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Eating Gluten Free in Bellingham

Travelers on a gluten free diet will be pleasantly surprised with the number of options available for delicious eating in Bellingham, WA. I made the switch to gluten free over a year ago. It takes a lot of will power, because that darn gluten is so yummy. Although it can seem like an overwhelming adjustment at first, once you learn which restaurants and bakeries provide special products, eating (and traveling) becomes fun again.

A fantastic gluten-free breakfast, or lunch, can be enjoyed at **Magdalena's Creperie** in Bellingham's historic Fairhaven district. A huge selection of crepes ranges from sweet (try mascarpone cream cheese, lemon curd and fresh berries) to savory (such as baked pork, caramelized red onion, fig jam, goat cheese and asparagus). Each can be made gluten free by requesting buckwheat flour. Magdalena is originally from Poland and has always loved to cook. She also specializes in Eastern European soups, baked goods and handmade Polish pierogi. Open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. www.magdalenascreperie.com.

Just across the Village Green, **Book Fare Café** is located on the mezzanine level of Village Books in Fairhaven. It's a great place for a casual latte and a snack. Owner Charles Claassen bakes all his goodies from scratch and usually has a full shelf of gluten free muffins and cookies at the counter. The gluten free chocolate chip cookie is amazing! He will custom prepare sandwiches with gluten free bread, and he serves a creative menu of soups made with locally harvested produce. Open 10 – 6 Mon – Sat, 11 – 7 Sun. www.bookfarecafe.com.

Avenue Bread, which has 3 locations in Bellingham: Fairhaven on 11th Street, Downtown on Railroad Avenue, and near Trader Joe's on James Avenue, produces its own "Almost Free" bread for the gluten intolerant. My favorite comfort food on the menu is Tomato Basil soup, which they make from scratch and is also gluten free! For an extra dollar it can be accompanied by a toasted slice of Almost Free bread for dunking. Sandwiches can also be requested on the Almost Free bread, when it is in stock. Other specialties include hearty American-style breakfasts and delicious salads. Hours vary at each location www.avenuebread.com.

For those of us trying so hard to stay on a gluten free diet, but longing for a tasty sandwich, the most consistent source is **Bellingham Flatbread & Bakery**. This little bakery is on the corner of Alabama and Cornwall Avenue. It is not a dedicated gluten free bakery, and does not have a seating area, but the owner takes great care to bake his Gluten Free'r items separately about every other day. The gluten free selection is wonderful including: flat bread that can substitute for a tortilla, white bread, french bread, rosemary garlic french bread, mocha coffee cake, pumpkin bread, pumpkin applesauce bundt cakes, turnovers, brownies, several types of cookies and even calzones. Sandwiches to go can be made to order on the Gluten Free'r Sandwich Bread.

On a recent visit I noticed a sign announcing their products can also be found at [Boundary Bay Brewery & Bistro](#), [North Fork Brewery](#) and [The Table](#).

I found **The Baker's Cousin** while strolling through the Bellingham Farmer's Market. Lindsay Kastelic was selling gluten free sandwiches. They were small, but tasted delicious. Her bread is made of almond flour. It was moist, flavorful and filling. I had the pesto, tomato and fresh mozzarella. Since I am not always able to visit the Bellingham Farmer's Market on Saturday mornings (10 – 3), I asked her if she sells her products anywhere else in town. She does – at Black Drop Coffee House on Champion Street in downtown. She also has a wonderful website with recipes at www.bakerscousin.com

Greene's Corner was an unusual find in Ferndale. Located at the corner of Northwest Avenue and Smith Road, it is a combination corner grocery, coffee roaster and gourmet pizza parlor operated by the catering company Fool's Onion. I stopped in to look around and my nose picked up delicious smells from the pizza oven. I asked if they ever bake gluten free pizza and I discovered they carry a frozen, 9-inch, thin crust they can bake at any time. Customers can select any 4 toppings for \$10.99. I chose chicken, artichoke hearts, tomatoes, spinach. The pizza arrived with a beautiful presentation and beautiful taste! I suddenly realized this is a place I could bring the kids to eat and *I* would go home full as well. www.greenescorner.com

Bellingham's go-to spot for a wide assortment of alternative foods – organic, vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free, gluten-free, etc. - is the **Bellingham Food Co-op**. It is primarily a grocery store, but is also home to the Swan Café, which serves deli foods, coffee and pastries and includes a nice in-store eating area with a microwave, tables and chairs. The Bellingham Food Co-op now has two locations: one store downtown at Forest and Holly in downtown Bellingham, and a second store near Whatcom Community College on Cordata Avenue. Open 7 am – 10 pm. www.communityfood.coop

What about dinner? The best gluten-free dinner restaurant I have found in Bellingham is **The Table**, which serves a forbidden treat – pasta! The Table is located at the corner of Champion and Commercial as part of the Mount Baker Theatre building in downtown, making it perfect for a night out. It is owned by Bellingham Pasta Company, which specializes in locally made fresh pasta of superior quality. The Table puts particular emphasis on local products throughout its menu including produce, fish, meats, wine and beer. The restaurant now features gluten free pasta on its menu, which can be paired with a variety of sauces. I ordered pink vodka sauce with chicken. Although much gluten free pasta is extremely fragile and disintegrates easily (due to the lack of gluten), this pasta held up great and was delicious. I could enjoy my dinner with pride. Hours vary. www.bellinghampasta.com

Another new restaurant in downtown Bellingham is also open for dinner with gluten free items on the menu. **Brandywine Kitchen** is located on Commercial Avenue. Although its specialty is sandwiches on their own traditional wheat breads. Gluten free entrees include Mac & Cheese made with quinoa pasta, Quinoa-Salmon cakes, and fish & chips with rice panko crust. Brandywine Kitchen also prides itself on sourcing local produce and locally grown products. Open 11 – 10 Mon – Sat and 4 – 10 Sun. www.brandywinekitchen.com.

Happy Eating!

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Original content here: <http://www.bellingham.org/blog/eating-gluten-free-in-bellingham/>