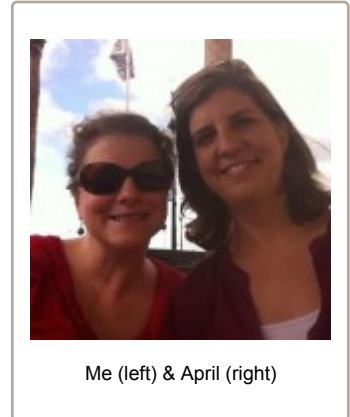


Dining in Disney with Dietary Restrictions

If you have food allergies or dietary restrictions then dining in Disney World, Orlando, Florida is about as good as it gets! From January 10-14, 2013, my good friend April and I were having a girls weekend at Disney. Although, our weekend wasn't all magical and didn't quite go as planned (more another time), the dining service was mostly excellent. I have been to Disney numerous times before and they do a great job with special dietary needs as I am sure you have heard. We stayed at the [Polynesian](#) resort which has small refrigerators in the room. I always travel with safe snacks to supplement other foods I purchase. We were not on a Disney dining plan for this trip. I have to be honest that I ate more sugar and "junk" food than usual this weekend as it doesn't happen often. I will highlight a few of the places we dined.



Me (left) & April (right)

Friday and Saturday morning we dined at the [Kona Cafe](#) in the Polynesian hotel. Once seated, I alerted the server right away who had the chef come right over to take my order. Both mornings I had scrambled eggs, potatoes, turkey bacon (not on the menu), fruit, and a small gluten free mickey waffle. It is great getting to speak directly to the chef about my options and to have even more options than there are on the menu. One thing I didn't like is that you after you discuss your order with the chef you have to wait to place your order with the waitress, seems this could be slightly more efficient. My food was delivered separately which made me feel that the order is truly safe. Later that Friday at the [Wild World of Sports](#), April and I had snacks for lunch since our breakfast was on the later side and filling. April had a soft pretzel and I had popcorn. Friday night we had a pasta party to attend as part of the [Run For Our Sons](#) team that I am on for [Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy \(PPMD\)](#). I had notified the PPMD event organizer about my peanut allergy and gluten intolerance ahead of time who communicated this to her Disney contact. When I arrived that night, there was a huge plate of gluten free pasta with marinara sauce waiting for me! Then, the server made me a fresh plate of salad without any questionable toppings. It made me feel so special to have my safe food at a buffet pasta party that I wouldn't have been able to eat from.



Gluten free waffle

Saturday afternoon April and I lounged by the hotel pool and it was a gorgeous day. We had some "girly" drinks and a snack. I asked the poolside bartender if I could read the bag of Doritos to make sure it was the newer version without wheat and it was! He had no idea that the recipe was recently changed, so I used it as a chance to give him a quick overview of gluten free foods. For dinner Saturday night we went to [Downtown Disney](#). We had made reservations months before at [Fulton's Crab House](#) which I have eaten at before. As soon as I let the server know about my food issues, she got the restaurant manager. I had already scouted the menu and asked the manager a few questions. What I liked about this was the manager took both my order and my friend's order at the same time and we didn't have to wait to tell the server. I decided on Alaskan King Crab legs for dinner which came with red roasted potatoes. Fulton's provides

complimentary crab dip with crackers and I asked if I could have the crab dip with celery or carrots and they brought me both! I wasn't going to have desert, but after discussing with the manager I had several safe choices and decided on the flour-less chocolate cake which is made on-site because why not? The manager confirmed with the chef that there was no potential contamination of nuts in the cake. It was very rich and decadent. After dinner we shopped and walked through Downtown Disney. I had heard about [BabyCakes](#) in downtown Disney but had not been there before. It is a gluten free, dairy free, egg free, soy free bakery. You have to read their [statement about nuts](#), but I was comfortable with it. By the time we got there there was slim pickings! I was full anyway, so I picked a cookie sandwich and a donut to save for another time. You can tell I was in no shortage of sweets, the quick service place in our hotel carries individually wrapped [OMG It's Gluten Free](#) cookies and brownies which are also nut-free and peanut free. It is great that they provide safe options for those who need it so they don't feel left out when looking at the bakery case which they can't eat from. It is a great thing that you do a lot of walking while at Disney to burn off those calories consumed.



Sunday we spent the day at the parks. We lucked out and got to eat at the [Sci-Fi Dine-In Theater](#) at Hollywood Studios. This was a fun eating experience that we highly recommend. We even ordered the fun drinks that light up as you are never too old! They had gluten free bread which I had with turkey and it was tasty. Then onto Magic Kingdom. We visited the Ice Cream Parlor on main street for an afternoon snack as April was craving some. I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to have any but after discussing my dietary restrictions with their staff I ordered some. Yes- I said ICE CREAM! I almost never eat ice cream out as the risk is too high of cross contamination with peanut flavors and toppings. Their policy is to open a new container and scoop it out in the back which is great! They use [Edy's brand](#) and I had mint chocolate chip, man was it good! Also, they did not have any peanut containing ice cream flavors in the ice cream parlor. Later onto the final park for the night, Epcot. We decided we would eat in Mexico at [San Angel Inn Restaurante](#). There were many options that were gluten free and peanut free. Stay away from the Mole as most contain peanuts! The service was good. After shopping through the countries before the fireworks show, we went for a coffee in Paris at the [Boulangerie Patisserie](#) which was not a great allergy dining experience. April was going to get a coffee and a pastry and I spied a creme brulee that have should be safe to eat. However, the staff couldn't provide information about the ingredients or safety of it. When I asked to speak to the chef, they said one wasn't there. Apparently, the new Patisserie had only been open for four days so the staff stated they were not familiar with everything yet. Actually, we felt they were a bit rude. Hum..... I really didn't need to eat another dessert and with safety in question I chose to only have a coffee, but Disney prides themselves on great dining experiences for people like me and this one did not come through. If your or a loved one has special dietary needs, overall Disney is a great place to go. I wish I could say that the rest of our weekend was magical, but more later...



Sci-Fi Dine-In Theater

I carry at least four epi-pens when I travel. Even with a great place like Disney you have to be prepared for emergencies. Read more about [Special Dietary Requests](#) at Disney World.

What destinations treat you right when dining with food allergies or restrictions?

Be Well,

Lori

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