

## Coffee in cup to pickles on sandwich are GF

**Q. I love coffee of all kinds, but I am worried about drinking flavored coffee. I've heard that it's not gluten free. Is that true?**

**A.** For coffee lovers, even the thought of giving up any favorite brew can trigger fear of caffeine withdrawal symptoms. But you don't have to worry. It's hard to find a flavored coffee that is not gluten-free.

Coffee is flavored in two ways. Flavoring is either added to the beans after they are roasted but before they are ground, or it is added as syrup after the coffee has been brewed.

Joseph Staffieri, founder of Flavor Development Corp., a New Jersey company that makes flavorings for coffee, said it would be unlikely to find gluten in a coffee flavoring since gluten-containing ingredients are not part of the flavor-making process. In fact, his plant is completely gluten free and he has never used any gluten-containing ingredients.

Staffieri, who has worked in the flavor industry for 40 years and supplies flavors to coffee companies throughout the US and Canada, said it would not make sense for a coffee flavor maker to use gluten in a product. And even if a company did use a gluten-containing ingredient in a flavor, Staffieri said, the amount that would end up in the coffee would be so minute it would be untraceable.

He calculated that the amount of flavoring in a cup of coffee is about 1 part per million. That accounts for all the components of the flavor. Any theoretical gluten-containing ingredient would only be a small portion of that 1 ppm. Even if the flavoring was all gluten, at 1 ppm it would be well below 20 ppm, which is the amount the Food and Drug Administration has proposed as the standard for gluten-free food.

Many coffee companies say their flavored coffees are gluten free. The list includes Dunkin Donuts, Jelks, Melitta, New England Coffee Co., Green Moun-

tain, Zavida, and Gloria Jeans. Van Houtten Coffee specifically says its coffees are tested and are gluten free, but then takes the odd step of "discouraging people who acknowledge gluten sensitivity" from consuming their flavored coffee. It is unclear why they would go to the trouble of testing for gluten but then discourage those on the gluten-free diet from consuming their coffee.

Gevalia says its flavored coffee is not gluten free, but a company representative said in an email the gluten comes from corn. Corn gluten is not a problem for those who follow the gluten-free diet.

Most coffee flavoring syrups are also gluten free. Monin, Nature's Flavors, and Weldon Flavorings are gluten free. The flavoring syrup used by Starbucks is also gluten free. Meanwhile, DaVinci Gourmet Coffee said all of its syrup flavors, with the exception of sugar-free Dulce Deleche, which lists wheat on the label, are gluten free. If wheat is used to make an ingredient in flavor, it has to be listed on the label.

**Q. When the new gluten-free labeling law goes into effect will it require labels to list "gluten" in a food?**

**A.** No, there is nothing in the law that will require use of the word "gluten" on a label.

The part of the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) that deals specifically with gluten will set rules companies have to follow if they want to voluntarily use the "gluten free" label. It is separate from the part of the law that requires wheat and seven other allergens to be listed on a label whenever they are an ingredient in a product.

Even when a specific definition for the phrase "gluten free" is finally approved, nothing will change when a food is not labeled "gluten free." You will still have to look for wheat, barley (often labeled malt) or rye in the ingredients list. Barley and rye are not among the

top eight allergens covered by FALCPA.

You also have to look for oats because oats used in mainstream products are highly unlikely to be the purified oats allowed on the gluten-free diet.

There are some companies that voluntarily list the word "gluten" on their labels, usually after a "contains" statement. Generally, it refers to gluten from wheat (the word "wheat" which would still have to appear on the label).

It could also refer to gluten from barley or rye, most likely barley in a malt flavoring. But every once in a while a company will use the word "gluten" to refer to corn gluten, which is not a problem for those who follow the gluten free diet.

This does not happen very often, so usually the use of "gluten" on a label means you should avoid the product. If you do not see wheat or malt flavoring elsewhere on the label, and you think the gluten might be from corn, you can check with the manufacturer.

