

Allergy and Celiac Diets With EASE

**Money and Time
Saving Solutions
for Food Allergy and
Gluten-Free Diets**

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Introduction to the Revised Edition

The original *Allergy and Celiac Diets With Ease* is about a year old at the time of this writing. I never expected to revise a book this soon because I normally lack enough new information for a revision to be important in less than several years.

The information available for this book has not changed much in the last year, but the circumstances we Americans find ourselves in have changed dramatically. Our financial crisis has deepened into a recession with the dreaded “D” word on everyone’s mind across the globe. As I have watched the changes and listened to people’s reactions to them, I realized that I’m old enough to know some things that keep me from being adversely affected by the changes as much as many younger people are.

Because my parents grew up during the Great Depression, I, as a child, was immersed in Great-Depression-born habits and ways of doing things. I have retained many of these habits and applied them to all areas of my life, including my special diet. These 75-year old ideas are “up to the minute” and exactly what we need now. I had them a year ago when I finished the first version of this book, but I did not include most of them because I did not realize readers would need them in the near future. Since these ideas are relevant now, this revision was written to share the wisdom of my forbears.

What's to Eat?

“What’s for dinner?” This perennial question becomes more difficult to answer when you or a family member must follow a diet that eliminates wheat, gluten, milk, yeast, corn, soy or other foods that are the basic ingredients of standard fare. When you combine the demands of a special diet with financial pressure and the hurried pace of modern life, making dinner (or breakfast, or lunch, or muffins that “fit” your diet) may seem nearly impossible at times.

This book will help you cook for your special diet as economically, quickly, and easily as possible but in ways different from other sources you may have consulted. If you look in other cookbooks for quick ways to make a meal, the advice you may find can sound like this:

A can of this,
A can of that,
A can of mushroom soup,
Some biscuit mix,
Some processed cheese,
And there’s your dinner, made with ease!

Can this really be a recipe for dinner or is it a recipe for fake food? Even though it is made at home, the component ingredients are so highly processed that you don’t get optimal nutrition. And of course this food usually does not conform to an allergy or celiac diet; a recipe like this is a serious threat to health for some of us. Real food is good for everyone’s health (even those who are not on special diets), tastes better, and is more economical. We just need to know how to cook it in limited time and purchase the ingredients we need with limited money.

So how can we economize and stay on our special diets without spending all day in the kitchen? First, accept the fact that you *will* be doing some cooking. Learn to enjoy the creativity of it rather than regretting the time spent. Then organize and simplify. Use money and time-saving practices, appliances, gadgets, and wholesome ingredients. (This book will introduce you to these helpers). Finally, use the right recipes. This book contains recipes for simple, wholesome foods, simply but flavorfully prepared. Skip recipes with dozens of ingredients. Skip the cream of mushroom soup and other highly processed foods. As you follow this book, you will find yourself saving money and enjoying simple wholesome foods while you enjoy improved health.

The How and Why of Your Diet

People who have been recently diagnosed with food allergies or celiac disease respond to the news of their condition in a number of ways. The most common reaction I hear is that of being overwhelmed by the complexity of the diet they are supposed to follow and the changes it will make in every day life. They ask the question, “*How* do I do this?” (This question will be answered in the next several chapters). Another reaction is relief that a cause for their poor health has been found and that the prognosis is not serious as long as they stay on the diet.

Some patients also ask, “*Why* do I have to be on this diet?” Learning the answer to this question will help motivate you to be diligent about staying on your diet and will get you going when it is time to cook. For both celiacs and those with food allergies, the most convincing way for you to answer this question for yourself is to stay on your diet diligently for a few weeks or months and see how you feel. The improved health you are likely to experience – sometimes after just a few days on the diet – is the most basic and important reason, and one that even children understand and find motivating.

Celiac disease is more well defined than food allergies, both in the diagnosis and understanding of the illness and in the uniformity of the diet. The medical definition of celiac disease is a genetic condition in which the patient has antibodies to gluten. These antibodies cause an immune response in the intestine when gluten is eaten, which results in damage to the intestinal villi. This damage leads to maldigestion, intestinal distress, and malabsorption of nutrients. Although blood tests are used to detect the presence of antibodies to the components of gluten, the first part of the gold standard test for celiac disease is having an intestinal biopsy which shows the characteristic damage to the intestine.

The malabsorption of nutrients caused by celiac disease can lead to other problems such as anemia, osteoporosis, fatigue, weakness, muscle cramps, neurological symptoms, and even some forms of cancer. (This list is included here because it will motivate you to stay on your diet!) The only treatment is lifelong strict avoidance of gluten. After the patient has avoided gluten for several months, the intestine heals and the effects of the disease are reversed. The reversal of symptoms is the second part of the gold standard criteria for the diagnosis of celiac disease. If improvement does not occur or is not complete, the possibility of intolerance to other foods such as milk may be considered.

The celiac diet is “simple” to the doctor who tells you to follow it – just avoid gluten. The more helpful doctor will elaborate by telling you to avoid wheat, rye, barley, and possibly oats. While not simple in practice, at least the celiac diet is

easily defined. This makes it possible for health food producers and supplement manufacturers to make products for the gluten-intolerant. The August 2007 issue of *Better Nutrition* reported that more than 2500 gluten-free products line the shelves of health food stores. Restaurants which cater to the gluten-intolerant are springing up in large cities as more and more people are being diagnosed with gluten intolerance. If a person with celiac disease has enough money to regularly purchase commercially prepared gluten-free foods (which is unlikely in these tough economic times), does not have or develop any other intolerances (such as to rice, the basic ingredient of most gluten-free food), and lives in a city large enough to support gluten-free restaurants, life can go on as before diagnosis with some relatively minor changes and modification. However, if your budget is restricted or you live in a small town, you will need to learn new ways of cooking and eating.

Food allergies pose a different situation. They are a poor cousin to celiac disease in terms of respect from the conventional medical community. In my opinion, this is because food allergy is a diverse problem which usually does not have a well-defined or easy solution. The immunological mediators of food allergies (often called sensitivities if they do not involve IgE antibodies) are diverse, the foods a person is likely to be intolerant of can be a long, complex list, and the conditions that may be caused by food allergies are many. Average doctors (who practice as though “for every ill there is a pill”) find this overwhelming so they often make light of food allergies. However, food allergies are just as real as celiac disease, and they also can result in malnutrition, anemia, osteoporosis, and other serious conditions. For more about the definition, diagnosis, treatment, and conditions that can be associated with food allergies, see *The Ultimate Food Allergy Cookbook and Survival Guide* as described on the last pages of this book.

Another question people recently diagnosed with food allergies often ask themselves is, “Why am I doing all this cooking?” Even if they can afford to purchase commercially prepared foods routinely, people with multiple food allergies usually must be able to do some cooking for themselves because there are not enough people with the same combination of food allergies to support a special segment of the health food industry as there is for celiacs. The more foods allergy patients are allergic to and the more complex their diets are, the more they will be unable to rely on commercial food producers and restaurants for their meals. Celiacs who do not want to spend over \$6 for a small loaf of bread also will benefit from cooking for themselves. In addition, some celiacs develop intolerance to rice, milk, or other foods. In these cases, they are faced with the same challenges as people with multiple food allergies. Finally, the wisest celiacs learn from the experiences of others and cook for themselves instead of relying solely on commercially prepared foods so that they can eat a variety of grains and grain alternatives rather than eating

rice-containing foods at every meal. Thus, they lessen their chances of developing sensitivity to rice and probably will be able to preserve their ability to eat out occasionally and eat commercially prepared foods when they are temporarily too busy to cook.

