

An aerial photograph of Manhattan, New York City, taken from a high vantage point. The foreground is dominated by the lush green trees of Central Park. In the background, the dense skyline of Manhattan is visible, with numerous skyscrapers and buildings. The sky is a mix of soft, hazy clouds and a warm, golden light, suggesting the time is either early morning or late afternoon. The overall mood is serene and urban.

explore

A LOCAL'S GUIDE TO

Gluten-Free in NYC

I'm not quite sure I qualify as a New Yorker, but I was born in Manhattan and have spent the last five out of six years living in Brooklyn. One of the best things about this city is its diversity, particularly when it comes to food. The five boroughs give no shortage of eateries, although eating gluten-free as a celiac can be tricky. It's something I have learned to navigate with both disasters and delicious results.

It may come as a shock, but there aren't as many 100 percent gluten-free restaurants here as you might think. While places like Manhattan's **Senza Gluten** and **Tu-Lu's Gluten-Free Bakery** do exist, they are few and far between. NYC is a notoriously tough place for restaurants to survive, and, unfortunately, not all that's gold can stay. Double-check your internet finds and recommendations, and remain vigilant, as gluten-free doesn't always mean celiac-friendly. I've been to places that boil gluten-free pasta in regular pasta water, who think "just a little bit" of flour is OK, or understand gluten-free to mean I'm avoiding cheese.

GETTING THERE

For most visitors, flying to/from JFK airport is the best call. However, if you're staying in north Brooklyn, LaGuardia (LGA) is the closest. If you're planning on staying on the west side of Manhattan, it's worth checking out flights to/from New Jersey's Newark Airport (EWR).

TRANSPORTATION

Walking is an easy, fun way to get around, and there are also several rideshare apps (I prefer Juno over Uber and Lyft). The subway can be a pain and hard to navigate for newbies, but it runs 24 hours and (eventually) gets you where you want to go. The \$32 weekly pass is worth it if you are planning to ride more than five roundtrips or 10 single-rides. It's good to note that Yellow Cabs have pickup and drop-off rights in all five boroughs, while green "boro" taxis can only pick up riders in boroughs outside of Manhattan (but can drop anywhere).

WHERE TO STAY

The Maritime Hotel

As you might guess, this 4-star boutique has an upscale maritime theme. Rooms sport a cabin-like design with large porthole windows and teak floors and walls, and the minibar selection is prime. The trendy Chelsea location is within walking distance to the Whitney Museum and Union Square.



The Pearl Hotel

This 4-star boutique has a great Midtown location right off Times Square, free wine and cheese happy hours, contemporary rooms, and free breakfast (though gluten-free options are limited). You'll also get a gym, in-room Keurig machines, and stay resort-fee free.

WHERE TO EAT

Instead of reiterating much of what you'll find with a few internet searches on gluten-free food in NYC, here's a local's look at my favorite spots in Manhattan. So come, take a walk with me.

Chinatown's Little Sheep Mongolian

Hot Pot is a must-visit during winter, but just as worthy of a stop on hot days. Choose from sliced meats, seafood, vegetables, and other items off the marked a la carte menu, drop them into a shared pot of boiling broth, and *voilà!* Split the pot with

vegan mushroom and spicy broth, and load up on potato noodles, pumpkin, a mushroom basket, and homemade meatball platter.

Russ & Daughters Cafe opened as an offshoot of the iconic **Russ & Daughters** "appetizing" shop off East Houston Street. Dive into the smoked fish boards served with spectacular gluten-free bagels and rye-style bread, and fill your glass with homemade soda, shrub or egg cream. Fear not, thanks to separate prep spaces, utensils, and toasters. For pizza, go to **Kesté** in the West Village, where the crust on their 18 gluten-free pies is so good you might cry! This small Neopolitan-style pizzeria has been praised as having the best pizza in New York *and* for being one of the top pizzerias in the country. A separate kitchen and dedicated wood-fire oven keep it celiac-friendly. Other pizza spots with gluten-free options include



Pie by the Pound near Union Square and **Two Boots**.

Mac ‘n’ cheese is my comfort food, and it doesn’t get much better than the piping hot cast iron skillet at **S*MAC**. Breadcrumbs and béchamel sauce are gluten-free, and all macs can be made with brown rice elbows (and dairy-free cheese). Go wild on the menu or build your own. My favorite is the Parisienne, bubbling with brie, roasted figs, rosemary, and shiitake mushrooms. To curb other comfort food cravings, tuck into some burgers at **Bareburger** or fried chicken at **Friedman’s Lunch**.

