

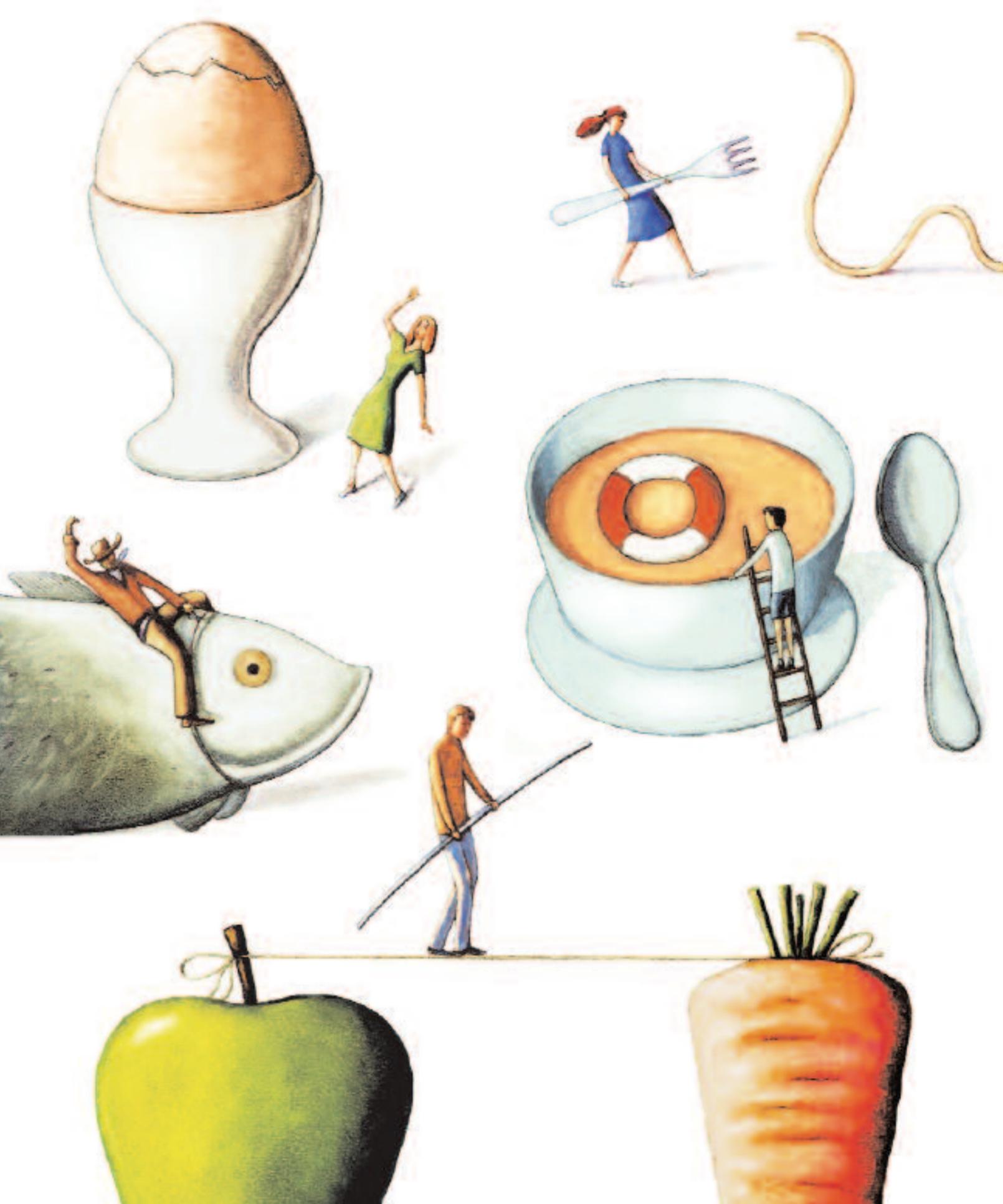
| SPECIAL REPORT |

how to
eat
A R O U N D
allergies

WHAT TO SERVE WHEN THERE'S NOTHING THEY CAN EAT

BY CHERYL STERNMAN RULE

FOOD PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEN BURRIS | ILLUSTRATION BY MARIUSZ STAWARSKI



EARLIER THIS YEAR, my 5-year-old son, Alex, joined the growing ranks of Americans who have tested positive for food allergies. Alex had been sick to his stomach, off and on, for weeks. Tests revealed allergic responses to a large number of foods and an abnormally high white blood cell count. An allergist advised us to temporarily eliminate wheat, dairy, chicken, fish, pork, beef and eggs from Alex's diet. My husband and I were stunned.