The best reason to cook for yourself is because that is the only way to have real control of your diet. As the restaurant dining tip sheet of the Gluten Intolerance Group of North America says, “The only person who really knows what went into a dish is the person who made it!” If you are the cook, and you are starting with known ingredients, then and only then can you know that you are totally safe.

Although the next chapter offers information on how to eat in a restaurant, it is never possible to be 100% certain that you are really getting what you asked for. I have had reactions after eating only *plain* buffalo and a *plain uncut* baked potato in a restaurant. This means that something was not plain! Most restaurants cater to normal customers and are staffed by healthy people who taste what they serve and possibly cannot believe that anyone would want meat as dry as some buffalo. I suspect that they shop around until they find “buffalo” that is more tender, and that they thus inadvertently purchase meat which has been larded with beef or pork fat. Or perhaps it is marinated or otherwise chemically tenderized without the knowledge of the staff member who assures you that it is plain.

In addition, if you find a restaurant that is special-diet-aware, you cannot relax your diligence. You must remind them every time of exactly what you need. A restaurant that is good today may not be good tomorrow. Staff turnover may occur, and the restaurant is only as good as its weakest employee.

A final important reason for everyone – even the healthy and wealthy – to cook for themselves most of the time is the prevention of illness. Usually the food borne illnesses acquired in restaurants are mild. However, some of the most allergic people I talk to developed food allergies after a bout with a parasitic disease. These people are often allergic to chemicals as well as foods, must live in isolation, and have little hope of ever recovering even partially. With global travel and immigration, you do not have to visit a Third World country to contract a parasite. The world and its parasites will come to you.

It is estimated that 80% of people with food allergies suffer from some degree of impairment of hydrochloric acid secretion by their stomach.* In addition to its role in the digestion of food, hydrochloric acid serves to nearly sterilize food before it enters the small intestine. Therefore, due to no or an inadequate level of hydrochloric acid, most people with food allergies have much less defense against parasites and other food borne illnesses than a healthy person.

*Braly, James, M.D. *Dr. Braly's Food Allergy and Nutrition Revolution*. Keats Publishing, New Haven, CT, 1992, page 73.

I do not eat anything in a restaurant that is not cooked just before serving and served piping hot because my food allergies were probably triggered by a parasitic infection. I never left the country, but I did eat in restaurants where I had no control over the hand-washing habits of the employees, some of whom were undoubtedly from parts of the world where the parasite I contracted is endemic and is carried by almost every member of the population without major ill effects.

Restaurant employees are not the only possible contributors to food borne infections. If you eat at a salad bar, you have no control over what other diners might have put into the salad fixings before you got there. Recent scares with *E. coli* on pre-washed table-ready fresh vegetables implicated a very reputable organic farming corporation. You cannot be too safe with your food. At our house produce which will be eaten raw is decontaminated by soaking in a sink full of water plus Nutribiotic™ (See “Sources,” page 209). For more on eating out safely see the next chapter of this book. For more about safe food handling practices at home, see pages 215 to 218.

In addition to microbial food safety, ingredient control, and strict kitchen food separation habits to eliminate gluten or allergen contamination of foods, there are other food health issues which are beyond the scope of this book. They include pesticides on food and genetically engineering of foods which may introduce a gene from a food to which you are allergic into a food that appears to be one of your safe foods. (For more information about this, see *Chemical-Free Kids: The Organic Sequel* which is listed in “References,” page 221). The best way to control exposure to these factors is to shop carefully and cook for yourself most of the time.

Eating out when you are on a special diet is like flying. If what you eat is likely to be safe from infectious organisms (i.e. freshly prepared, thoroughly cooked, and served piping hot), you have celiac disease but no other intolerances, and you are eating at a restaurant awarded three stars by the Gluten-Free Restaurant Awareness Program (described in the next chapter) at a less-busy time of day, it is like flying in a commercial aircraft – likely to be safe. If you have multiple food allergies or eat unsafe foods, eating out can be like flying a glider near the Rocky Mountains where there are unpredictable updrafts. Although it is fun and relaxing to eat out occasionally if your diet and budget allow, it is best for your health to cook at home most of the time. The less often you fly (or eat out), the less likely you are to crash (have a reaction or contract a food borne illness). Cooking for yourself routinely is not as difficult or time consuming as you may think. The rest of this book will show you how to do it more easily.

Money-Saving Solutions

Food is a basic necessity of life, and how nutritiously we eat profoundly influences our health. When money is tight, we cannot quit eating. The question is how to spend money on food wisely and receive an adequate quantity of food with the best nutritional value for our budget. Nutritionists often talk about nutrient-dense food, meaning food that contains the most nutrients for the number of calories. If we adapt that idea and think about maximizing nutrients per dollar, it will put how we spend our food money into the proper perspective.

At the time of this writing, America has just officially moved into a recession which we hope will not become a depression. It is my fervent hope and prayer that every reader of this book has sufficient income, reserve in a bank account, or access to a government or charitable safety net to make it possible for her or him to eat well and feed a family healthily. This chapter will help you to carefully and efficiently use your money for food and hopefully prevent the need for literally tightening your belt due to less-than-adequate nutrition.

Guard Your Health

The most important way to save money is to be healthy. For those of us with food allergies or gluten intolerance, eating economically cannot mean eating less expensive foods that do not fit our special diets. If you are gluten-intolerant, cheating on your diet can damage your intestine and eventually lead to serious health consequences. As discussed in the last chapter, because celiac disease is a well-defined condition, there is data correlating this disease with other conditions. Thus, medical experts know with certainty that uncontrolled celiac disease (i.e. when the diet is not followed diligently) can lead to malnutrition, osteoporosis, anemia, neurological conditions, and even some forms of cancer. Food allergies can also damage the intestinal lining causing some of the consequences above to occur. If you develop serious medical problems, even if you are insured, you will spend much more on medical bills than you might save on food if you eat foods which you do not tolerate. In addition, if you are not healthy, you will find it harder to function, do your work well, or enjoy friends and family.

Everyone's health, even that of seemingly healthy people, is influenced by what they eat. Diets that are high in sugar and unhealthy fats can lead to obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other serious conditions. If the food you eat contains infectious organisms, you may get bacterial food poisoning (usually short-lived and not

serious unless caused by enteropathogenic *E. coli*), contract a viral illness (which may either be transient or lead to long-term problems), or pick up a parasite which can lead to long-lasting consequences such as food allergies and chemical sensitivities. To be sure your food is safe to eat, all animal foods must be thoroughly cooked. If you have insufficient hydrochloric acid production in your stomach, as do many people with food allergies, plant foods should also be cooked or disinfected before eating them raw. See pages 217 for more about how to disinfect produce and about food safety in general.

When you cook for yourself, YOU are in control of everything you eat. You can choose foods that have the highest nutrient density per dollar, make certain that the fats and sweeteners you use are healthy and used in reasonable amounts, and use good food safety practices to insure that your food is safe. This is the best way to safeguard your health.

Set Up a Budget

My parents grew up during the Great Depression which forced them to develop frugal habits. When I got my first job after college, my mother gave me a spiral notebook and a lesson on how to keep track of how and where I was spending my money and then use that information to set up a budget. My husband's family did not use a budget, so when we were first married and were DINKs (**D**ouble **I**ncome, **N**o **K**ids), although his income was a graduate student's stipend, with **N**o **K**ids), we did not have a budget. However, I did cook everything from scratch and taught my husband more nutritious eating habits rooted in my agricultural Italian heritage. We owned one car and lived close enough to my husband's school that he could walk or ride a bike to get there. (This was good exercise as well as a way to save money). We lived in a small apartment and saved diligently for a house.

