Tecaya Health
Larrea Naturopathic Medicine

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO A

100% GLUTEN-FREE DIET

Foundations, food lists, label-reading tips, and 15 easy recipes to get started

WHY GO GLUTEN-FREE?

Gluten is a family of proteins found in wheat, barley, rye, and their derivatives (including malt and most conventional oats, which are typically cross-contaminated during growing or processing). A 100% gluten-free diet means removing **all** sources of these proteins — not just "cutting back."

People pursue a strict gluten-free diet for several reasons, including celiac disease (an autoimmune condition where gluten damages the small intestine), non-celiac gluten sensitivity, wheat allergy, and — in functional and integrative medicine — as part of a broader strategy to calm intestinal permeability ("leaky gut"), autoimmune activity, and systemic inflammation.

Many patients notice improvements in digestion, energy, joint discomfort, skin, mood, and brain fog after a true elimination, though individual response varies and this is not a guarantee for every person or condition.

> **Before you start — if celiac disease is suspected:** Gluten should not be removed from the diet before appropriate testing, since going gluten-free first can cause a false-negative result. Talk with your provider about testing before you begin if this applies to you.

FOODS & INGREDIENTS TO AVOID

Grains & Starches with Gluten

- **Wheat** — including durum, semolina, spelt, farro, einkorn, emmer, kamut, bulgur, couscous
- **Barley** — including barley malt, malt extract, malt vinegar, and malt flavoring
- **Rye**
- **Triticale** (a wheat-rye hybrid)
- **Conventional oats** — unless labeled "certified gluten-free" (cross-contamination is common)
- **Brewer's yeast** (typically derived from a beer/grain process)

Beverages

- **Beer** — it contains considerable amounts of barley and gluten. This includes most conventional and craft beers, ales, lagers, and malt beverages.
- Malt beverages and malt-based coolers
- Some flavored liquors, coolers, and wine products that add barley-derived coloring or flavoring — check labels

Better choice: Dedicated gluten-free beers made from sorghum, rice, or millet.

Common Hidden Sources of Gluten

Gluten hides in many processed and packaged foods. On a strict elimination, **read every label, every time** — formulations change.

- Soy sauce (regular) — use tamari labeled gluten-free instead
- Salad dressings, marinades, and gravies thickened with wheat flour
- Breaded and fried foods, croutons, and most fast food
- Soups and sauces thickened with a wheat-based roux
- Processed meats, deli meats, and imitation seafood (fillers can contain gluten)
- Some supplements, vitamins, and medications (fillers/binders) — ask your pharmacist or check with the manufacturer
- Communion wafers, some candies, licorice, and beer-battered items
- Shared fryer oil, shared toasters, and shared cutting boards/utensils at home or in restaurants

NATURALLY GLUTEN-FREE FOODS TO BUILD MEALS AROUND

Grains & Starches

- Rice (brown, white, wild) — whole-grain rice preferred for fiber
- Maize/corn (whole, not highly processed) and organic corn tortillas
- Quinoa, buckwheat, millet, teff, sorghum, amaranth
- Certified gluten-free oats
- Potatoes and sweet potatoes

Protein

- Grass-fed beef, lamb, and bison
- Organic poultry
- Wild-caught fish and seafood
- Eggs (organic/pastured preferred)
- Legumes: lentils, chickpeas, black beans, and other beans

Produce, Fats & More

- All fresh vegetables and fruits
- Raw nuts and seeds (organic almonds/almond flour preferred)
- Olive oil, avocado oil, coconut oil, ghee/butter (grass-fed when possible)
- Organic, cultured dairy in moderation if tolerated (avoid if SIBO)

GETTING STARTED: PRACTICAL TIPS

Reading Labels

- **Do a full pantry check:** Read every label for wheat, barley, rye, malt, and "modified food starch" unless specified gluten-free.
- **Look for "certified gluten-free" labeling,** which generally indicates testing below a defined threshold. Labeling standards and thresholds can vary by country, so this is a helpful but not absolute guide.
- **Keep it simple at first:** Whole foods (meat, fish, eggs, vegetables, rice, potatoes, fruit) are gluten-free by nature and remove the guesswork.

In the Kitchen & Eating Out

- **Avoid cross-contamination at home:** Separate toaster, cutting board, colander, and condiment jars (no double-dipping a knife used on regular bread back into shared butter or jam).
- **When eating out,** ask how food is prepared and whether a shared fryer is used, and request no croutons/breading.
- **Batch-cook gluten-free grains** (rice, quinoa) at the start of the week to make meal assembly easier.

A FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE PERSPECTIVE ON QUALITY

Removing gluten is the first step. In this practice, we also encourage attention to overall food quality, since many gluten-free packaged products are ultra-processed and high in refined starches, sugar, and inflammatory oils.

- Choose organic when possible, and especially for the "Dirty Dozen" produce, to reduce pesticide and glyphosate exposure.
- **Organic almonds and almond flour are preferred,** since almonds can carry notable glyphosate residue when conventionally grown and are a very common gluten-free baking substitute.
- Favor grass-fed meat, organic poultry, and organic dairy (cultured/fermented dairy such as yogurt or kefir when tolerated — limit or avoid if SIBO is present).
- Avoid GMOs, artificial fragrances, and endocrine-disrupting chemicals in food packaging and personal care products where practical.
- Prioritize whole, naturally gluten-free foods (vegetables, fruit, quality protein, legumes, gluten-free whole grains) over gluten-free-labeled packaged snacks and baked goods.

IMPORTANT: FIBER, DIGESTION & SIDE EFFECTS

Removing gluten-containing grains also removes a major source of dietary fiber for most people — especially early on, while the diet is still centered around refined gluten-free substitutes (gluten-free breads, crackers, and baked goods are often low in fiber).

Side effects to watch for: Indigestion, diarrhea, constipation, abdominal pain, and gastroesophageal reflux — presumably from the **deficiency in dietary fiber** that can occur when gluten-containing whole grains are removed and not adequately replaced. This is a general observation and not a certainty for any individual; if these symptoms develop, persist, or worsen, discuss them with your provider rather than assuming they are simply "part of" being gluten-free.

Closing the Fiber Gap

Dietary fiber may be supplemented by increasing whole-grain rice, maize (corn), potatoes, and vegetables, or by taking psyllium husk.

- Build meals around fiber-rich, naturally gluten-free whole foods rather than refined gluten-free flours.
- Introduce fiber sources gradually to avoid digestive discomfort.
- Stay well hydrated — fiber needs adequate fluid to work as intended and support regularity.

Targets & Psyllium

General target: Roughly 30 grams of fiber per day where tolerated, emphasizing vegetables and raw nuts/seeds.

Individual fiber needs and tolerance vary — adjust with your provider, especially if you have SIBO, IBS, or another GI condition where higher fiber may worsen symptoms.

Psyllium husk can help bridge the gap for some people. Start low and increase slowly, with adequate water.

15 EASY GLUTEN-FREE RECIPES

Simple, whole-food recipes to help you get started. Where noted, choose organic, grass-fed, and gluten-free-labeled ingredients to align with the quality guidance above.

#	Recipe	Time	Serves
BREAKFAST			
1	Veggie & Herb Scrambled Eggs	10 min	2
2	Overnight Chia Pudding with Berries	5 min + overnight	2
3	Quinoa Breakfast Bowl with Cinnamon & Apple	20 min	2
LUNCH			
4	Grilled Chicken & Rainbow Veggie Salad	20 min	2
5	Lentil & Vegetable Soup	35 min	4
6	Salmon & Avocado Rice Bowl	25 min	2
7	Turkey Lettuce Wraps	20 min	2–3
DINNER			
8	Baked Salmon with Roasted Vegetables	30 min	2
9	Grass-Fed Beef & Vegetable Stir-Fry	25 min	3
10	Herb-Roasted Chicken Thighs with Sweet Potato	45 min	4
11	Zucchini Noodle Bolognese	30 min	3
SNACKS			
12	Almond Flour Energy Bites	15 min	about 12
13	Roasted Chickpeas	35 min	4
14	Guacamole with Veggie Sticks	10 min	4
15	Simple Trail Mix	5 min	6

BREAKFAST

1 Veggie & Herb Scrambled Eggs

Serves 2 · 10 min

INGREDIENTS

- 4 organic/pastured eggs
- ½ cup chopped spinach
- ¼ cup diced bell pepper
- 1 tbsp ghee or olive oil
- Fresh herbs (chives or parsley), salt, and pepper to taste

STEPS

1. Whisk eggs in a bowl with a pinch of salt and pepper.
2. Heat ghee or olive oil in a skillet over medium heat; sauté bell pepper 2 minutes.
3. Add spinach and cook until wilted, about 1 minute.
4. Pour in eggs and gently scramble until just set.
5. Top with fresh herbs and serve.

Tip: Naturally gluten-free — no cross-contamination risk from bread or croutons.