I ran through his favorite foods in my head, mentally ticking off those that were suddenly forbidden. Milk? Gone. Regular pasta? Nope. Bread, brownies, crackers, pizza? History. Cheese sticks, squeezable yogurts, hamburgers? Sorry.

For a while, it was tough going. Try explaining to a kid why you're suddenly serving his sandwiches on crackly brown-rice tortillas with egg-free mayo, and you'll know what I mean. But we adjusted. Turns out, oat flour makes terrific cookies and pancakes. Quinoa spaghetti holds up well to marinara. Fortified rice milk and soymilk work beautifully in many recipes. And whoever invented dairy-free chocolate chips earned a place of honor in our home.

Perhaps what surprised me most during the early weeks of Alex's ordeal was how many people told me they, too, had to avoid certain foods, or knew of someone else with a food restriction. According to the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network, about 12 million Americans have food allergies. A true food allergy causes the body's immune system to attack the proteins in a particular food, releasing chemicals (histamines) and causing symptoms like hives, gastrointestinal or respiratory distress. Symptoms, whether mild or severe, occur quickly: within a few minutes to two hours of eating. In the most severe cases, they progress to anaphylaxis, a potentially fatal condition in which the allergic reaction overtakes the entire body.

Any food can cause an allergic reaction, but 90 percent of the time one of the "Big Eight" foods—milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish or shellfish—is the trigger. Allergists and immunologists don't understand why these foods cause a reaction, nor do they know exactly what leads someone to develop a food allergy. There does, however, appear to be a genetic component, as studies show those who suffer from hay fever, or asthma, or who have family members with allergies, are more likely to develop food allergies.

Still, anyone can develop a food allergy, at any time, says Scott Sicherer, M.D., associate professor of pediatrics at the Jaffe Food Allergy Institute at Mount

Sinai in New York and author of *Understanding and Managing Your Child's Food Allergies* (Johns Hopkins Press, 2006). Some allergies—including milk, eggs, soy and wheat allergies—appear more often during childhood, and many kids outgrow them. Others, like shellfish allergies, tend to develop during adulthood. Such is the highly individual (and unpredictable) nature of the food-allergy beast.

Many people mistake localized discomfort, say a rumbling tummy after eating certain foods, as a food allergy, but it's generally not. In fact, according to Dr. Sicherer, "Roughly 20 percent of people think they have food allergies, but the majority of them don't." They may, for example, have suffered a single bout of food poisoning or have trouble digesting certain sugars, but these don't fall under the food-allergy umbrella. Knowing the difference is often tricky, which is why consulting a doctor is so important.

For instance, milk is one food to which people can either be allergic or intolerant (or both), so it's useful for highlighting the difference between the two terms. When the milk's *protein* triggers an immune reaction like hives or breathing problems, this is usually a milk allergy. But when a person can't digest the milk's *sugars* (often causing loose stools), this is usually lactose intolerance. (For more on lactose intolerance, visit eatingwell.com.)

According to Annie Khuntia, M.D., clinical associate of allergy and immunology at the University of Chicago, two main tests can help determine the presence of a food allergy. One involves putting a small amount of the suspected allergen underneath the skin and looking for a raised bump, or wheal. "This method provides quick, easy results within 15 or 20 minutes," Dr. Khuntia says. Another, the RAST blood test, "gives you a quantitative number to follow over time." (Both tests have high

ARE ALLERGIES ON THE RISE?

The Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network (FAAN), a nonprofit group dedicated to raising awareness of food allergies, conducted a telephone survey of 13,000 households (in which 5,000 participated) and determined that peanut allergies doubled in children between 1997 and 2002. But that's not all. "Anecdotally," says FAAN's CEO and founder Anne Muñoz-Furlong, "we know from physicians and school nurses that other food allergies, and allergies in general, have increased as well."

Identifying what's responsible for the increased prevalence of allergies is difficult—but several theories abound. One is the so-called "hygiene hypothesis," which posits that we've done such a good job eradicating diseases and sanitizing our environment that our immune systems are looking for something to do. Another theory is that we're introducing potentially allergenic foods too early, or too late, into young children's diets.