When we had our children, we were living on my husband's income only. I was impressed with the need to plan ahead for their college education, so I went back to the old notebook budget system with a certain amount of money allocated from every paycheck for each category of expenses. Returning to budgeting was an eye-opener for me. I was amazed at how much I had spent on gifts for people I was not even especially close to (such as baby gifts for former co-workers). We had a few other "great realizations" about where money was going as well. These realizations caused us to close the loopholes, and we tweaked our budget for a few months until it fit our actual expenses and needs. We have lived on a budget ever since. Naturally, money allocations in our budget needed occasional adjustment, but the only change we have made in how we manage our budget over the years is

to replace the spiral notebooks with Excel files on the computer which make the time spent managing the budget briefer and the arithmetic easier.

Although using a budget can seem constraining if you have never done it before, it is actually extremely liberating in the long run. It makes you aware of where your money is going and you can use that information to make wise decisions. For example, because we knew exactly how much we spent on gas, we chose to drive small fuel-efficient cars. When the price of gasoline began to skyrocket, we were in much better shape than our neighbors who owned SUVs and vans. After you have been on a budget and made decisions based on what you have learned from it for a number of years, you may find yourself free of debt (except possibly a mortgage) and able to buy large items like cars with cash, thus saving an incredible amount of money on interest. Such purchasing is truly liberating.

My younger son recently reminded me of something about his childhood. Both of our sons received a modest allowance every week. We had them donate a small amount, and they could spend the rest on whatever they wanted. When we went to Target once a week, they usually spent their allowances on toys. As they grew older, they wanted larger toys that cost more money than they had that week. My son recently reminded me that, although he often begged me, I never gave him extra money or even an advance on his allowance to buy a more expensive toy. He had to save up his allowance until he had enough to buy the toy he wanted. As our sons reached their late elementary school years, we witnessed some several-month saving sprees for large space Lego™ sets. Children (at least sons – I have no experience with daughters) raised this way actually prefer non-designer clothing, and our sons voluntarily included economics in the factors they considered when they chose colleges. Between their wise choices and the saving programs we began for them at birth, they will both graduate from college debt-free. Currently, they save about 90% of their pay from summer jobs and have bought cars using cash. My only financial concern about our sons is whether they will be able find wives who can adjust to their frugality!

The “moral” of this story about our family is that although the current financial crisis is hard for many Americans, if it forces us to return to the frugal habits of our parents or grandparents and teach them to our children, the long-term result may be positive. Americans have become conspicuous consumers over the last few decades, but possessions do not bring us true happiness. A re-ordering of priorities may be what is needed for many reasons beyond just allowing us to survive the recession.

Here are a few practical considerations for budgeting: Be realistic when you plan a budget, yet try to be frugal. Expect to have to adjust your budget for the first several months to make it fit your actual expenses rather than your ideas of how

much you are spending in each category. You will also have to adjust your budget whenever there is a change in your circumstances or new priorities arise. Set aside a little money from each paycheck for unexpected expenses or emergencies.

In your grocery budget, allow enough money to buy sufficient nutritious food because good nutrition is the basis of good health. If what you have to spend does not cover everything you would normally buy, skip foods that provide mostly empty calories such as some snacks and beverages. Make homemade soda pop for your children by mixing carbonated water with fruit juice concentrate. (See the recipe on page 174). This refreshing beverage provides sound nutritional value as well as saving money.

As you begin to track expenditures with a budget, the cumulative expense of a daily stop at Starbucks™ or a similar coffee shop on the way to work may shock you. To save money make your own coffee at home and put it in a insulated travel mug to take to work. There are many good automatic coffee makers on the market, some of which come in small or single-serving sizes. You can set up the coffee maker in the evening, plug it in the next morning, and have your coffee made in a few minutes with very little effort. If you do not have an automatic coffee maker, an inexpensive French drip system also makes delicious coffee. See the coffee recipe on page 173 for more about this method of making coffee.

If you must save time in addition to money, consider using instant coffee. Mount Hagen organic instant coffee is delicious and rich-tasting yet costs only \$7.75 for a 60-serving bottle at the time of this writing. Even if you take a large mug with a double-sized serving of coffee, cream, and sweetener, your coffee will cost less than 50 cents per day and, without a stop at the coffee shop, you will save time in the morning as well.

Snacks and beverages are an area of the grocery budget where we often receive the lowest nutrient density per dollar, so consider making these foods at home. See pages 173 to 181 for recipes for economical homemade snacks and beverages.

Have a Plan When You Grocery Shop

An almost certain way to have more month than grocery money is to routinely walk into the grocery store at the end of the day without a plan. To save money, you must be organized and plan ahead. Never go to the grocery store when you are hungry. If you cannot go right after a meal, at least have a snack before you enter the store. If you are hungry, you will be tempted to buy the high priced goodies which are so attractively displayed in prominent places. Buying these types of things on impulse will run your bill up without contributing much to your nutrition or to what you have in the house to cook for dinner.

The best way to save on groceries is to be organized and plan ahead. Once a week, read the newspaper grocery store advertisements. Choosing from the best sales, plan what you will eat for the next week and make a grocery list based on your menus. If you do not receive a newspaper, you may be able to see the grocery ads online. The Kroger (www.kroger.com), Albertsons (www.albertsons.com), and Safeway websites (www.safeway.com) have pages where you enter your zip code and can see the weekly ad for your area. In some parts of the country, you can see current sale prices for local grocery stores online at GroceryGuide.com. This website allows you to select the items you wish to buy and print them out as a starting point for making your weekly grocery list. However, in some areas the only stores that are listed on GroceryGuide.com are Walgreens, Rite Aid, etc.

Stick to your grocery list when you shop. Try to do all of your shopping in one weekly trip. Whenever you make a special trip to the store for just one item, you are likely to come home with an entire bag of groceries that you may or may not need. Keep a list of items that are running low and purchase them on your weekly shopping trip. Although you will probably have to do some of your special-diet shopping in a health food store, buy most of your food at the most economical store possible. Store-brand foods are often a better value than national brands. Compare the price per ounce and buy the least expensive brand if the quality is comparable. However, for some items such as paper towel, you may use less of a national brand making that the better buy. For more about grocery shopping and menu planning, see pages 35 to 36 and 45.

Coupon clipping used to be a way to save a little money on food. However, in recent years it seems as if coupons in newspapers are usually for highly processed foods such as frozen dinners, mixes, etc. that those of us with food allergies or gluten intolerance cannot eat. Even if some family members can eat these foods, they are less nutrient dense per dollar than the same foods made at home. Yet, the vigilant shopper may find coupons in grocery store ads for relatively unprocessed foods. Always be discriminating in your use of coupons.

Do It At Home

The more food you prepare at home, the more money you will save on your food budget. Cooking together as a family is also a great bonding experience. Young children will enjoy cooking with you; and as they get older, they will learn skills that will save them money when they are on their own.

My father grew up on a small family-owned vegetable farm in the middle of North Denver during the Great Depression. Several of the few pictures we have

of him as a boy are of him and his parents in the field hoeing vegetables together. He often told us how he walked around to their customers' homes pulling his red wagon which was loaded with vegetables to sell. Earning a living was an entire-family experience for him. He always said, "Work hard and work together." While very few families can earn a living together now, we can share our work at home. Letting your children cook with you is a great way to get them started on working hard and working together with others. Giving them chores they must do at home and responsibilities in keeping with their ages teaches them to be dependable hard workers in all areas of their lives. Cooking together also makes cooking more fun for both adults and children.

If you are a "solo" cook, you can still make it enjoyable. Put on your favorite energizing music to listen to while you cook and enjoy the creativity of the cooking experience. While you are cooking, also think about how much money you are saving by cooking at home! For more about how to make cooking easier, see pages 46 to 48 and 30 to 43.

