



10 TIPS FOR A GLUTEN FREE CHRISTMAS

By Becky Excell



1. Mix cooking from scratch with easy-to-prepare festive products.

There's certainly no need to cook everything from scratch, even if you're gluten free. So please make sure you take full advantage of all the wonderful products that will inevitably pop up in supermarket free from sections during the festive season. They make preparing a gluten free Christmas so much easier and give you more time to focus on what you are cooking! The offerings in 2022 are SO much better than what they were five years ago and Coeliac UK have a fab Christmas Food List to help!

2. Prepare whatever you can ahead of time.

The best gift you can give yourself at Christmas is preparing as much as you can ahead of time. That way, you get to enjoy yourself on Christmas day. For example, you can easily prep all your veg and leave them in saucepans filled with cold water overnight then they'll be ready to boil the next day. Making gluten free Yorkshire puddings from scratch? Whip up a batch beforehand and once cooled, freeze them, then simply bake from frozen.

3. Have go-to, fail-safe recipes that everyone will enjoy.

It's a good idea to have a tried and tested, crowd-pleasing recipe in your back pocket (or even better: have the finished result ready in the fridge). This particularly applies if preparing dessert on the big day. How does a recipe become tried and tested? By making sure you've made it at least once as a test run!

4. Waste not, want not.

In our house, the best part of Christmas lunch is the leftovers. As tempting as it is to eat them cold or opt for the classic 'boxing day turkey sandwich', why not transform them into a boxing day dinner to remember? I usually use them to create a festive bubble and squeak or a turkey and ham pie both of which easily rival the best of Christmas lunches. Trust me, gluten free food is too precious to waste!

5. Don't let cross contamination crash your party.

Christmas day can be hectic but ensuring you keep cross contamination in mind before you even start cooking, right up to serving it, is essential. Don't let all your hard work be ruined by serving utensils finding their way from gluten containing food to gluten free food, or gluten containing breadsticks carelessly taking a dunk in an otherwise gluten free dip. Always keep gluten free food as far away from any gluten containing food as possible and of course, have separate serving utensils too.

6. Briefly inform your guests of a little gluten free etiquette - especially if there's party food involved.

For most gluten eaters, it's very unlikely they'll have cross contamination in mind unless they've been politely informed beforehand! Even something as simple as saying, 'the gluten free food is over here so make sure no gluten containing crumbs, food or utensils make their way over here, thank you,' will usually suffice but you could always make things easy for yourself and...

7. Make your entire Christmas gluten free.

When one of my followers first told me to do this, I was a little sceptical. Wouldn't everyone be against this? Would my family even allow it?! However, the first time I hosted Christmas at my house, everything edible was gluten free, yet nobody even noticed. There was no worrying about cross contamination, and I could just relax and enjoy myself for the first time in years! I know this isn't possible for everyone, but if you can...do it!

8. Ask your host to keep as much of the packaging from any products used as much as possible.

It's all too easy to grab a handful of this or that, or a chocolate from a selection box then later discovering the hard way that it did contain gluten. Even something as seemingly innocent as crisps can contain wheat in the seasoning and that's not to mention 'may contain' warnings too. Ideally (just like you would any other day of the year) you'd be able to have the packaging of what you're eating to hand to check yourself so if that's at all possible then make sure it happens.

9. If you're not sure, don't risk it!

For me, Christmas should be no different to any other day when it comes to gluten. If you're not sure if something is gluten free or can't check the packaging yourself to check with your own eyes, then don't risk it. No matter what food is in question, I can assure you that it's most definitely not worth it!

10. Don't forget to enjoy yourself.

As much as it's a top priority to ensure that you're feeling well and without symptoms on Christmas day, don't forget that it's supposed to be fun and enjoyable too! It can already be very easy to get stressed and overwhelmed when planning Christmas, let alone then throwing being gluten free on top of that too.

For more Christmas ideas including recipes, gluten free products, great gift ideas and exclusive giveaways, check out www.coeliac.org.uk/christmas

Photo: Hannah Rose Hughes

