. (K.I.S.S.) Make the call so they aren't left wondering.

- Review your safety plan to prevent cross contamination. **Ask** about your cutting board. **Ask** if they would feel more comfortable if you did this step together. It's helpful for both of you to learn what's possible.
- Review the menu including prep details. **Ask** if they would prefer to cook together.
- Genuinely **ask**, "Is there anything else you think I should do to make our meal safe? I can wash pots and pans too, just help me get it right."

Offer Again

If you went through all these steps and your friend declined the dinner invitation don't take it personally. There are many reasons an invitation like this can seem scary. Keep learning, be supportive and keep offering to cook a simple gluten free meal. Eventually you can learn to cook anything you want and have fun in the kitchen!

At the end of a meal like this your celiac friend might say, "you didn't have to do all this work for me." Of course you didn't, but you did because you care and you should do it again. ♥