Making good use of your appliances will save you both time and money. With a crock pot you can prepare meals using less-expensive cuts of meat and beans. They will cook all day while you are away and a delicious meal will await you when you get home. Prepare entrées in large batches and freeze part of the batch for future meals. Although the initial investment in a bread machine can seem expensive, it will allow you to make all of your bread at home with very little effort, and the savings will quickly add up to more than the price of the machine. For more about using crock pots, freezers, and bread machines, see pages 37 to 42.

Have Fun With Food

In hard times, it is easy for life to become too serious. However, it is important for both our mental and physical health to lighten up occasionally and have some fun with friends and family. Food allergies or celiac disease can make it difficult to eat out, but there are other kinds of fun we can have that involve food, and this fun can be economical. What makes something fun is not how expensive it is but who you do it with.

For many families, going out for pizza or Chinese food or bringing a pizza or other takeout food home for dinner has been a family treat that is also a way of coping with time pressure. However, with the restrictions of a gluten-free or food allergy diet or with increasing financial pressure, you may have given up this practice. Now is the time to bring back fun with food. Make pizza at home!

Make pizza sauce (recipe on page 178) in large batches and keep it in the freezer. You can make pizza dough that fits your special diet very easily with a bread machine, or make it by hand using the recipes on pages 138 and 179 to 180. Have your children grate cheese and cut up toppings. Mom or Dad may have to stretch the dough out in the pan, but the youngest child can help add the toppings. In addition to having fun making it together, your pizza will be hot and wonderfully delicious and the money you save will add up to a considerable amount over the course of a year.

Picnics are another way to have a great time with friends and family while remaining on a budget. See pages 24 to 25 for more about picnics. During the summer, take a family outing to a local farmers' market. In addition to having fun, you will get some good buys on delicious and nutritious fresh produce.

Waste Not

You have probably heard the old saying, "Waste not, want not." This is certainly true with food. To save money we should try to insure that we do not have to throw food away due to spoilage.

Buying food in large quantities may be a way for large families or people with surplus food storage space to save money. As time goes on, you will come to know the regular prices of the foods you purchase often and will recognize a good sale. If you can afford it, stock up on foods you use often when their prices are significantly reduced. Larger packages of foods may also cost less per ounce. However, do not assume that the larger package always offers the best value. Do the math or read the shelf labels. Surprisingly, more moderately-sized containers are often a better buy. A quantity purchase is not a good deal on perishable foods if they may spoil before they are used up. Even if foods are not perishable, do not buy them in large quantities if they are something that the adults, due to dietary restrictions, cannot eat if the children become tired of them.

The purchase of raw spinach and salad greens is another area where what seems economical may not be. I used to buy fresh spinach in bunches and wash it myself. Unfortunately, I found that, no matter how thoroughly I thought I had dried the spinach, I often could not eat an entire bunch of spinach in salads before it began to spoil. Now I save myself the work of washing and buy plastic clamshells of pre-washed spinach. (The plastic bags of pre-washed spinach also seem more prone to spoilage than the spinach in hard plastic containers). If you are cooking for one or two people and you cannot finish a plastic tub of spinach or salad greens before

they spoil, transfer them to a “lettuce keeper” for head lettuce and they will keep longer. See “Sources,” page 212, for information on ordering a lettuce keeper.

Maintain inventory control of contents of your refrigerator and freezer. If you know what you have at all times, you can eat your food before it begins to spoil. Buy milk and other perishable dairy products in the quantity you will use before their expiration dates. Do not be shy about picking through the cartons of milk to get one with a better date. Put an E.G.G. (Ethylene Gas Guardian) in the produce drawer(s) of your refrigerator to help protect your produce from spoilage accelerated by ethylene gas. For more about the E.G.G. see page 43.

Take advantage of free food. Chances are you know people who garden and have more zucchini than they can use at the end of the summer. If they want to give you some, take it and fill your freezer with zucchini stew. (See the recipe on page 106. This recipe is the only way I have found to freeze zucchini without it becoming mushy). There is a family in our neighborhood who has an apple tree in their front yard. Every year in the late fall I notice that all the leaves have fallen off the tree but there are still one or two dozen apples hanging and that the ground around the tree is littered with shriveled apples. Every year I think, “What a waste!” Maybe someday if I have grandchildren I’d like to peel apples with, I’ll ring this family’s doorbell and ask if I can pick their apples in exchange for some homemade applesauce and an apple pie or two. They might appreciate not having the mess to clean up! Peeling apples for pies or sauce with children is a lot of fun if you have the time and an old-fashioned crank apple peeler because they love to turn the crank. Even preschoolers actually can be a real help with this job, and older children enjoy it as well.

Find the Balance

Other ways to save money on food were widely used during the Great Depression such as gardening. If you are a gardener and have the time, go for it! Unfortunately, with gardening, as with many of the suggestions in this book, there is a trade-off between time and money. If you have abundant time, you can peel apples from your own tree and grow your own vegetables. Although my children and I spent a lot of time peeling apples together when they were small, most mothers now hold full-time or part-time jobs, and this way of economizing is not practical. If you are busy, you may need to use some of the commercially prepared foods listed on pages 187 to 208 in spite of the fact that you could save some money by making them yourself. Each of us must find our own personal balance between time and money as we faithfully stay on our diets and try to save both time and money.

Time-Saving Solutions

Time – We could all use more of it. Our lives have become increasingly hectic in recent years. Thankfully, we no longer have to wash our clothes in the stream and our dishes by hand. Besides obvious time-savers such as clothes and dishwashers, many other appliances can save you time if you use them wisely. See pages 37 to 42 and the corresponding recipes chapters for more about using freezers, microwave ovens, crock pots, and bread machines to make your meals and special diet breads with minimal time and effort.

Cooking goes more quickly and easily and can be an enjoyable social experience if you do it with someone else. If you have family members who can assist, enlist their help even if they are children. They will learn to cook by helping you, and in less time than you might expect they will actually be lightening your workload in the kitchen. Helping Dad or Mom cook also helps them learn to be hard-working and responsible.

There are also businesses which can lighten your cooking workload such as restaurants, deli departments of some large health food stores, and commercial food producers. These food producers include not only the makers of frozen entrees, crackers, cookies, breads, and baking mixes, but also the producers of less complex, often single-ingredient foods such as frozen vegetables, canned fruits and vegetables, and pre-washed ready-to-eat salad greens and vegetables.

Bringing Food In and Eating Out

Until the recession began, many families routinely addressed their time problems by eating out or picking up take-out on the way home from work. Now that many Americans find saving money as important as saving time, restaurants and take-out may be an occasional treat rather than a regular routine. However, if you are going to eat out occasionally, you need to know how to do it safely on your diet.

RESTAURANTS

As you read in the last chapter, I rarely eat out, but if your diet allows you to eat fairly freely and you do it in way that avoids exposure to food borne illness, eating out can be a great treat. Celiacs and those with relatively simple food allergies should take a break from cooking to enjoy a meal out when they can afford to.

More and more restaurants are available to cater to celiacs. A friend recently sent me an article from the *New York Times* that featured several gluten-free restaurants in New York City. Even in small towns, people have heard of celiac disease and cater to those who have it. About a month ago, we took our younger son to his second year of college and wanted to spend some time visiting with the family of his best friend so we took them out to lunch at a restaurant which serves buffalo. I was amazed that The Overland Restaurant in Laramie, Wyoming offered me a gluten-free bun for my buffalo burger.

The Gluten Intolerance Group of North American (GIG) offers website help to celiacs who wish to eat out. (See their website at www-gluten-net). They also provide new members with a two-page printed information sheet called “Restaurant Dining: Seven Tips for Staying Gluten-Free” and a wallet-sized restaurant card. This card is meant to be handed to your waiter and lists foods that are allowed and are not allowed on a gluten-free diet. The back of the card lists hidden sources of gluten such as modified food starch, self-basting poultry, and hydrolyzed vegetable protein.

