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Is Rice Gluten Free by Brandon Schmid

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Gluten free foods have now become the need of the hour as more and more individuals are falling prey to celiac disease or gluten intolerance - a disease of the autoimmune system wherein the individuals cannot digest or tolerate the protein composite â€“ gluten. Celiac disease or gluten intolerance is a disease that weakens the small intestine debarring it from its entire essential functions of absorbing nutrients from food digested.

There are three major cereals that are gluten rich; these been wheat, rye and barley. Rice is also a cereal but is gluten free and safe for individuals suffering from gluten intolerance. Both white and brown rice are gluten free. But, gluten intolerance sufferers need to be watchful before they go on to eat any preparation made from rice mixed with other cereals that contain gluten.

In its original form, rice is gluten free. However, several rice preparations involve addition of gluten containing cereals and celiac disease sufferers should refrain from such rice preparations. While dining out individuals intolerant to gluten should be careful before ordering rice preparations that do not contain rice in its plain form. In restaurants rice is many times mixed with sauces that contain refined wheat flour as thickening agent; and wheat as we all know contains gluten. Not only sauces, but rice preparations may also involve inclusion of sautÃ©ed vegetables that can again contain gluten. It is therefore preferable to order plain rice while dining out.

Rice can also become contaminated with gluten during harvesting, while packaging and transportation process. If the harvesting fields have been previously used for growing gluten rich cereals and the same is used for growing rice paddy then it can get contaminated with gluten. Rice can even get contaminated with gluten if the same storage containers that have been previously used for storing gluten rich cereals are now used for storing rice. Another potential source of contamination is during transportation. During transportation if the vans have not been cleaned properly and are been reused or carrying rice then there is a high risk of it getting contaminated with gluten.

Ready to eat rice meals are also available that require almost no cooking time. Such rice meals may contain some added cereals gluten rich stuff. Make sure you always read the ingredients that are listed behind the packed product. Carefully studying the ingredients will give you an idea as to whether or not the food product contains gluten. The labels may also list malt as one of the ingredients; remember that malt is always made from barley and barley contains gluten. Hence, avoid all those rice preparations that contain malt in them. Natural plain rice is gluten free, but modified preparation of rice containing vegetables and sauces may require addition of some products that contain gluten.

Rice has been crowned as the â€˜safe foodâ€™ for individuals who are intolerant or allergic to gluten or an other food stuff. Individuals sensitive to gluten have to use rice as part of their meals. Several products of rice such as rice flour are used as substitute to wheat flour. Rice and itâ€™s by products can be liberally used by anyone who suffers from gluten intolerance.

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