Could it be that we're all exposed to more and more of the "Big Eight" allergens through processed foods and this might be contributing to the rising rates? "Possibly," says Annie Khuntia, M.D., clinical associate of allergy and immunology at the University of Chicago. "But it's really difficult to come to this conclusion because there isn't any evidence to support it. This issue hasn't been studied." At this point, say experts, most hypotheses tend to be, well, educated guesses. "Even the big players tend to disagree," says Khuntia. "It's an evolving science." —C.S.R.

LA CENSE BEEF AD TO COME

WHAT-THEY-CAN-EAT CHEAT SHEET Following the guide below can help you avoid off-limits foods when preparing a meal for someone with food allergies or other special eating needs. While hidden sources are not as elusive as they were before it became mandatory to list, in plain language, ingredients derived from “Big Eight” allergens, you still need to read labels. We’ve simplified that job by identifying some foods in which “Big Eight”-derived ingredients are common, plus we offer ideas for modifying favorite dishes so all can enjoy them. Note: The following is not a substitute for professional medical advice and, since allergies and intolerances are quite variable, it’s best to ask your guests about their specific restrictions before you start planning a dinner menu.

| | AVOID OFF-LIMITS FOODS | READ LABELS OF COMMON HIDDEN SOURCES | MAKE DELICIOUS SWAPS |
|--|--|--|--|
| MILK ALSO RELEVANT TO: • people with lactose intolerance (though many can tolerate yogurt and aged cheeses) • vegans | Cow’s milk and all food products—including butter, buttermilk, cheese, cream cheese, cream, half and half, ice cream, cottage cheese, yogurt, pudding, sour cream—made from it. Plus, many (but not all) people who are allergic to cow’s milk are sensitive to proteins in goat’s milk and sheep’s milk too. | Deli meats and hot dogs, veggie burgers, sorbet, canned tuna, chocolate, non-dairy creamers, commercial breads and rolls, salad dressings and mayonnaise. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitute an equal amount of rice milk, soymilk or almond milk in recipes. • Blend soy yogurt into smoothies. • Make a cheese-less pesto. • Bake cookies with nonhydrogenated margarine, soy/rice milk, dairy-free chocolate chips. <p>NOTE: For more substitution ideas, see our Milk Buyer’s Guide, page TK.</p> |
| EGG ALSO RELEVANT TO: • vegans | Eggs. NOTE: Some people are so sensitive to egg proteins that cooking fumes can stoke an allergic reaction. | Ice creams, egg substitutes, pastas, candies, hot dogs, meatballs, breads, rolls and other baked goods, mayonnaise, meringues, marshmallows, nougat and marzipan. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub mashed avocado, hummus or tapenade for mayo on sandwiches. • Scramble tofu with salsa, black beans and a little cheese. • Make your own frozen yogurt instead of eating commercial ice cream |
| PEANUT | Peanut butter, mixed nuts, beer nuts, peanut oil. NOTE: Experts often caution those with peanut allergies to avoid tree nuts, due to cross-contamination risks. Plus, about one-third of those with an allergy to peanuts (which are legumes like beans) have or will develop an allergy to one or more true nuts, which grow on trees. | Sauces used in ethnic—Asian, African and Mexican—meals (e.g., mole), candy, chocolate, sunflower seeds and nut butters (which often are processed on shared equipment, so read labels to find ones that keep peanuts separate), some natural and artificial flavors and many other foods (i.e., read labels of all processed foods). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dip apples in a little honey instead of peanut butter. • Pop your own popcorn when craving a crunchy, salty snack. • Think outside the peanut butter-sandwich box: try turkey-cranberry, Cheddar-chutney, goat cheese-roasted red pepper or Strawberry & Cream Cheese Sandwich (page TK). |
| TREE NUTS | Walnuts, almonds, cashews, pistachios, pecans, Brazil nuts, hazelnuts, chestnuts, macadamia nuts, pine nuts, and more. NOTE: Experts often caution those with tree nut allergies to avoid peanuts too. (See explanation above.) | Cereals, chocolate, candies, marzipan, nougat, mortadella, pesto and some natural and artificial flavors (i.e., read labels of all processed foods). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix your own nut-free trail mix with a variety of favorite cereals, raisins and banana chips. • Try whole-grain croutons in salads to mimic the crunchy texture of nuts. |
| FISH ALSO RELEVANT TO: • vegans | Finfish including tuna, salmon, catfish, and more. NOTE: Experts often caution those allergic to fish to be aware of cross-contamination risks of eating shellfish and other seafood. | Caesar salad dressings (many contain anchovy paste), Worcestershire sauce, fish sauce, caponata, imitation crab meat (a.k.a., surimi). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blend olives and sun-dried tomatoes into cream cheese as a substitute for smoked salmon on a bagel. • Prepare canned chicken as you would canned tuna. |
| SHELLFISH ALSO RELEVANT TO: • vegans | Shrimp, crab, lobster, crawfish, and more. NOTE: Experts often caution those allergic to fish to be aware of cross-contamination risks of eating fish and other seafood. | Fish stocks, flavorings (anything labeled “natural and/or artificial flavorings” may contain fish by-products). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try risotto cakes instead of crab cakes. • Stir up a festive batch of paella using a variety of meats and veggies instead of shellfish. |
| SOY | Soymilk, tofu, tempeh, edamame, soybeans, soy protein isolate, soy sauce, soy nuts, TVP or textured vegetable protein (defatted soy flour), tamari, miso. | Tuna, deli meats, hot dogs, vegetable broth, vegetable starch, textured vegetable protein, cereals, infant formulas, sauces, soups, many vegetarian products contain soy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a stir-fry with seitan (wheat gluten) or chicken, plus veggies, ginger and garlic (skip the soy sauce!). • Try paneer (pressed Indian cheese) in your curry. • Enjoy fortified rice milk on cereal. |
| WHEAT ALSO RELEVANT TO: • people with celiac disease | Wheat-based pastas, cereals, breads, bran; wheat germ, wheat berries, semolina (a type of wheat used to make pasta), kamut (used in cereals, crackers and pasta), bulgur, seitan. | Ice creams, bouillon cubes, potato chips, deli meats, French fries, soy sauce, many processed snacks (too many to list), breadcrumbs, couscous, spelt, hot dogs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiment with different pastas, including those made from corn, brown rice and quinoa. • Switch from flour to corn tortillas. • Use rice noodles for Asian-inspired dishes. |