GIG also sponsors the Gluten-Free Restaurant Awareness Program which provides restaurants with information about gluten-free diets and offers food preparation training materials for restaurant staff. Their website lists restaurants that participate in this program at <http://www.glutenfreerestaurants.org/find.php>. Their online restaurant database is searchable by ZIP code.

The GIG restaurant database is also helpful to those with food allergies who are searching for potential restaurants to try. Restaurants trained by the GIG program are used to special diets and know how not to cross-contaminate foods, so their customers have a better chance of getting the foods they order *plain* and having a meal prepared without butter or bread crumbs from the last customer’s meal ending up in the sensitive person’s food.

Both celiacs and those with food allergies should take additional steps to achieve a safe dining experience. Call the restaurant a day or more before you plan to visit and ask questions about menu items you would like to order and how they are prepared. If there is only one entrée that you can eat on the menu (as is usually the case for me), ask if they are likely to run out of that food on the day you plan to visit. If the food is something like fresh fish which is not stored in their freezer in abundance at all times, perhaps they can set aside a portion of that food for you.

Other suggestions for safe dining include eating at higher-quality restaurants and timing your meal at a less busy time of day. More expensive restaurants are likely to prepare food to order and can accommodate special requests more easily than chain restaurants. If you go early or late in the dinner or lunch hours, the staff will be able to take more time to listen to your requests and follow them.

Some of the issues you will need to address with your waiter and chef include:

(1) Is this food available *plain*? An explanation of what plain means is in order. It does not just mean without sauces. For meat, it also means not marinated, not tenderized by any means other than pounding with a clean implement, and not pre-basted or injected with butter, hydrolyzed vegetable protein, maltodextrin, or other allergens. Plain turkey is rarely plain because it is difficult to purchase a truly natural turkey; they are almost always injected with something. In addition, prime rib may be cooked rare and brought up to whatever degree of doneness the customer orders by poaching it in a pan of beef broth before serving. This broth is likely to contain a whole list of allergenic or gluten-containing ingredients, but the server may still consider your meat plain because it has not been dressed with gravy. A plain baked potato is not only uncut (specifying that you want your potato uncut helps prevent the addition of butter to the center of the potato) but the skin also has not been rubbed with butter or an allergenic oil before baking. Plain vegetables are boiled with only water and salt, steamed, or baked without anything added. A plain salad is not only free of dressing, but the greens have also not been treated with sulfites to maintain a fresh appearance.

(2) Was there cross-contamination in the preparation of this food? If you order French fries, are they fried in the same vat of oil as battered foods? If they are fried with the same oil that was used for battered fish, your French fries will be contaminated with wheat. If they are fried in a separate vat of oil, you need to ask if it is a kind of oil to which you are allergic. In addition, potato products (including both French fries and hash browns), unless prepared from fresh potatoes, have often been processed with dextrose, dextrans, or starches added by the producer. The restaurant staff may consider them plain, but they were not plain when they came in the back door. The safest way to eat potatoes in a restaurant is to avoid French fries and hash browns and have a baked potato. Even this is not always easy. I once called a restaurant, was told that baked potatoes (the only item I could eat there) were on the lunch menu, got to the restaurant, and found out that baked potatoes were only on the dinner menu. Thankfully, they were willing to microwave a raw potato for me.

Cross-contamination problems are common with other foods also. If you are ordering a salad, will your salad ingredients be chopped on a cutting board contaminated with crouton crumbs from the previous patron's salad? Will your fish be cooked on a grill contaminated with butter from the last order of fish? If you order grilled food, suggest that the chef lay down foil between the grill and your food while cooking it. Unless a restaurant is aware of cross-contamination problems for people on special diets, the same cutting board may be used for the orders of many diners without washing it between different foods, and thus your meal may contain small amounts of many problems foods.

When dining out, even if you have called ahead and the restaurant sounds as if it can meet your needs, it is always wise to carry a few food items in your purse or car just in case. Have a back-up protein supply, such as some home-prepared meat in a cooler or a bag of nuts, in your car. In addition, bring some acceptable crackers and some fresh or dried fruit. Carry a small bottle containing salad dressing that is acceptable on your diet or containing oil for your baked potato in your purse or pocket. Naturally you will put it in a Ziploc™ bag in case it leaks.

If you are dining out and cannot control the selection of the restaurant, eat before you go. Order a cup of tea to sip during the meal, or just sip water and enjoy talking to the other guests. If you cannot have black tea, order tea but specify that you do not want the tea bag (or it may arrive already steeping in your hot water) and bring along an herbal tea bag to use instead.

For more ideas about what foods to order for each meal of the day and tips on dining out from an allergy expert who eats out more than I do, refer to *The Allergy Self-Help Cookbook* by Marjorie H. Jones. For similar advice from the foremost expert on celiac diets and cooking, see *The Gluten-Free Gourmet: Living Well Without Wheat* by Bette Hagman. Both books are listed in the reference section of this book (page 221).

OTHER OPTIONS FOR MEALS AWAY FROM HOME

A picnic is one of the most enjoyable meals to eat away from home. If there are children along, they can leave the table and run around without having to be quiet. The relaxed atmosphere benefits everyone, thus enhancing the eating experience.

Most of the time I prefer a picnic menu that is simple and “disposable.” Pack sandwiches for normal family members and guests. If you can eat any type of bread, tortilla, flatbread, or pancake, you can bring a sandwich along for yourself also. If not, some cold meat or bean pate makes a good picnic main dish. (See “Lentil Spread, page 133). Vegetable crudité and healthy chips from the health food store (possibly served with a dip or spread such as lentil spread), a salad with dressing on the side, beverages, and fresh fruit or homemade cookies for dessert round out the meal. We use paper plates and dispose of the trash at the picnic site so there is minimal clean-up when we get home. This is the perfect lunch for a relaxing day in the mountains or at the beach, and since you are in total control of what you eat, an allergic reaction will not spoil your fun.

Occasionally we enjoy the adventure of cooking our lunch at the picnic site. (To appreciate the adventure aspect of this, you should see pictures of us cooking in the rain under an umbrella!) Watching Dad make a fire in the grate is a lot of fun

and also offers great picture-taking opportunities. We take hamburgers and two frying pans – a large one for the beef burgers that most of the family and guests will eat and a small one for my game meat burger. We might bring homemade baked beans or other vegetables to warm in the frying pan after the burgers are cooked. Aside from the sandwiches, our usual menu for a cook-out is usually the same as our disposable picnic menu described above.

With microwave oven access available at most workplaces, weekday lunches are easy. If you are on a rotation diet, begin your rotation day at dinner time. Make enough food for the next day's lunch, package it up after dinner, and your lunch will be ready to grab in the morning. If you do not have a microwave oven at your workplace, make extra salad at dinner time and supplement it with some protein which can be eaten cold. This could be the entrée from dinner the night before, other cold meat or fish, or a bag of nuts.

If you are going somewhere and are not sure if you will be home by lunch time, carry nuts and fruit (fresh or dried) along with you in your car. I always have some nuts in my car just in case whatever I have planned for the morning runs longer than expected and I get hungry before I get home.

BRINGING FOOD IN: ASSISTANCE FROM THE DELI

The situation that causes those on special diets the most pressure is that of having nothing planned for dinner when they are on their way home at 5 or 6 p.m. The average person in this quandary can pick up a pizza after work, but this is becoming too expensive for many people to do routinely and is not an option for celiacs and those with food allergies.