2 Overnight Chia Pudding with Berries

Serves 2 · 5 min + overnight

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup chia seeds
- 1 cup unsweetened coconut or almond milk
- ½ tsp vanilla extract (gluten-free)
- ½ cup mixed berries
- 1 tbsp raw pumpkin or sunflower seeds

STEPS

1. Whisk chia seeds, milk, and vanilla together in a jar.
2. Refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight, stirring once after 10 minutes to prevent clumping.
3. Top with berries and seeds before serving.

Tip: Chia seeds add fiber, healthy fat, and protein — helpful for the fiber gap left by removing wheat.

3 Quinoa Breakfast Bowl with Cinnamon & Apple

Serves 2 · 20 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 1 apple, diced
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 1 tbsp raw walnuts, chopped
- 1 tbsp almond butter (from organic almonds)
- Splash of unsweetened almond milk

STEPS

1. Warm cooked quinoa in a small pot with a splash of almond milk.
2. Stir in cinnamon and diced apple; warm through, about 3 minutes.
3. Top with walnuts and a drizzle of almond butter.

Tip: Quinoa is naturally gluten-free and higher in fiber and protein than most gluten-free flours.

LUNCH

4 Grilled Chicken & Rainbow Veggie Salad

Serves 2 · 20 min

INGREDIENTS

- 2 organic chicken breasts
- 4 cups mixed leafy greens
- ½ cup shredded carrot
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- ¼ cup sliced cucumber
- 2 tbsp olive oil, 1 tbsp lemon juice, salt and pepper

STEPS

1. Season chicken with salt and pepper; grill or pan-sear in olive oil until fully cooked (internal temp 165°F).
2. Slice chicken and set aside.
3. Toss greens, carrot, tomatoes, and cucumber together.
4. Whisk olive oil and lemon juice for dressing; toss with salad and top with sliced chicken.

Tip: Skip croutons and check that any bottled dressing is labeled gluten-free — this homemade dressing avoids the issue entirely.

5 Lentil & Vegetable Soup

Serves 4 · 35 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup dried lentils, rinsed
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 1 cup diced celery
- 1 small onion, diced
- 4 cups gluten-free vegetable or bone broth
- 1 tsp cumin, salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tbsp olive oil

STEPS

1. Heat olive oil in a large pot; sauté onion, carrot, and celery until softened, about 5 minutes.
2. Add lentils, broth, and cumin; bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer 20–25 minutes until lentils are tender.
4. Season to taste and serve.

Tip: Lentils are an excellent fiber and plant-protein source — always confirm broth is labeled gluten-free.

6 Salmon & Avocado Rice Bowl

Serves 2 · 25 min

INGREDIENTS

- 2 wild-caught salmon fillets
- 1 cup cooked brown rice
- 1 avocado, sliced
- ½ cup shredded cabbage or slaw mix
- 1 tbsp gluten-free tamari
- 1 tsp sesame oil, sesame seeds for garnish

STEPS

1. Season salmon and bake at 400°F for 12–15 minutes, or pan-sear until cooked through.
2. Divide brown rice between two bowls.
3. Top with flaked salmon, avocado, and cabbage.
4. Drizzle with gluten-free tamari and sesame oil; garnish with sesame seeds.

Tip: Regular soy sauce contains wheat — gluten-free tamari is the safe substitute.

7 Turkey Lettuce Wraps

Serves 2–3 · 20 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground organic turkey
- 1 head butter lettuce, leaves separated
- ½ cup shredded carrot
- 2 tbsp gluten-free tamari
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, minced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp avocado oil

STEPS

1. Heat oil in a skillet; sauté garlic and ginger 1 minute.
2. Add ground turkey and cook through, breaking it apart, about 8 minutes.
3. Stir in tamari and carrot; cook 2 more minutes.
4. Spoon into lettuce leaves to serve.

Tip: A naturally grain-free lunch option — no bread or wraps needed.

DINNER

8 Baked Salmon with Roasted Vegetables

Serves 2 · 30 min

INGREDIENTS

- 2 wild-caught salmon fillets
- 2 cups mixed vegetables (broccoli, zucchini, bell pepper), chopped
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 lemon, sliced
- Salt, pepper, and garlic powder to taste

STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Toss vegetables with 1 tbsp olive oil, salt, and pepper on a sheet pan.
2. Roast vegetables 10 minutes.
3. Push vegetables aside, add salmon to the pan, drizzle with remaining oil, and top with lemon slices.
4. Bake 12–15 minutes more until salmon is cooked through.

Tip: A simple one-pan meal with no gluten-containing ingredients at all.