any food can cause an allergic reaction, but 90 percent of the time one of the “BIG EIGHT” foods—milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish or shellfish—is the trigger.

rates of false positives, so follow-up testing is sometimes necessary.) Once allergies are identified and foods are eliminated, patients may need advice on maintaining proper nutrition. It’s unwise to self-diagnose and avoid foods haphazardly, since you may risk depriving your body of important nutrients.

Because avoiding known triggers is the only surefire way to prevent reactions—which can be life-threatening, particularly with peanuts, tree nuts and shellfish—people with allergies must be on high alert at all times, fastidiously reading labels and avoiding cross-contamination. Even trace amounts of peanut protein lingering on a utensil can cause trouble for someone with a peanut allergy.

Fortunately, in the last couple of years, living with food allergies has become a little easier. Thanks to the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA), which took effect in January 2006, reading food labels is no longer an exercise in deciphering secret code. For example, before the law passed, those allergic to eggs had to memorize a laundry list of terms (e.g., albumin) that implied “egg inside.” Now that food manufacturers must disclose in plain language the top eight allergens, those same people can look for a single word: “egg.”

Also, the number of allergy-friendly products has grown surprisingly large. In fact, a 2007 report from Chicago-based market research firm Mintel shows that the number of new dairy-free products more than tripled between 2005 and 2006 due to an increased awareness of dairy allergies.

Eating with food restrictions (or cooking for someone with them) is far from easy, as I learned firsthand. Still, as I also discovered in the early weeks of Alex’s allergy ordeal, many people do it every day, or at least know someone who does. I have a new appreciation for their challenges. I’ve also come to view acquaintances who keep kosher or follow vegan diets with new respect. After all, it’s hard enough to restrict your diet when forced to by medical necessity, but they choose to do so for religious and personal beliefs.

Following Alex’s initial diagnosis, I learned to cook creatively with the staples of an allergy-friendly diet—less-familiar grains, like quinoa, plenty of fruits and vegetables, fewer processed foods. The exercise was both eye-opening and a good lesson in nutrition.