The real solution to this problem is to plan ahead as described in the next chapters of this book. However, if you live near a large health food store, some of them have delis that you can visit for a take-out meal. As when you eat in a restaurant, you will have to ask questions, but the deli may have an ingredient label or card for you to read for each food. Before you are in a 5 p.m. crisis situation, visit the deli at a less busy time so you can become familiar with what they have and what you can eat. Be sure to re-check the ingredients before you buy, however! A large health food store near us carries relatively plain roasted free range chickens. My mother-in-law (who could eat anything) used to get their chicken and say that it was better than any chicken she had eaten since she was a girl when all chickens were raised naturally.

In addition, although I do not recommend eating raw items from salad bars anywhere, including in health food stores, a deli salad bar is a good place to get an

assortment of pre-cut vegetables to include in a stir-fry or homemade soup. (See page 12 for more about salad bars). As long as the vegetables are adequately cooked before consumption, they should be safe.

Using Convenience Foods

Using commercially prepared foods, especially baked goods, can make it much easier to stay on your diet and lessen your time in the kitchen. The most important thing to remember with these foods is to **read the labels carefully**. If you are just beginning your special diet, set aside an hour or two to visit a large health food store and just read labels. Take a notebook and make a list of items that contain only ingredients which you can eat. Read labels in your grocery store also; the prices for foods you can eat may be lower there. Beware, however, of hidden sources of gluten and food allergens in grocery-store foods. (Although health food store foods tend to be better, they are not immune to containing some hidden allergens). See the “Using Commercially Prepared Foods” section of this book on pages 182 to 186 for a listing of hidden forms of gluten and allergens such as vegetable protein or malt as a hidden form of gluten or wheat, casein or whey as a hidden form of milk, modified food starch as a hidden form of corn, etc. The “Special Diet Resources” section on pages 187 to 208 also provides more ideas than are listed in this chapter for commercially prepared foods that you might be able to use.

FROZEN FOODS

Your health food store freezer is likely to be stocked with a number of gluten-free frozen dinner entrées and many gluten-free baked items such as waffles and breads. Those with multiple food allergies often can find single-grain breads that they can eat in their health food store’s freezer. See the “Special Diet Resources” section on pages 188 to 190 for a list of such items that you can purchase from a large store or by mail order. Read the labels each time you shop for these foods to be sure their ingredient lists have not changed.

When shopping for special breads, be aware that some bread labeled yeast-free is not really yeast-free even though no yeast is listed in the ingredients. It may have been prepared by a natural fermentation process, and although no yeast is added, it is leavened by yeast from the air and should be avoided by those with yeast allergy. If the bread is truly yeast-free, the ingredient list will contain baking soda and/or other leavening ingredients.

GLUTEN-FREE AND WHEAT-FREE BAKED GOODS

Commercial food producers have risen to the challenge of baking for the celiac diet. Our health food store carries many varieties of gluten-free baking mixes for everything from corn bread to chocolate cakes. If you are a celiac with additional food sensitivities, be sure to read the labels on the baking mixes carefully; there is a good chance that you will be able to use at least some of these mixes. However, to prevent rice sensitivity, you may wish to vary the grain or grain alternative you eat from day to day and not use rice-based baking mixes exclusively. For recipes made with grains other than rice, see the baking recipes on pages 135 to 151 and pages 156 to 170 of this book and also the recipes in *Gluten-Free Without Rice* as described on the last pages of this book.

Your health food store also probably carries a large variety of gluten-free crackers, cookies, cereals, and snacks. Again read the labels to check for ingredients that may cause you problems if you have other sensitivities, and do not rely solely on rice. As an added caution, re-read the labels of your favorite brands each time you purchase them to be sure the ingredients have not changed.

For a list of commercially prepared baked goods that you might be able to use, see “Special Diet Resources” on pages 187 to 208. Many of these items can be purchased by mail order if you live in an area without a large health food store. If you have Internet access and would like to shop at Vitamin Cottage Natural Grocers, the health food store where I shop, visit www.naturalgrocers.com. They have a Shop-by-Diet search tool that will help celiacs find the hundreds of gluten-free and allergen-free products they carry. Those with food allergies can also shop by diet to avoid individual food allergens. If you are allergic to a number of foods, you may be able to find items that are free of all of your problem foods by reading the ingredient lists (click on “back of the bag”) for foods you find by searching for one of your problem foods.

Another way to find reliable producers of additional gluten-free foods is to check the gluten-free product listing on the Gluten Intolerance Group (GIG) website at www.gluten.net. If you do not have Internet access, new members of the GIG receive a printed handout which, at the time of this writing, contains about 120 companies that produce gluten-free foods.

CANNED VEGETABLE, BEEF, AND CHICKEN BROTH

Most commercially prepared broths are a land mine of chemicals and allergens. (For a list of some of these strange ingredients, see pages 58 to 59). However, at

the time of this writing, there are a few broths which are made with only meat, and/or poultry (or their pure extracts), vegetables, water, salt, and spices. See pages 202 to 204 for a listing of some of these broths. They are convenient to have on hand for throwing together a quick soup or for making some of the main dish recipes in this book.

VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

While usually not thought of as convenience foods, frozen, canned, and pre-washed and cut fresh fruits and vegetables definitely can save you a lot of time in the kitchen. Compare shelling peas to purchasing a bag of them frozen! Or think about using frozen or pre-cut and washed fresh broccoli instead of cutting a large stem of broccoli into bite-size pieces yourself. Although freshly picked vegetables have the highest levels of nutrients, those that are frozen soon after picking retain more nutrients than vegetables which have been stored several days in transit or in your refrigerator.

You can save time by using pre-washed salad greens also. I remember my dad's lettuce and spinach grown in his garden. They were incredibly delicious freshly picked and certainly had the maximum amounts of nutrients, but it was a major chore to wash all the dirt and bugs out of them using salt in the first wash and then using several changes of water. Unless you grow your own salad vegetables, if you are pressed for time, pre-washed bagged salads certainly are handy. The recipes in this book make use of convenience produce whenever possible.

Canned vegetables do not have the crisp textures and flavors of fresh or frozen vegetables, so I avoid using most of them, with a few exceptions such as those below. If you do use them, read the labels carefully for ingredients such as sugar, corn syrup, and flavor enhancers that may contain gluten. The stroganoff recipe in this book (page 69) calls for either fresh or canned mushrooms because using canned saves time on cleaning and slicing mushrooms. I find canned tomatoes indispensable for soups and use tomato paste, sauce, and puree in Italian cooking. Be aware, however, that tomato products require diligent label-reading. If you think a certain brand is all right, be sure to read it every time you buy it anyway. I was recently shocked to find that a brand of plain tomato sauce that my grandmother used years ago and that is made by a producer with an Italian name had added sugar and a number of other ingredients to their sauce. The ingredient list of a store brand of Italian-style tomato paste includes tomato paste, water, sugar, salt, spices, Romano cheese, soy oil, hydrolyzed corn protein, wheat gluten, soy protein, garlic, torula yeast, and natural flavors. A person with a sensitivity to any-

thing would be likely to react to something in that tomato paste! A national brand of chopped tomatoes had high fructose corn syrup in all of their flavored or variety canned tomatoes. The lesson is – always read labels carefully!

If you have difficulty finding plain canned vegetables or all-tomato canned tomato products, check the salt-free versions of each brand. These tend to be free of other potentially problematic ingredients in addition to salt. Organic canned vegetables are also more likely to be plain. If you are highly sensitive to yeast and cannot eat canned tomato products in general due to yeast, see *The Ultimate Food Allergy Cookbook and Survival Guide* for sauce recipes made from fresh tomatoes.

