

Greek 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 Greek restaurants, what are some common menu items and how can you order them gluten-free?

Greek Salad: Romaine lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, onion, olives, and feta cheese drizzled with a vinaigrette.

- ✓ Make sure vinaigrette is only olive oil and vinegar.
- ✓ Ask for no croutons.

Avgolemono: A smooth soup made with chicken, egg, lemon, and rice.

- ✓ Make sure no flour was used to thicken the soup.
- ✓ Ask about any seasonings used.

Dolmades: Grapevine leaves stuffed with rice and herbs.

- ✓ Ask about any seasoning used.
- ✓ Make sure the leaves are stuffed with rice and not with tabbouleh (a salad of bulgur wheat, mint, parsley, tomato and other fresh herbs, lemon, and olive oil).

Tzatziki: Strained yogurt, garlic, cucumber, olive oil, fresh dill and lemon juice

- ✓ Use as a dip for meats or vegetables.
- ✓ Ask about any additional seasoning used.

Souvlaki: Skewered and grilled lamb, pork, or goat. May be served with tomatoes, onions, and tzatziki sauce.

- ✓ Avoid the pita bread and rice pilaf (may contain orzo) and ask for extra vegetables and plain rice instead.
- ✓ Ask about any seasonings used.
- ✓ Ask to have the grill cleaned before cooking.

Papoutsakia: Baked eggplant stuffed with tomato and meat sauce and topped with béchamel sauce and cheese.

- ✓ Request no béchamel sauce (contains flour).
- ✓ Ask about any seasonings used.

Grilled Meats and Seafood: Grilled chicken, lamb, goat or a variety of seafood are often offered on the menu.

- ✓ Ask about any seasoning used.
- ✓ Request the grill be cleaned prior to cooking your order.
- ✓ Avoid any rice pilaf or pita bread that may accompany the meat. Instead, opt for extra vegetables, plain rice, or a salad.

Gigantes: Giant beans baked with tomato sauce and fresh herbs.

- ✓ Ask about any seasoning used.

Briam: Roasted eggplant, zucchini and potato with tomato sauce and traditionally seasoned with oregano, garlic, and onion.

- ✓ Ask about any seasoning mixes used on the vegetables.
- ✓ Ask about any additional ingredients the restaurant may use in their recipe.

Skordalia: Garlic and pureed potato that is eaten as a dip or side with meats or seafood

- ✓ Make sure it is not thickened with bread.
- ✓ Ask about any additional seasoning or ingredients used.
- ✓ Ask for cut vegetables rather than pita to dip in the skordalia

Greek Yogurt with Honey and Walnuts: Creamy and thick yogurt topped with honey and walnuts.

- ✓ Make sure all flavorings and add-ins are gluten-free.

Dishes/Ingredients to Avoid: Béchamel sauce (unless gluten-free thickener is used in place of flour), spanakopita (spinach pie made with phyllo dough), Moussaka (contains béchamel sauce), Pastitsio (Greek lasagna, contains béchamel sauce and lasagna noodles), Koftedes (Greek meatballs which may contain bread or breadcrumbs), Loucanico sausage (may contain hydrolyzed wheat protein or seasoning mixes), pasta (orzo or any other type), pita bread, dressings (unless just olive oil and vinegar), deep-fried foods (such as calamari) unless coating is gluten-free and has been fried in a dedicated gluten-free fryer, thickening agents (unless arrowroot or corn starch is used), Baklava or Kataifi (both made with phyllo dough).

Always identify your needs. Consider carrying a [gluten-free restaurant card](#) in different languages or a [gluten-free restaurant card in English](#).

If a utensil, preparation area, or cooking surface is used for foods that must be avoided, ask for it to be cleaned before cooking your meal. To be safe, ask staff to use disposable tin foil.