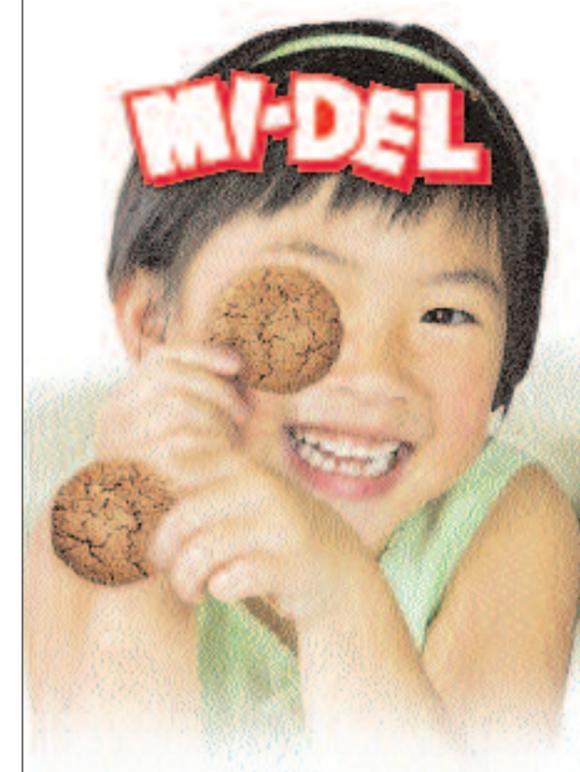
As it turns out, we were among the lucky ones. Alex’s symptoms were never life-threatening and we eventually got the green light to reintroduce many foods under careful supervision. Today, his diet is close to normal—a surprisingly quick turnaround that’s hardly typical among food-allergy sufferers. This whole ordeal even had a silver lining: together, Alex and I discovered a wide variety of new, healthful foods we might not have encountered otherwise. In fact, his favorite breakfast is still banana-oat pancakes, which are wheat-, egg- and dairy-free. And his dinners include more nutrient-rich grains and vegetables than ever before.

In the days when Alex’s eating was most restrictive, I came up with what I call “One Dinner Everyone Will Love,” a menu of three recipes that contain none of the Big Eight foods, so they’re appropriate for many allergy sufferers (as well as vegans and people with celiac disease). Even better, those without food restrictions can enjoy the same meal without ever suspecting that anything’s “missing.” (Recipes begin on page TK.)

This is a dinner without compromise, and it’s delicious proof that with careful planning and a little know-how, anyone can create a first-rate dinner.

Alex likes it too.

Cheryl Sternman Rule is a contributing editor for EATINGWELL.



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ONE DINNER EVERYONE CAN LOVE

...even people who can't eat dairy, fish, nuts, wheat, soy or eggs.

- Jicama-Apple Slaw
- Roasted Vegetable Enchiladas
- Dairy-Free Banana Rice Pudding