Fresh locally produced fruit is always the most delicious, but there are times when canned and frozen fruit is a real time-saver. I haven't cut up a fresh pineapple in years because pineapple canned in its own juice is so convenient. If you are making a dessert with berries when they are out of season, frozen berries are the thing to use. To save time on washing, stemming and sorting, you also might use them when fresh berries are available. For apple pie or apple crisp, canned peeled and sliced apples save a lot of time. Read the label and be sure what you are buying is only apples and water. You do not want to mistakenly purchase apple pie filling made with sugar, high fructose corn syrup and thickeners that might contain gluten.

Frozen, canned, and refrigerated fruit and vegetable juices are so common, economical, and convenient that you must be a dedicated juicer to make your own juice. In addition to consuming commercially prepared fruit juices plain, you might enjoy using them to make tasty and nutritious beverages that are a good substitute for sodas. Just mix some fruit juice or thawed fruit juice concentrate with carbonated water, add a little ice and a straw to make it special, and your kids (or you) will not be tempted to reach for a can of pop. See the fruit juice soda recipe on page 174.

By making use of help from others, especially commercial food producers, you can stay on your diet with less work. See the "Special Diet Resources" section of this book on pages 187 to 208 for more ideas of convenience foods that you can use. The "Using Commercially Prepared Foods" section on pages 182 to 186 contains as a list of hidden sources of allergenic ingredients to refer to when you read labels.

Oat Crackers

Ask your doctor.

These crackers are tasty and easy to make with just four ingredients.

- 4 cups quick oats, uncooked
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ⅓ cup oil
- ⅔ cup water

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Lightly oil two baking sheets. Stir the oats and salt together. Add the oil and mix it into the dry ingredients thoroughly. Stir in the water, then mix and knead the dough with your hands until it sticks together. Divide the dough in half; put each half on one of the prepared baking sheets. Lightly rub your rolling pin with oil. Roll the cracker dough out to about ⅛ inch thickness. Cut the dough into 1½ inch squares and sprinkle the crackers lightly with salt. Bake the crackers for 20 to 25 minutes. Watch the crackers closely as the baking time nears completion. If the crackers on the edges of the sheets brown before the baking time is up, remove them from the baking sheet and continue to bake the rest of the crackers. Use a spatula to remove the crackers from the baking sheets when they begin to brown. Put them on paper towels to cool. Makes 3 to 4 dozen crackers.

Quinoa “Graham” Crackers

Gluten-Free

My friend and taster Athena really likes these grain-free “graham” crackers.

- 3 cups quinoa flour
- 1 cup tapioca starch
- 3 teaspoons GF baking powder plus ½ teaspoon baking soda OR 2
teaspoons baking soda plus ½ teaspoon unbuffered vitamin C powder
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon (optional)
- 1¼ cups apple juice concentrate
- ½ cup oil

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Oil three baking sheets. Mix together the quinoa flour, tapioca starch, baking powder (if you are using it), baking soda, vitamin C powder (if you are using them), and cinnamon in a large bowl. Combine the apple

juice concentrate and oil and stir them into the dry ingredients until the dough sticks together. Divide the dough into thirds and put each third on one of the baking sheets. Flour your rolling pin and the top of the dough. Roll each third to just under $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thickness. Flour a knife and cut the dough into 1 inch by 3 inch bars. You may have to re-flour the knife between cuts. Prick each bar three times with a fork to resemble graham crackers. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes or until the crackers are lightly browned. Re-cut the crackers on the same lines if necessary. Remove the crackers from the baking sheet using a spatula, and allow them to cool on paper towels. Makes about 3 to 4 dozen crackers.

Spelt "Graham" Crackers

These fruit, agave, or honey-sweetened crackers are just like the ones you remember from your childhood.

2 $\frac{5}{8}$ cups whole spelt flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
 $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon baking soda
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon unbuffered vitamin C powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon (optional)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup agave or Fruit Sweet™ or agave OR $\frac{3}{8}$ cup honey plus $\frac{1}{8}$ cup water

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Lightly oil two baking sheets and dust them with spelt flour. Combine the flour, salt, baking soda, vitamin C powder, and cinnamon in a large bowl. Thoroughly mix together the oil with the Fruit Sweet™ or agave or the honey and water until the mixture looks granular. Immediately stir the liquids into the flour mixture to form a soft dough. Divide the dough in half and put each portion of the dough on a prepared baking sheet. Sprinkle flour on top of the dough and rolling pin and roll each portion of dough to about $\frac{1}{8}$ to just under $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thickness. Cut the dough into 1-inch by 3-inch rectangles and prick them with a fork. Bake for 12 to 17 minutes, or until they begin to brown. Remove them from the oven and re-cut them on the original cut lines if necessary. Remove them from the baking sheet with a spatula and cool them on paper towels. Makes 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 dozen crackers.

Spelt Saltines

- 2 cups spelt flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon unbuffered vitamin C powder
- ¼ cup oil
- ½ cup water

Combine the flour, salt, baking soda, and vitamin C powder. Add the oil and stir until it is thoroughly mixed in to form small crumbs. Add the water two tablespoons at a time, mixing well after each addition. Knead the dough on a lightly floured board for one to two minutes. Divide the dough in half and roll each half out on an oiled baking sheet with an oiled rolling pin to about a 10 inch by 14 inch rectangle. The dough should be very thin, about 1/16 to 1/8 inch thick. Cut the dough into 2 inch squares and prick each square three times with a fork. Sprinkle the tops of the crackers with additional salt if desired. Bake at 350°F for 10 to 14 minutes, or until the crackers are golden brown and crisp. Cool the crackers on paper towels. Makes 6 to 7 dozen crackers.

Cassava Crackers

Gluten-Free

These delicious crackers are crunchy but crumbly. Save the crumbs to use in place of croutons in salads. To obtain cassava meal by mail order, see “Sources,” page 209.

- 2 cups cassava meal
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon unbuffered vitamin C powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¾ cup water
- ¼ cup oil

Preheat your oven to 350°F. Oil a 12 by 15 inch pan. Mix the cassava meal, baking soda, vitamin C powder and salt together in a large bowl. Combine the water and oil and stir them into the dry ingredients. Roll and press the crumbly mixture firmly into the baking pan. (The thickness of the dough layer will be between 1/8 and 1/4 inch). Cut the dough into 1½ inch squares and bake for 35 to 40 minutes. Remove the crackers from the pan with a spatula and cool them on paper towels. Makes about 3½ dozen crackers.

Safe Food Handling Practices

The principles of food safety are simple. Just don't give bacteria, viruses, and parasites what they need to live and grow, and kill them by exposure them to plenty of what they cannot tolerate.

Temperature

Bacteria like a nice warm environment. Lukewarm food is an ideal growth substrate for them, but your food will be safe as long as it is very cold or very hot. The temperature in your refrigerator should be 41°F or less. Check it with a thermometer occasionally and adjust the temperature control dial until it maintains a temperature of about 40°F. At this temperature, bacteria will not be killed but neither will they multiply rapidly. Keep all animal foods and most plant foods, with the exception of ripening fruit, in the refrigerator or freezer at all times. Freezer temperatures will kill some parasites and bacteria.

Food safety should be your first priority after grocery shopping. Put all of your groceries away promptly when you get home giving meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, and other refrigerated and frozen foods the highest priority. Freeze meat, poultry and fish if you are not planning to eat them within one or two days after purchase.

Don't let leftovers sit at room temperature after dinner. Refrigerate or freeze them promptly and always within two hours of when they were prepared.

When refrigerators were new, people were advised to let hot foods cool to room temperature before putting them into the refrigerator. It is true that this saves your refrigerator work, but leaving food out on the counter to cool for an extended time period is not a safe practice from the standpoint of bacteria. The safest and most efficient way to handle hot leftovers is to divide them into small portions for storage, which allows the heat to dissipate more quickly, and to set them on a rack to cool briefly (not all the way to room temperature) before putting them into the refrigerator.

