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# FOOD LABEL CHEAT SHEET

A quick guide to shopping gluten-free in the United States. Check the entire label every time, even for products you have purchased before.

## 1 LOOK FOR THESE FIRST

☐ A clear "gluten-free" claim. In the U.S., FDA-regulated foods using this claim must meet the FDA gluten-free labeling rule, including less than 20 ppm gluten.

☐ A reputable gluten-free certification mark. Certification is voluntary; requirements vary by certifier.

☐ A complete ingredient list and any Contains: Wheat statement. A wheat statement alone is NOT a gluten-free guarantee.

## 2 STOP AND CHECK THESE INGREDIENTS

☐ Wheat and its varieties: durum, semolina, spelt, farro, einkorn, bulgur, couscous.

☐ Barley, malt, malt extract, malt syrup, malt flavoring, and barley malt vinegar.

☐ Rye and triticale (a wheat-rye hybrid).

☐ Brewer's yeast, unless verified gluten-free; check the source.

☐ Oats: choose oats specifically labeled gluten-free due to cross-contact risk.

## 3 WORDS THAT NEED CONTEXT

☐ Modified food starch: in U.S. FDA-regulated foods, wheat-derived starch must identify wheat in the ingredient/allergen labeling. Still check the full label.

☐ Natural flavors, sauces, spice mixes, seasonings, soups, and marinades: not automatically unsafe, but check ingredients and gluten-free claims.

☐ "May contain wheat" / "shared equipment": voluntary precautionary statements; their absence does not prove a food is free from cross-contact.

IMPORTANT: "Wheat-free" is not the same as "gluten-free." Barley and rye also contain gluten.

# SMART SHOPPING: 5-SECOND LABEL CHECK

## BEFORE YOU PUT IT IN YOUR CART

☐ Find a gluten-free claim or credible certification when buying higher-risk packaged foods.

☐ Read the full ingredient list for wheat, barley, rye, malt, and triticale.

☐ Check allergen information, but remember: U.S. major-allergen labeling covers wheat, not barley or rye.

☐ Review precautionary statements and assess cross-contact risk, especially for celiac disease.

☐ If uncertain, check the manufacturer's current product information or choose another product.

## COMMON SHOPPING QUESTIONS

Does "no gluten ingredients" mean gluten-free? Not necessarily. It does not establish that cross-contact has been controlled.

Does a gluten-free label always mean zero gluten? No. The FDA threshold is less than 20 parts per million for FDA-regulated foods labeled gluten-free.

Is malt vinegar gluten-free? Barley malt vinegar is not gluten-free. Distilled vinegar is generally gluten-free when properly distilled and no gluten-containing ingredients are added afterward.

What about oats? Choose oats labeled gluten-free. People with celiac disease should discuss introducing oats with their healthcare professional; a minority may react to oat protein.

## KEEP THIS HANDY

Save to your phone, print for your grocery bag, or share with a friend. This guide is for education and is not a substitute for individualized medical or dietetic advice.

Source guidance: U.S. FDA Gluten-Free Labeling of Foods (21 CFR 101.91), FDA food allergen labeling guidance, and Celiac Disease Foundation consumer education. Rules and product formulations may change.

**Gfreeva | Gluten-free living, made easier.**

## Ingredient names and terms to check




**Important clarification:** The graphic is a quick reference, not a definitive list of gluten ingredients. Natural flavors, seasonings, dextrin, vegetable starch, and hydrolyzed proteins are **not automatically sources of gluten**. Check the full ingredient statement, the source where disclosed, and gluten-free claims; contact the manufacturer when uncertain. Malt from barley and malt vinegar are not gluten-free.

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# Gluten-free certification reference




**Certification note:** This supplied graphic is an educational reference and may reflect historical program criteria. Certification standards, testing limits, and logos can change. Check each certifier's current requirements and verify the mark on the actual product. The U.S. FDA gluten-free labeling standard is less than 20 ppm; individual certification programs may use stricter limits.

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