

Italian Dining with Celiac Disease

There are many ways to make your dining out experiences safe and enjoyable. Remember to always understand the menu, make special requests, and ask the wait staff questions.

When dining out at Italian restaurants, what are some common menu items and how can you order them gluten-free?

Fresh Mozzarella with Tomatoes and Basil: Fresh mozzarella cheese, ripe tomatoes, and fresh basil drizzled extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar.

- ✓ Ensure vinaigrette is only olive oil and vinegar.

Prosciutto and Melon: Slices of melon wrapped in prosciutto.

- ✓ Ensure the prosciutto (or any cured meat) is not made with gluten containing ingredients; ask to see the ingredient label if the wait staff is unsure.

Mussels di Napoli: Mussels simmered with wine, garlic-butter, and onions

- ✓ Avoid broth made with beer, flour, or hydrolyzed wheat protein.

Roasted Branzino: Sea bass served whole or as a filet with olive oil, lemon, butter, and herbs.

- ✓ Ask if any broth is used in the preparation of the fish.
- ✓ Ask about any seasoning mixes used.

Shrimp Scampi: Large shrimp or prawns sautéed in olive oil, white wine, garlic, and lemon.

- ✓ Avoid shrimp that has been floured to hold the seasonings.
- ✓ If served over pasta, request gluten-free pasta cooked in fresh water in a clean pot.

Risotto: Creamy rice made with short grain or Arborio rice gently cooked in butter or oil, and broth.

- ✓ Avoid broth made with hydrolyzed wheat protein.
- ✓ Avoid risotto made from orzo instead of rice or with a flour thickener.

Gluten-Free Linguine Fra Diavolo: Gluten-free linguine pasta in a spicy seafood red sauce.

- ✓ Ensure the pasta is not boiled in fresh water in a clean pot.
- ✓ Ensure the sauce does not contain any broth, flour, or deep-fried seafood.

Chicken/Veal Piccata: Chicken breasts/veal cutlets dredged, pan fried, and served with a caper, lemon, and white wine sauce.

- ✓ Request the chicken/veal to not be dredged in flour, or request gluten-free flour.
- ✓ Avoid piccata sauce thickened with flour.

Chicken/Veal Marsala: Chicken breasts/veal cutlets dredged in flour, pan fried, and served with a mushroom and Marsala wine sauce.

- ✓ Request the chicken/veal to not be dredged in flour, or request corn starch.
- ✓ Avoid Marsala sauce thickened with flour (ask for gluten-free thickener as alternative).

Roasted or Steamed Vegetables: Vegetables roasted with herbs and garlic, or steamed.

- ✓ Ensure the steamed vegetables are not steamed over pots of boiling pasta.
- ✓ Ask about any seasoning mixes used on the vegetables.

Caesar Salad: Romaine lettuce, grated Parmesan, croutons and Caesar dressing

- ✓ Ensure Worcestershire or tamari sauce, and mustard are gluten-free. Avoid croutons.

Panna Cotta: Cold pudding made with sweetened cream and gelatin, often topped with a sauce and fresh fruit.

- ✓ Ensure wheat flour has not been added to the dessert.

Gelato: Creamy ice cream-like frozen dessert made with cream, milk, sugar, and flavorings.

- ✓ Ensure all flavorings and add-ins are gluten-free.
- ✓ Ask to have garnishes of cookies or dessert biscuits omitted.

Dishes to Avoid or Request a Gluten-Free Substitution: all pasta (penne, ravioli, gnocchi, etc.) unless gluten-free pasta is available; still advisable to ask whether separate water is used to prepare this pasta), bread, bruschetta, dressings unless just olive oil and vinegar, breadcrumbs, soups, deep-fried foods, croutons, pizza (ask for gluten-free crust, ask how gluten-free pizza is prepared [how toppings are added, separate pans, and separate pizza cutters]), meatballs (may contain bread or breadcrumbs), sausage (may contain hydrolyzed wheat protein or seasoning mixes), tiramisu, cheesecake, biscotti, and cannoli.

Always identify your needs. Consider carrying a [gluten-free restaurant card](#).

Keep in mind that if a utensil, preparation area, or cooking surface is used for foods that need to be avoided, ask for it to be cleaned before cooking your meal. To be extra safe, ask for disposable tin foil to be used.