Cook foods thoroughly. Dr. Leo Galland recommends cooking all animal foods conventionally because microwave ovens often have hot spots and cold spots, and certain areas of the food may not reach a high enough temperature to kill bacteria and parasites which may be present.¹ When you cook vegetables in a microwave, stir them during the cooking process to insure sufficient heating of all parts of the food.

For conventional cooking of large cuts of meat and poultry, use a meat thermometer to determine when they are done. Turkeys should be cooked until the temperature in the deepest part of the breast and thigh is 180° to 185°F. Do not let the thermometer touch bone. Beef roasts can be cooked to a range of thermometer temperatures depending on how well done you like your meat. Beef roasts and steaks are safe when cooked rare because they are cuts of muscle meat that are sterile on the inside. Only the cut surfaces will be contaminated with bacteria. Therefore, the entire inside of the roast does not need to reach a temperature high enough to kill bacteria. Ground meat, however, is another story. It is basically all cut surfaces which are subject to bacterial contamination. Therefore, cook your ground meat until the pink is completely gone. Pork should always be cooked thoroughly to kill the parasite *Trichinella spiralis*. Test pork roasts with a meat thermometer and leave them in the oven until the temperature registers at least 170°F in the deepest part of the meat.

Frozen meat or poultry should be thawed in the refrigerator rather than by allowing it to stand at room temperature. If you can't wait as long as it will take to thaw your turkey in the refrigerator (and in the case of a large bird, it may be several days), you can thaw it in a sink of cool water. Check the bird and replace the water with fresh cool water regularly. When the turkey feels spongy, remove it from the water and refrigerate or cook it immediately. Small cuts of meat may be defrosted in your microwave oven but only if you are going to cook them immediately after thawing them this way because they may develop hot spots.

Fish is highly perishable and should be kept cold from the minute it is taken from the water until it is cooked. Never buy fish from a fisherman's truck; only buy from reputable markets which get their fish from government-inspected fisheries. After you purchase fresh fish, get it home and into the refrigerator quickly. Cook fresh fish within one or at most two days of purchase. Keep frozen fish frozen until you plan to eat it; then thaw it in the refrigerator. If it is not thawed in time for dinner, you can cook fish starting from frozen although it will take a few minutes longer to be done. Always cook fish thoroughly. Test it for doneness by piercing it with a fork. If it flakes easily and is opaque throughout, it has been cooked enough. If you poach fish, it is impossible to dry it out and you can err on the side of overcooking it without consequence.

Eggs should be cooked until both the white and yolk are set. Cook scrambled eggs until there is no liquid egg remaining. If you like your eggs soft-cooked or prefer fried eggs with soft yolks, use pasteurized eggs. Get eggs into the refrigerator as soon as you get them home from the store. If there happens to be a contaminated egg in your carton and you leave it at room temperature, the bacteria will multiply to a number that is much more likely to make you sick if the eggs are undercooked.

Chemical environment

Bacteria, parasites, and viruses are affected by the chemical environment in which they find themselves as well as by temperature. We can exploit the sensitivity of harmful organisms to chemicals to make our food safe.

When you plan to eat fresh fruits or vegetables raw, for maximum safety you should disinfect them as well as washing them. *In Guess What Came to Dinner*, Ann Louise Gittleman suggests that raw fruits and vegetables be disinfected by soaking them in a solution of ½ teaspoon of Clorox™ for each gallon of water. Thin skinned fruits and leafy vegetables should be soaked for 15 minutes and thick skinned produce should be soaked for 30 minutes.² Dr. Leo Galland recommends soaking fruits and vegetables in a solution of 2 teaspoons of 3% hydrogen peroxide to each gallon of water.³ Nutribiotic™, a grapefruit seed extract, can also be used for disinfecting foods. In laboratory testing, this non-toxic food-based extract has been shown to be effective against a wide range of bacteria, yeast, fungi, and parasites. At our house, as soon as we get home from the grocery store, any produce we plan to eat raw is soaked for 30 minutes in a sink full of cool water with about 30 drops of Nutribiotic™ added. If you purchase fragile produce, such as berries, you may wish to hold off on soaking them until right before you plan to eat them. Nutribiotic™ can be purchased at most health food stores, or for a mail-order source, see page 209.

A few simple practices will keep bacteria and other organisms from spreading in your home. Dr. Leo Galland says hand washing is a very effective way to remove pathogens and prevent the transmission of disease of all kinds.⁴ As soon as you come home, wash your hands to keep from bringing bacteria, viruses, or parasites into your own environment. Before you begin cooking, every time you cook, wash your hands thoroughly with warm water and soap, sudsing for a few minutes. If you handle raw meat or poultry while cooking, wash your hands thoroughly again. Any time you think you may have touched something that could possibly be contaminated while cooking, re-wash your hands.

Cutting boards can also spread infection. Do not use wooden cutting boards because they can harbor bacteria in grooves or cracks in the wood and are nearly impossible to clean thoroughly. Glass or plastic cutting boards can be washed in soap and hot water or put in the dishwasher to clean and disinfect them. If you use a cutting board for raw meat, poultry, or fish, wash it thoroughly before using it for anything else. Food poisoning bacteria can be easily transmitted by cutting raw meat on a cutting board and then using the same cutting board to cut vegetables that will be eaten raw.

Your kitchen counters should be kept thoroughly clean and disinfected regularly. Wash your counters with hot soapy water and/or with a disinfectant on a regular or daily basis. Also wash and disinfect them whenever they are dirty or especially when they may have become contaminated with juices from raw meat or poultry. I like to disinfect our kitchen counters routinely every day as I am cleaning up the kitchen after dinner. For maximum safety, first wash your counters with hot soapy water to remove food and grease. (Disinfectants will only work if they can get to the germs, and grease and dirt protect them from chemicals). Then disinfect the counters by moistening a piece of paper towel with hot water and a teaspoon of Clorox™ or a good squirt of Nutribiotic™ and wiping the counters down with the disinfectant-soaked paper towel.

Be careful of how you wash dishes. Do not leave your dishes soaking for a prolonged time because the dishwater will cool to a lukewarm temperature where bacteria thrive. The food that is left on the dishes will dissolve in the water, making a nice soup for bacteria to enjoy. Keep your dishwater hot and soapy. If you must leave the dishes half-done and the water cools, replace it with hot soapy water before you finish washing your dishes. Whether you wash the dishes by hand or in a dishwasher, it is most hygienic let them air dry so you don't add bacteria to them with your hands or a dish towel.

Dishwashers which have the water temperature set high enough are excellent for killing bacteria. However, the hot water and detergent must be able to get to the bacteria. If you put your dishes into the dishwasher with dried food on them that doesn't come off in washing, bacteria can be lurking under that food. Clean visible food off before loading dishes into the dishwasher.

Throw away your dishrags and sponges. This is one area where health issues should take precedence over environment concerns. Dr. Leo Galland recommends that we use paper towels to wipe counters and other kitchen surfaces, not a sponge or dishrag. For washing dishes, use disposable dishrags such as HandiWipes™ and replace them often rather than using a sponge or cloth dishrag. Because bacteria love to grow in wet sponges and dishrags, the kitchen sponge is usually the most unsanitary object in the home.

If you follow these practices routinely, your kitchen will never be a source of food borne illness.

Footnotes

1. Galland, Leo, M.D., *The Four Pillars of Healing*, Random House, New York, 1997, p. 215.
2. Gittleman, Ann Louise, *Guess What Came to Dinner: Parasites and Your Health*, Avery Publishing Group, Inc., Garden Park, NY, 1993, p. 128.
3. Galland, p. 215.
4. Galland, p. 214.

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