

# LIFE

The Intelligencer

## Hold the gluten

*Special orders don't upset the area chefs and restaurant owners who are trying to make dining out easier for those with celiac disease.*

**By Betty Cichy**  
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At Jules Thin Crust in Doylestown, customers can order gluten-free pizza with any topping except sausage.

Some people bring a bottle of wine when they go out to an Italian restaurant. Bill Lucas brings pasta.

The Burlington, N.J., - resident has celiac disease, and he can't eat anything made from wheat flour, including spaghetti and other traditional pastas. But he's found that if he calls ahead, and if he brings along the rice pasta he can eat, some chefs are willing to cook it (in a separate pot, so it doesn't pickup flour from the other pasta) and serve it to him topped with the restaurant's own sauce.

That's just one of the ways Lucas has learned to cope with a condition that makes both dining out and eating in a challenge. People with celiac disease cannot eat gluten, proteins found in wheat, rye and barley. Just a bite or two can bring on unpleasant reactions such as diarrhea, gas and skin rashes, while prolonged exposure can lead to more serious problems, including anemia,

Pregnancy complications, osteoporosis and cancer.

Lucas, who heads a support group for celiac sufferers in South Jersey, finds it's easier to follow a gluten-free diet now than it was when he was diagnosed 32 years ago. "It's a whole lot better as far as selection and people's awareness of it," he says.

Health foods stores used to be the major source for gluten-free products, but now, most supermarkets carry at least a few items, and Wegmans, Trader Joe's and Whole Foods offer an extensive selection of gluten-free flours, mixes and baked goods.

More and more restaurants also are reaching out to diners with celiac disease. The menus at Charlie Brown's, Steakhouse, Outback and several other chains indicate which items are gluten-free, and some restaurants have started to offer gluten-free versions of their most popular dishes.

But taking the gluten out of a recipe can be tricky, as John Ordway discovered. Ordway owns Jules Thin Crust, a

Doylestown pizzeria that specializes in organic, thin-crust pizza.

Soon after the shop opened a year ago, customers began begging him to make a version of his pizza with a gluten-free crust. Ordway studied what other people had done with gluten-free doughs, but it will took him and his kitchen staff two months to come up with a crust that would stand up to their toppings.

The one they use now is made with a combination of rice and tapioca flours, plus olive oil and egg yolks to hold everything together.

"We're constantly experimenting with it," says Ordway.

He notes that while some pizza fans might find the cracker-like crust a little lacking in character, customers with celiac disease are thrilled with it. "We had a woman in here who was 72. She was literally in tears. She hadn't had pizza for 15 years," he says.