



Gluten-Free & Vegetarian

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A little extra planning may be needed, but maintaining a healthy diet when you are both gluten-free and vegetarian is absolutely doable. Depending on the degree of dietary restriction in the type of vegetarianism followed, as well as on varied individual food choices, some people who are both gluten-free and vegetarian may require the use of additional fortified foods or supplements to ensure adequate intakes of certain nutrients - especially vitamin B12, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and zinc. Your specific diet and unique nutritional status should be assessed in consultation with your own healthcare team, but the following information will provide a general overview of potential considerations.

Restricted Foods (& Their Nutrients) in Vegetarian and Gluten-free Diets

TYPE OF DIET	RESTRICTED FOODS	NUTRIENTS OF CONCERN
Vegetarian (lacto-ovo)	Meat, poultry, fish/seafood	Iron, Zinc, Omega 3 fatty acids, Protein
Lacto-vegetarian	Meat, poultry, fish/seafood, eggs	Iron, Zinc, Omega 3 fatty acids, Protein
Ovo-vegetarian	Meat, poultry, fish/seafood, dairy products	Calcium, Iron, Zinc, Vitamin B12, Vitamin D, Omega 3 fatty acids, Protein
Vegan	All animal products including meat, poultry, fish/seafood, eggs, and dairy products	Calcium, Iron, Zinc, Vitamin B12, Vitamin D, Omega 3 fatty acids, Protein
Gluten-free	Wheat, rye, barley and their derivatives. Oats unless certified gluten-free.	B vitamins, Iron, Fiber

Did you know...?

- Typical vegetarian diets do generally meet protein requirements, but you may need to pay a little extra attention to this nutrient that is most concentrated in foods of animal origin. Many gluten-free whole grains provide significant amounts of protein, including amaranth, buckwheat, millet, quinoa, sorghum, teff, and wild rice.
- Gluten-free flours made from whole grains, seeds, and beans, such as quinoa, teff, flaxmeal, almond, hazelnut, fava bean and garbanzo bean are highly nutritious and can provide additional sources of iron, calcium, and B vitamins to a vegetarian diet.
- Good sources of Omega-3 fatty acids include ground flaxseed and walnuts.
- The soybean is a highly versatile food that is naturally gluten-free and a high quality protein source.
- Processed soy products (and other “meat alternatives”) may or may not be gluten-free; read ingredient labels carefully.
- Malabsorption of vitamin D and calcium are common in advanced and untreated celiac disease, and can lead to bone disease (osteopenia, osteoporosis, osteomalacia). Vegans need to be especially careful to include sufficient levels of these nutrients.



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- Non-dairy sources of calcium include: leafy greens (except spinach and swiss chard), calcium-set tofu, nuts, seeds, and the gluten-free grains teff and amaranth. Many non-dairy “milk” products are also fortified with calcium.
- A vegetarian, gluten-free diet eliminates many of the major sources of iron in a typical diet. For this reason, a supplement may be necessary.
- Vitamin B12 is found only in foods of animal origin (including dairy products). Vegans need to obtain vitamin B12 through fortified foods or a supplement.
- Zinc absorption is enhanced by animal proteins and therefore may be needed in supplemental form for vegetarians. This nutrient can be found in some vegetarian gluten-free foods like wild rice, teff, pumpkin/squash seeds, and navy beans.

This educational bulletin has been produced by the Gluten Intolerance Group of North America, a registered 501(c)3 organization. Learn more about GIG at www.gluten.org.

GIG is on a mission to make life easier for everyone living gluten-free.

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Vegetarian Resources

Vegetarian Resource Group, www.vrg.org

This article has been assessed and approved by a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist.