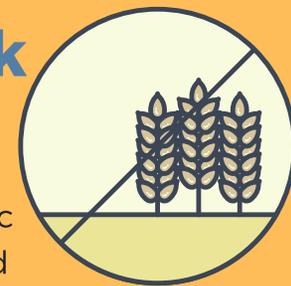


# What Can I Drink?

## A Gluten Free Guide to Booze

### It Ain't For the Weak

When you're gluten-free or celiac, knowing what to eat (and drink!) is all about the research. While some alcoholic beverages indicate that they are certified gluten free on the packaging, it can be hard to tell if some contain harmful ingredients, especially if they come from a small or craft manufacturer. Armed with basic knowledge and a few key questions, you can indulge (responsibly) without worry.



#### Is It Naturally GF?

#### What Should I Watch Out For?

#### What Questions Should I Ask the Producer?

##### Wine



Yes

**While wine is naturally GF, wine coolers are not always.** Check the labeling or call the manufacturer.

**There is a theoretical risk of cross-contamination from gluten in fining agents (used to clarify wine) and wheat paste used to seal the barrels for aging.** Even if these agents are used, it is unlikely the amount of remaining gluten would cause a reaction. Most celiac experts agree that the level of gluten in wheat-paste sealed wines is nonexistent or negligible, but those with a true wheat allergy should still be cautious if they are highly sensitive.

**What fining agents do you use?** If they use any other agent besides wheat gluten, then it is safe. **Is the wine aged in barrels or stainless steel?** If in stainless steel, it's safe. If in barrels, then **ask if wheat paste is used for sealant.** If wheat paste is not used, it is safe. If wheat paste *is* used, the product is considered safe for celiacs, but may not be for those with wheat allergies.

##### Cider



Yes

**Hard cider is almost always naturally gluten free,** as it is made by fermenting fruit juices with sugar and yeast. However, it is important to take note if there are other additives or flavorings that may contain gluten. Additionally, if the cider is manufactured in a brewery, it is important to note if the brewing or bottling equipment for the cider is also shared with the beer. **If the cider is not labeled as GF, then it is worth doing a little extra research by asking the producer.**

**Do you produce cider on any of the same equipment you use to produce beer?** There is a risk for cross-contamination if cider is produced on the same equipment. **Is your cider produced in a separate area of your facility from the beer?** As in any facility, there is a risk of airborne cross-contamination if the beer and cider operations are not separated within the facility.

## Is It Naturally GF?

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Beer



**Not Usually**

**Gluten Free Beer:** Brewed from a non-wheat base ingredient (such as rice, buckwheat, sorghum or corn) and contains no barley, thus is totally gluten free.

**Gluten Removed Beer:** Some brewers remove gluten using filters or centrifuges after brewing a traditional gluten-containing beer. In theory, this is meant to filter out the gluten proteins. Unfortunately, no current testing method exists allowing us to test the gluten content of brewed products (including soy sauce), therefore, it is impossible to verify if these products are at safe gluten levels for celiacs. Thus, gluten removed beer is only recommended for those with gluten intolerances, not celiac disease.

**Note:** Some other beers purport to be naturally low in gluten, but no testing method currently exists to verify these claims. Beer made with wheat or barley is never recommended for anyone with celiac disease.

**Is this gluten free or gluten removed?** If the beer is gluten removed, stay away. Should you feel the brewer's response to this question is not adequate, consider a follow-up question: **At any point in the brewing process does this product come in contact with wheat, barley, or rye?** Obviously, if the product is exposed to harmful ingredients at any point in the brewing process, stay away.

Liquor



**Yes**

**Believe it or not, ALL distilled spirits are naturally GF regardless of the original ingredients used to create the spirit.** This is because spirits are created by evaporating out the alcohol from the original liquid and then condensing it back into another container. Gluten is a protein, which is a solid, meaning the only ingredients consumed from the original ingredients are the ethanol, water and fusel oils. This means that if you are drinking an un-aged white spirit with no additives, then it is going to be GF.

**Many spirits are labeled as GF on the packaging.** If they are not, it may be worth contacting the producer for further details. The absence of appropriate GF labeling does not always mean there are gluten-containing additives, especially in the case of smaller-scale craft spirit manufacturers.

**In general, spirits are GF unless there are flavor or color additives that contain gluten or cross-contamination in the production facility.**

**Are there any flavor or color additives in your spirit that may contain wheat or gluten?** Some dark spirits are colored with caramel coloring that can contain gluten in rare cases.

**Is there any grain being milled in the same area where your spirits are produced and bottled?** This is most common in small facilities that are making whiskey. If the grain is milled in the same room as production and bottling, it is possible to have airborne gluten particles from the milling get into containers and equipment.

**Is wheat paste used to seal the barrels?** As with wine, some spirits are aged in barrels sealed with wheat paste. While this is rare, it does create a theoretical risk of contamination. (See the "wine" section for more details.)