menu planner

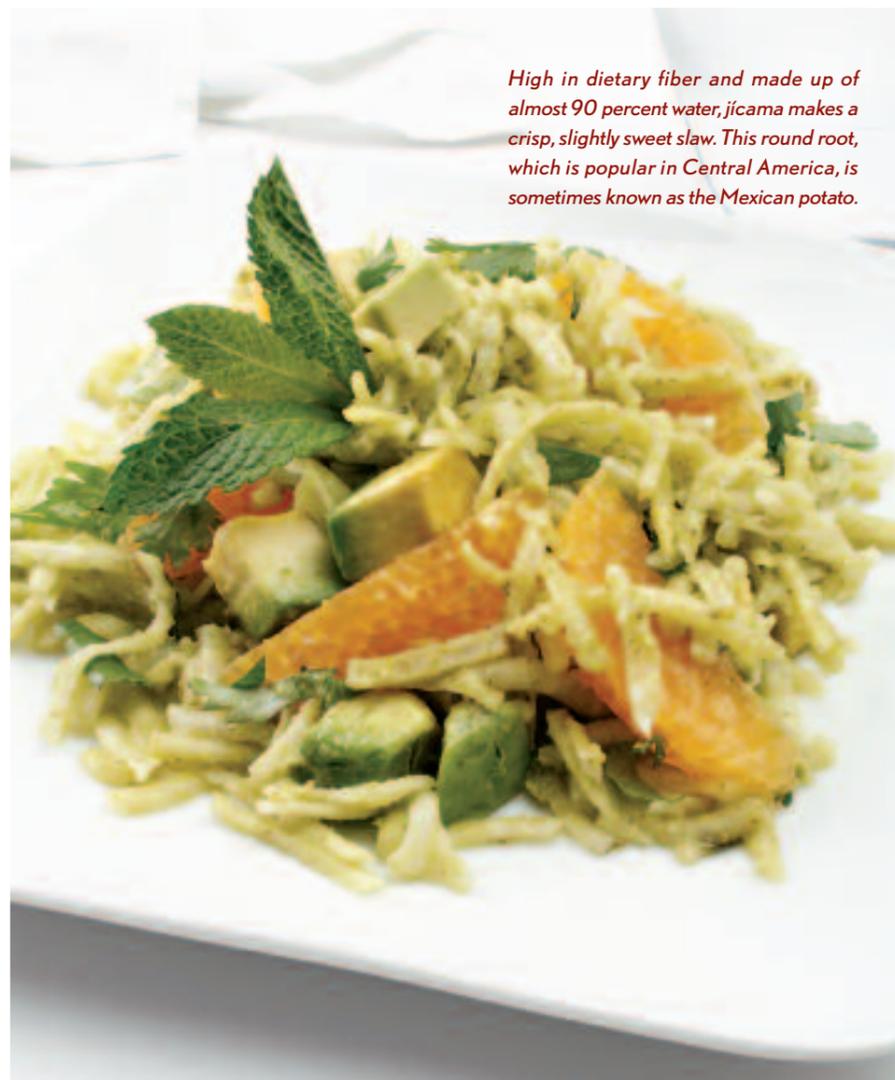
Up to 2 DAYS ahead: Prepare sauce (Steps 1-4) and filling (Step 5) for enchiladas.

Up to 1 DAY ahead: Prepare pudding through Step 3.

About 45 MINUTES before serving dinner: Assemble enchiladas and bake; keep warm in a turned off oven until ready to serve.

- Prepare slaw.

Just before serving dessert: Top pudding



High in dietary fiber and made up of almost 90 percent water, jicama makes a crisp, slightly sweet slaw. This round root, which is popular in Central America, is sometimes known as the Mexican potato.

Jicama-Apple Slaw

High Fiber

ACTIVE TIME: 35 MINUTES | TOTAL: 35 MINUTES

 Thanks to avocado and citrus, this refreshing salad manages to be both creamy and light. Some stores carry jicama that has already been peeled; by all means use it if you can find it. For best flavor and appearance, don't let the slaw sit too long before serving.

- 1/3 cup packed chopped fresh cilantro, plus leaves for garnish**
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint, plus leaves for garnish**
- 1-2 tablespoons minced jalapeño pepper**
 - 1 teaspoon sugar**
 - 3/4 teaspoon salt**
 - 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin**
 - 1/4 cup lime juice**
 - 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil**
 - 1 1-pound jicama**
 - 1 tart green apple, cored (not peeled)**
 - 2 navel oranges**
 - 2 avocados, diced**

1. Place 1/3 cup cilantro, 2 tablespoons mint, jalapeño to taste, sugar, salt, cumin and lime juice in a food processor. Process until finely chopped, about 30 seconds, stopping once to scrape down the sides. With the motor running, add oil through the feed tube in a slow, steady stream until the dressing is well combined. Transfer the dressing to a large bowl. Do not clean the processor, but change to the shredding disk.

2. Using a small, sharp knife, carefully peel jicama, making sure to remove both the papery brown skin and the layer of fibrous flesh just underneath. Cut the jicama and apple into pieces that will fit comfortably through your processor's feed tube. Shred the jicama and apple in the processor. Add to the bowl with the dressing.

3. Using a sharp knife, remove the peel and pith from the orange. Working over the bowl with the slaw (to catch any juice), cut the orange segments from the surrounding membranes, letting them drop into the bowl. Squeeze any remaining juice into the slaw. (Discard membranes and peel.) Add avocados; gently toss to combine. Serve immediately, garnished with cilantro and mint leaves.

MAKES 6 SERVINGS, GENEROUS 1 CUP EACH.

PER SERVING: 288 CALORIES; 23 G FAT (3 G SAT, 10 G MONO); 0 MG CHOLESTEROL; 27 G CARBOHYDRATE; 3 G PROTEIN; 8 G FIBER; 296 MG SODIUM; 584 MG POTASSIUM. **NUTRITION BONUS:** Vitamin C (120% DAILY VALUE), Fiber (32% DV), Potassium (17% DV).