9 Grass-Fed Beef & Vegetable Stir-Fry

Serves 3 · 25 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb grass-fed beef, thinly sliced
- 2 cups mixed stir-fry vegetables (broccoli, carrot, snap peas)
- 2 tbsp gluten-free tamari
- 1 tbsp avocado oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp fresh ginger, minced
- 1 tsp arrowroot or tapioca starch (optional, for thickening)

STEPS

1. Heat avocado oil in a wok or large skillet over high heat.
2. Sear beef in batches until browned; set aside.
3. Add garlic, ginger, and vegetables to the pan; stir-fry 4–5 minutes.
4. Return beef to the pan, add tamari, and toss to combine. If desired, stir in starch mixed with a splash of water to thicken.

Tip: Regular oyster and stir-fry sauces often contain wheat — build the sauce yourself with gluten-free tamari to control every ingredient.

10 Herb-Roasted Chicken Thighs with Sweet Potato

Serves 4 · 45 min

INGREDIENTS

- 8 organic bone-in chicken thighs
- 2 sweet potatoes, cubed
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp rosemary, 1 tsp thyme, salt and pepper

STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Toss sweet potatoes with 1 tbsp olive oil and half the herbs on a sheet pan.
3. Rub chicken thighs with remaining oil and herbs; place among the sweet potatoes.
4. Roast 35–40 minutes until chicken reaches 165°F internally and potatoes are tender.

Tip: Sweet potato adds fiber and naturally gluten-free carbohydrate to help fill the gap left by wheat-based sides.

11 Zucchini Noodle Bolognese

Serves 3 · 30 min

INGREDIENTS

- 4 medium zucchini, spiralized
- 1 lb grass-fed ground beef
- 1 jar gluten-free marinara sauce (check label)
- ½ onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp olive oil

STEPS

1. Heat olive oil in a skillet; sauté onion and garlic until soft.
2. Add ground beef and cook through, breaking it apart.
3. Stir in marinara sauce and simmer 10 minutes.
4. Lightly sauté zucchini noodles 2–3 minutes (or serve raw) and top with sauce.

Tip: Some jarred pasta sauces use wheat-based thickeners — always confirm the label says gluten-free.

SNACKS

12 Almond Flour Energy Bites

Serves about 12 · 15 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup organic almond flour
- 2 tbsp almond butter
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- ¼ cup unsweetened shredded coconut

STEPS

1. Mix all ingredients in a bowl until a dough forms.
2. Roll into 12 small balls.
3. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes before serving; store in the fridge up to a week.

Tip: Use organic almond flour specifically — conventionally grown almonds can carry notable glyphosate residue, and almond flour is a very concentrated amount of almonds.

13 Roasted Chickpeas

Serves 4 · 35 min

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can chickpeas, rinsed and dried well
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tsp smoked paprika, salt to taste

STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Toss chickpeas with olive oil, paprika, and salt on a sheet pan.
3. Roast 25–30 minutes, shaking the pan halfway, until crisp.

Tip: A fiber-rich, naturally gluten-free alternative to wheat-based crackers or pretzels.

14 Guacamole with Veggie Sticks

Serves 4 · 10 min

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ripe avocados

STEPS

1. Mash avocado with lime juice and salt.

- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 2 tbsp diced red onion
- Salt to taste
- Carrot, celery, and jicama sticks for dipping

2. Stir in diced onion.
3. Serve with fresh vegetable sticks instead of gluten-containing chips or crackers.

Tip: Skip conventional tortilla chips that may be fried in shared oil with breaded products; look for corn chips certified gluten-free if you want a crunchy dipper.

15 Simple Trail Mix

Serves 6 · 5 min

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup raw almonds (organic)
- ½ cup raw walnuts
- ¼ cup raw pumpkin seeds
- ¼ cup unsweetened dried cranberries or cherries (check label for added gluten-based glazes)

STEPS

1. Combine all ingredients in a jar or container.
2. Portion into small servings for a fiber- and healthy-fat-rich snack on the go.

Tip: Raw nuts and seeds support both fiber intake and the microbiome-focused approach used in this practice.

A NOTE ON GETTING SUPPORT

A 100% gluten-free diet is a meaningful shift, and most people find it easier with some guidance around label-reading, nutrient adequacy (including fiber, as noted above), and identifying whether gluten removal alone is enough or whether additional workup for celiac disease, food sensitivities, or gut health is appropriate.

This handout is educational and is not a substitute for individualized medical advice — **please bring questions to your next visit.**

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