**Q. Do I have to worry if my child, who has celiac disease, uses papier-mâché? I am worried about the possibility it will get in her mouth.**

**A.** First of all, you do not have to worry about papier-mâché (which is usually made with wheat flour) causing a gluten reaction if your child gets it on her skin. The gluten protein that is harmful to those who have celiac disease is not absorbed through the skin. It has to be ingested to cause damage to the absorbing lining of the small intestine, according to doctors who are leading experts on celiac disease.

It would get into her mouth if she ate some or got some on her hand and then put her hand into her mouth. Personally, I can't think of anything less appetizing to put in your mouth than the goopy mix of wheat flour paste and strips of paper that make up papier-mâché. It doesn't even have the

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doughy texture and bright color that might cause some children to put play dough in their mouths.

But I understand your concern. If you are really worried about the possibility of the paste getting in her mouth, you can make gluten-free papier-mâché in a variety of ways. One is to substitute gluten-free flour for wheat flour when making the paste. You can also thin out Elmer's glue, which is gluten free, with water and use it instead of the flour paste. Or you can also use two cups of cornstarch, one cup of water and one cup of Elmer's glue. A pre-made product, called Ross Art Paste, will also work.

To be honest, I didn't worry about this when my daughter was young. It just seemed like such a remote possibility. But you may disagree. Fortunately there are a few options.

### Q. Is pectin gluten free?

A. Pectin, most commonly used in jams and jellies, is a natural gelling agent found in fruit. Apples and citrus peel are often used to make pectin, according to the International Pectin Producers Association. It is gluten free.

You might also find it on the label of yogurt and drinks made with milk, where it works as a stabilizer.

### Q. Is polysorbate 80 gluten free?

A. Polysorbate 80 is a food additive described in the Food and Drug Administration's Code of Federal Regulations as an ingredient manufactured when oleic acid reacts with sorbitol. It is used as an emulsifier in ice cream and other frozen desserts to help them have a firmer texture and retain shape as they begin to melt, and as an inactive ingredient in prescription drugs (*See page 19*).

Sorbitol is a slow-metabolizing sugar alcohol that most often comes from corn, fruit or seaweed. Oleic acid is a colorless oily liquid that is the major fatty acid in olive oil and canola oil. So polysorbate 80 is gluten free.

### Q. Are pickles gluten free?

A. A pickle is a cucumber that has been soaked in a briny solution to make it sour. My mother used to make the crunchiest pickles in a crock that sat in a corner of our kitchen when I was a kid.

That kind of homemade pickle and the kind you buy in a jar at the grocery are gluten free. Pickles are sometimes questioned because they are made with vinegar and the safety of vinegar has been questioned in the past.

But the vinegar is distilled and is gluten free so the pickles are too. Heinz and Vlasic brands specifically say their pickles are gluten free on their web sites.

### Q. What is wild rice and is it gluten free?

A. Wild rice is the grain of an aquatic grass native to North America, according to the USA Rice Federation. It grows naturally in water two to four feet deep along the margins of ponds or lakes in the Northern United States and Southern Canada.

Much of it is grown in Minnesota, which adopted wild rice as its official state grain. It is also grown commercially in flooded fields, called paddies, mainly in California.

Wild rice is dark, nutritious and naturally gluten free. It is often combined with white rice to create the popular long grain and wild rice mix.

Unfortunately, ingredients that contain gluten are often added to these mixes. Hydrolyzed wheat protein and soy sauce made from wheat are commonly used to flavor wild rice mixes.

But you can find some brands that are gluten free. Zatarain's New Orleans style Long Grain and Wild Rice contains soy sauce that is made from 100 percent soy beans. The mix does not contain wheat in any other ingredient. Near East brand Original Long Grain and Wild Rice does not contain any soy sauce or wheat. Read the label on private store brands to see if they are gluten free. The Giant store-brand Long Grain and Wild Rice sold at my local grocery is also gluten free.