WHO ELSE IS COMING TO DINNER?

You may never host a guest with food allergies, which affect one in 25 Americans. But it's likely that someday you will be in the position of serving someone who avoids certain foods for a medical condition, such as celiac disease, or for personal beliefs (e.g., veganism). Here's help in understanding your guests' reasons for not eating "everything" and advice on how to accommodate their needs, deliciously. —C.S.R.

"I'm lactose-intolerant."

TRANSLATION: This person doesn't make enough of the enzyme needed to digest lactose, the sugar in milk. Consuming dairy causes gastrointestinal discomfort (e.g., bloating, diarrhea) within 30 minutes to two hours. **ODDS:** 1 in 6 people. According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), up to 50 million Americans are lactose-intolerant. **RELEVANT CHEAT SHEET (PAGE TK):** Milk. **ALSO CONSIDER:** Using lactose-free milk. People with lactose intolerance can safely digest the proteins in milk, just not the sugars. Some can tolerate aged cheeses and yogurts with live active cultures. **LEARN MORE:** digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/lactoseintolerance/

"I have celiac disease."

TRANSLATION: This person cannot digest gluten, a protein found in wheat, rye and barley. Untreated, the disease can damage the small intestine, interfering with the body's ability to absorb nutrients. This can lead to anemia and osteoporosis. There's a genetic component to the disorder. The only effective treatment is a gluten-free diet for life. **ODDS:** 1 in 133 people, suggest NIH stats. **RELEVANT CHEAT SHEET (PAGE TK):** Wheat. **ALSO CONSIDER:** Your guest also must avoid rye and barley. Even trace amounts of gluten can cause health problems, so when using packaged products look not only for wheat-free foods but also a "gluten-free" label. **LEARN MORE:** celiac.org

"I'm a vegan."

TRANSLATION: This person chooses not to eat (or use) animal-derived products or products tested on animals. **ODDS:** 1 in 72 people. A 2006 poll conducted by the Vegetarian Resource Group found that 1.4 percent of American adults consider themselves vegan. **RELEVANT CHEAT SHEET (PAGE TK):** Milk, Eggs, Fish, Shellfish. **ALSO CONSIDER:** Vegan diets exclude all foods of animal origin, including meats, poultry, dairy and gelatin (some avoid honey too). **LEARN MORE:** vegan.org

KASHI AD TO COME



You won't miss the meat or gobs of melted cheese in these satisfying enchiladas. The secret is the poblano pepper, which lends an irresistible flavor to the sauce.

Roasted Vegetable Enchiladas

Healthy Weight High Fiber

ACTIVE TIME: 1 1/4 HOURS | **TOTAL:** 1 1/2 HOURS | **TO MAKE AHEAD:** Prepare the sauce (Steps 1-4) and the filling (Step 5); cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

Don't be daunted—these enchiladas are a bit of a project. But you can make the sauce and the filling ahead of time, then assemble and bake them just before serving. This dish has a bit of a kick, so if you're serving a crowd that likes less spice, substitute green bell pepper for the poblano and omit the ground chipotle pepper. **ALLERGY TIP:** Check the labels of your vegetable broth, bottled spices and pinto beans: some brands may contain unexpected allergens, such as gluten.

SAUCE

- 1 poblano pepper or green bell pepper
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup chopped yellow onion
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder

- 1/4 teaspoon paprika
- 1/8 teaspoon ground chipotle pepper (optional)
- 8 ounces tomatoes, roughly chopped, plus diced tomato for garnish
- 1 cup vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup packed fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped, plus more leaves for garnish

FILLING

- 3 bell peppers (1 each red, yellow and orange), diced
- 8 ounces cremini (baby portobello) mushrooms, diced
- 3/4 cup diced red onion
- 4 1/2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper to taste
- 1 15-ounce can pinto beans, rinsed
- 12 6-inch corn tortillas

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. **To prepare sauce:** Roast poblano (or bell) pepper directly over the flame of a gas burner, turning frequently with tongs, until evenly

charred. (Alternatively, char under the broiler, turning once or twice, for 5 to 7 minutes total.) Transfer to a deep bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and set aside to steam for 10 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, heat 2 teaspoons oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add yellow onion, garlic, 1 teaspoon salt, cumin, chili powder, paprika and ground chipotle (if using) and cook, stirring, until the vegetables have softened, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat.

