

Dairy-Free Restaurant Guide

(excerpted from *The Guide to a Dairy-Free Diet*, by David Brownstein, M.D. and Sheryl Shenefelt, C.N.)

Research And Always Call Ahead

Doing research online or within a support group will help in selecting dairy-free restaurants. Call ahead to find out if your restaurant choice can cater to your dietary needs. Avoid busy restaurants and most fast food restaurants.

Speak To The Chef

Speak with the chef about options that can be made dairy-free and to ensure your food will be cooked on clean surfaces and with clean utensils.

Explain Your Dietary Restrictions

Say something like “I am on a medically restricted diet and need to avoid dairy including lactose and casein and any items that are derived from or may have touched these items. Can you or the chef help me in ordering my meal today?”

Items You Can Order

Stick to simple items such as grilled meat, fish, or poultry and a side of steamed vegetables, which are items least likely to be contaminated. Also, salads with lemon juice, oil, and vinegar (no cheese!) or non-cream based soups are also usually safe to order. Always ask for dressings, spreads, and condiments on the side. As for dessert, stick to fruit or fruit sorbet.

Items To Avoid

Avoid buttery foods, imitation foods, cheesy dishes, cream-based dishes, breaded items, ice cream, desserts and any other items for which the server or chef cannot tell you all the ingredients. Avoid creamy dressings and creamy sauces. Avoid the loaded baked potato – try roasted or steamed potatoes instead. Get items without the cheese on top – try a pizza with just veggies and sauce or try the burrito without cheese.

Confirm Your Order And Be Grateful!

Be sure to double-check with your server that your meal was prepared without any dairy and in a clean area to ensure you do not accidentally get unsafe food. If you have a successful dining experience, gratitude can go a long way!