

GLUTEN

By AnnParkinson

Gluten Categories

- About Gluten
- Celiac Disease
- Gluten Free Breads
- Gluten Free Foods
- Gluten Free Recipes
- Gluten Sensitivity
- Gluten Slideshows

Gluten-Free at The Melting Pot

The Melting Pot offers an exquisite and original [dining experience](#). Everyone from fondue-fans to discriminating gourmets will find the Melting Pot's menu ready to deliver, but what of those individuals who must adhere to a [gluten-free diet](#)? Recently, The Melting Pot has made admirable efforts to provide interested parties with several gluten-free options. In fact, savvy gluten-freeers can easily customize their entire meal to meet their dietary needs. Make no mistake; there is no sacrifice in taste when it comes to such necessary modifications.

About The Melting Pot

The Melting Pot is an upscale fondue-based [eatery](#). Its first location opened in Maitland, Florida in April of 1975, but from this small emergence The Melting Pot has vastly expanded and now offers dozens of locations nationwide. The menu's focus on fondue makes The Melting Pot an excellent choice for romantic evenings, group events and parties, though it might be easy for a lone gluten-free individual to become lost during the experience. Fortunately this is not the case. The Melting Pot staff is eager to aid the perplexed diner, and each server is trained to assist patrons through the menu's nuances. Gluten-free options abound, from the cheese fondue course to the particular cooking preparations for entrees, not forgetting a delicious denouement of a chocolate fondue dessert.



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Gluten-Free at The Melting Pot: Interview with Sandy D'Elosua

Sandy D'Elosua, National Director of Communications for the Melting Pot, outlines your potential gluten-free experience at various Melting Pot locations.

The Inspiration

LovetoKnow: Several chain restaurants are now including gluten-free options in their repertoire. What inspired The Melting Pot to cater to the gluten-free crowd?

Sandy D'Elosua: Considering one in 100 people have celiac disease, guests have been requesting a gluten-free option for about two years, so we worked with GIG, the Gluten Intolerance Group, to help find a solution. With GIG's help in 2010, we developed and rolled out an easy-to-read version of the menu that tells guests exactly what is gluten free and how to request gluten-free items.

LTK: Do all Melting Pot locations offer the same gluten-free choices, or do some differ in their fare?

SD: All of our locations offer the same gluten-free options.

The Menu

LTK: The Melting Pot's fondue-style menu features many inherently gluten-free options such as fresh vegetables, meats, seafood, and cheeses. The trick seems to lie in the smaller ingredients, the wheat-based thickeners and certain brands of beer base. Aside from



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139

customers needing to avoid any breads and make special requests regarding the substitution of cornstarch for wheat-based thickeners, what other potentially hazardous sections of The Melting Pot menu still need to be considered?

SD: The gluten-free menu includes the following revisions:

- **Cheese course** - Considering The Melting Pot cheese is normally floured, guests requesting the gluten-free option must request for the cheese to be made with cornstarch. Also, instead of the guest receiving bread, cauliflower, carrots and celery, he/she will receive more veggies and broccoli.
- **Salad course** - All salads are gluten free. The only items that need to be removed are croutons.
- **Entrée course** - Most of the items on the entrée list are gluten free. Items that need to be substituted out include the teriyaki sirloin and spring vegetable dumplings.
- **Dessert course** - Two of the chocolate fondues contain gluten: Cookies n' Cream Marshmallow Dream and the Chocolate S'mores because of the Oreo cookies and graham crackers. A specialized dessert plate is also prepared to include strawberries, bananas, plain marshmallows and pineapple. Cheesecake, pound cake, Rice Krispie treats and brownies all contain flour and are not included on the GF menu.
- **Beverages** - All wines and mandatory specialty drinks are gluten free. Red Bridge, a gluten-free beer by Anheuser Busch, is used as a substitution base for some of the cheeses.

Special Considerations

LTK: Regarding the issue of cross-contamination, are any special measures taken by the kitchen staff during food preparation to protect gluten-free ingredients?

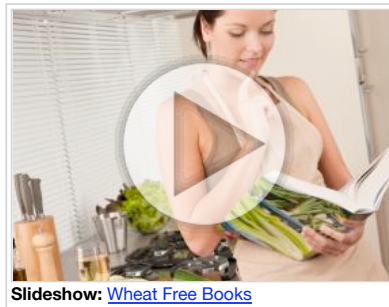
SD: Yes, we have a separate Gluten training guide that is part of regular new team member training. The training includes how to avoid cross-contamination (keep foods separate, use fresh clean gloves, do not use common utensils etc.), how to set up each of the stations and the start over rule - if gluten-containing items are placed on the plate by mistake, start over with a fresh, clean sanitized plate.

LTK: Does the Melting Pot have any current or future plans to expand its gluten-free options?

SD: Because we currently offer so many gluten-free options, we have not found there is a demand for more. We are currently testing mixing cornstarch in all of our cheeses so we could possibly be offering gluten-free cheese without the guest having to request for it to be made with cornstarch.

Further Information

For more information about The Melting Pot, you can consult the official restaurant website at MeltingPot.com. Details regarding The Melting Pot locations, event planning, reservations, as well as downloadable versions of the Melting Pot's full menu, are also available online.



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