4. Peel the pepper, discard the stem and seeds, and chop. Add to the saucepan along with chopped tomatoes, broth and chopped cilantro. Return to medium heat and cook, uncovered, at a steady simmer, until the liquid has reduced slightly and the tomatoes have broken down, 10 to 15 minutes. Transfer to a blender and puree. (Use caution when pureeing hot liquids.)

5. **To prepare filling:** While the sauce simmers, place bell peppers, mushrooms and red onion in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle with 4 1/2 teaspoons oil and sprinkle with 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper. Roast, stirring halfway through, until the vegetables are tender and browned in spots, about 15 minutes total. Transfer to a large bowl and stir in beans. Reduce oven temperature to 375°.

6. **To prepare enchiladas:** Spread 1/2 cup of the sauce in a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Place a skillet over medium heat. Coat both sides of a tortilla with cooking spray. Heat in skillet for 5 to 10 seconds per side, adjusting the heat if the pan gets too hot. Spread 1/3 cup of the filling and 1 tablespoon of the sauce down the middle of the tortilla and roll it up to enclose the filling. Place seam-side down in the baking dish. Repeat with the remaining tortillas, filling and sauce. Spread the remaining sauce and filling over the enchiladas.

7. Bake, uncovered, until hot, about 15 minutes. Serve garnished with diced fresh tomato and cilantro leaves, if desired.

MAKES 6 SERVINGS, 2 ENCHILADAS EACH.

PER SERVING: 269 CALORIES; 8 G FAT (1 G SAT, 4 G MONO); 0 MG CHOLESTEROL; 45 G CARBOHYDRATE; 9 G PROTEIN; 9 G FIBER; 753 MG SODIUM; 726 MG POTASSIUM. **NUTRITION BONUS:** Vitamin C (120% DAILY VALUE), Selenium (25% DV), Potassium (21% DV), Vitamin A (20% DV), Magnesium (19% DV), Folate (16% DV).



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Dairy-Free Banana Rice Pudding

Healthy **X** Weight

ACTIVE TIME: 30 MINUTES | TOTAL: 3 1/2 HOURS (includes 2 hours chilling time) | TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare through Step 3, cover and refrigerate for up to 1 day. Finish with Step 4 just before serving.

*This rice pudding is dairy-free, but the bananas and rice milk make it so creamy and rich-tasting, no one will know the difference. **ALLERGY TIP:** Some brands of rice milk may contain gluten. Gluten-free brands include Pacific Natural Foods or 365 Organic.*

- 1 cup brown basmati rice
- 2 cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups plus 1 tablespoon gluten-free vanilla rice milk, divided
- 1/3 cup light brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon, plus more for garnish
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 4 ripe bananas, divided
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Rice milk, normally made from cooked brown rice, water and sugarcane syrup, is a luscious stand-in for cow's milk in this creamy pudding.



1. Combine rice, water and salt in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and cook until the liquid is fully absorbed, 45 to 50 minutes.

2. Stir in 3 cups rice milk, brown sugar and 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon and bring to a lively simmer. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Stir cornstarch and the remaining 1 tablespoon rice milk in a small bowl until smooth; add to the pudding. Continue cooking, stirring often, until the mixture is the consistency of porridge, about 10 minutes. Remove from the heat.

3. Mash 2 bananas in a small bowl. Stir the mashed bananas and vanilla into the pudding. Transfer to a large bowl, press plastic wrap directly onto the surface of the pudding and refrigerate until cold, at least 2 hours.

4. Just before serving, slice the remaining 2 bananas. Top each serving with a few slices of banana and sprinkle with cinnamon, if desired.

MAKES 8 SERVINGS, GENEROUS 1/2 CUP EACH.

PER SERVING: 208 CALORIES; 2 G FAT (0 G SAT, 0 G MONO); 0 MG CHOLESTEROL; 49 G CARBOHYDRATE; 3 G PROTEIN; 3 G FIBER; 182 MG SODIUM; 213 MG POTASSIUM. 🍴

Regular cows don't like me because they're jealous.
But I keep telling myself, Lily, you were born for a reason
and that's to make the greatest yogurt in the world.

Yogurt made with brown cows' milk is as creamy as
it is delicious.

It's what keeps me on top.

Lonely, but on top.



Brown cows
make the
greatest yogurt.