NY Dosas is a tiny, family-owned food truck inside Washington Square Park that makes 100 percent vegan and gluten-free dosas (a type of Indian pancake), perfect for grab-and-go park picnics. Lines are long, but well worth the wait. For more dosas or uttapams, head to **Hampton Chutney Co.**



in SoHo. As far as fine dining, **Cosme’s** haute Mexican cuisine and collection of mezcal and tequila is turning heads, and lucky for us, the menu is rumored to be almost all naturally gluten-free. I haven’t been, but the brunch menu looks especially intriguing.

WHAT TO DO

Manhattan may be a small island, but you could live here for years and never see it *all*. It’s easy to get overwhelmed with how to spend your time. My biggest advice – if you can – is to walk. I’ve found that much of what makes this city *New York City* is intangible, and often only discoverable by getting “lost.” Being able to stumble upon a great shop, restaurant, museum, bar, or street is one of the best things about the city.

Still, a visit to any one of NYC’s famous museums is always an excellent decision, especially during

inclement weather. For those interested in mixing art with exploration, I also recommend checking what’s on at some of the galleries in Chelsea, where you’ll find the largest concentration of art galleries in the world. Some favorites include **Paul Kasmin Gallery**, **Sikkema Jenkins & Co.**, and **Chheim & Read**.

Slow strolls along the raised, converted trail rails of the **High Line Park** are always a nice break from the busy streets, or you can move up, up, up to the truly phenomenal (and pricey) 104th-floor views at the **One World Observatory**. On nice weather days, quick ferry rides make for scenic passage to Brooklyn, Governors Island, or the Statue of Liberty, and perusing the city’s many outdoor markets is a must. If you’re feeling game, walk across the **Brooklyn Bridge** and stand between the city’s two most popular boroughs.

You can safely dine GLUTEN FREE in Italy



This guide to gluten free dining in Italy includes dozens of restaurant recommendations near major sites in Rome, Florence, and Venice.

Available on Amazon from
The Publisher of
GlutenFreeTravelSite.com

amazonkindle™

Read on any e-reader, tablet, smartphone, or computer with the free Kindle app.

BEST OF BROOKLYN CHECKLIST

Make no mistake: Brooklyn is both a borough worth visiting and a goldmine for culture, great food and different perspectives.


- Soak in stunning Lower Manhattan views from **Brooklyn Heights Promenade**, then take a ride on East River Ferry from Brooklyn Bridge Park.
- Take in the fantastic collection and thought-provoking exhibitions at the **Brooklyn Museum** (NYC's third-largest museum), then see what's blooming at the **Brooklyn Botanic Garden** next door.
- A picnic or stroll through the wild, gorgeous, and widespread grounds of **Prospect Park** (many argue that it's better than Central Park).
- Discover the colorful street art spread across **East Williamsburg**.
- Pick up locally made souvenirs and browse eccentric goods in DUMBO at the **Sunday Brooklyn Flea**.
- Eye picturesque Brownstones on tree-lined streets in **Clinton Hill**.

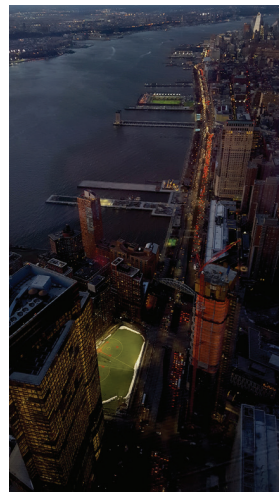
WHERE TO EAT

Brunch: Tradesman Bar – This East Williamsburg spot has a lot of heart and a great, no-fuss, seasonal and locally-sourced brunch on weekends. The menu changes weekly and is marked with vegan, vegetarian, and gluten-free options.

Lunch: Bogota Latin Bistro – Sink your teeth into tasty empanadas, arepas, plantain-crusted chicken and much more at this upbeat bistro in Park Slope. Marked menus, two dedicated fryers, and friendly staff make it easy to love.

Happy Hour: Maison Premiere – Indulge in NYC's obsession with oysters with one of the city's most celebrated oyster happy hours. Slurp through double-digit oyster offerings and sip a prohibition-style cocktail in trendy Williamsburg.

Dinner: Wild – It's 100 percent gluten-free Italian at this Park Slope spot, though don't waste your time on the pizza. Food is rich, so come hungry. 



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Katherine Alex Beaven is a travel and food writer and photographer. Whether on assignment or on vacation, Alex can usually be found at the nearest food cart or restaurant sniffing out the local gluten-free goodies. Her photography site, katherinealex.com, features some of the wildlife, landscapes, and portraits she's photographed along the way.