

As the sweltering heat of summer dissipates, and a crisp fall breeze begins to settle in, there's no better time to leisurely stroll through the streets of downtown Plattsburgh. Whether it's sipping an iced coffee, eating brunch with close friends, or de-stressing with a calm dinner after work, food can make or break the day. For most, a stressful part of ordering is deciding what sauce goes best with the penne or what toppings to put on a pizza. But, for those who eat gluten-free, it's a different story. Skimming through a menu can become a quest to find foods without a lengthy list of ingredients from the obvious wheat, barley and rye to the obscure artificial coloring and soy sauce.

**Breakfast:**

**Saturday, 10:30 a.m.**

**Bagel Pit**

On the corner of Margaret Street, exhausted, drained and visibly hungover college students flood through the doors of a popular bakery. The never-ending line of hungry customers have one thing on their minds: bagels.

The Bagel Pit's "Hangover Takeover" is a staple for college students and locals alike. The sandwich consists of a freshly toasted bagel piled high with crispy bacon, fried eggs and American cheese. For a dollar more, customers may request the ever-so-rare gluten-free bagel containing rice flour.

The Bagel Pit also offers The New Yorker- featuring a toasted bagel smothered in cream cheese, speckled with capers and layered with ribbons of fresh lox. The thinly-sliced tomatoes and red onions adds the perfect crunch to the bagel that never sleeps.

To wash it all down, customers gravitate towards the self-service coffee bar complete with cream, sugar, milk, and different flavors coffee to choose from.

**Lunch:**

**Saturday, 12:15 p.m**

**Irises Cafe and Wine Bar**

Wine is a safe-haven for the gluten-free as beer and most hard liquors contain gluten. Irises offers a designated wine menu and expert pairings for small plates such as crispy fries tossed with truffle oil or poached mussels in a broth made with white wine, garlic and cream.

Their gluten-free menu includes favorites such as the chimichurri ancient grain bowl, coconut milk-marinated cauliflower “steak” and sesame encrusted tuna. They also offer a wide selection of steaks, burgers and sandwiches.

Since 1997, Irises’ infamous grilled-chicken sandwich lives up to its name. It features tender grilled chicken lying atop a bed of smoky, crispy bacon and cheddar-jack cheese covered in a red-chilli mayo that adds a kick to the otherwise basic grilled-chicken sandwich. While it’s usually served on jalapeno-cheddar focaccia, customers can ask for the sandwich sans bread or substitute it with Irises’ home-made, gluten-free bun. It’s baked with almond flour and various herbs and spices.

**Dinner:**  
**Saturday, 6:30 p.m.**  
**YAMA Sushi**

As the sun makes its way over to the other side of the sky and blisters begin to form on the backs of your heels, a cozy atmosphere with a lighter fare sounds tempting. For most people, this means eating a slice of sun-dried tomato quiche or a flatbread covered in ricotta cheese and drizzled with golden honey. Although, for the gluten intolerant, this inevitably means salad. Or, if they’re feeling a little more daring, *sushi*.

Most sushi is gluten free but there are the obvious no-go’s: anything fried, anything soy, anything teriyaki, or made with eel, ponzu sauce or wasabi paste. Artificial crab, spicy tuna or salmon rolls are also out of the question- they contain wheat used to bind the ingredients together. Still, YAMA offers various plates that cater to those who don’t eat gluten.

Ordered without artificial crab, The Rainbow Roll is a simple, gluten-free California roll stuffed with crunchy cucumbers and avocado wrapped in sweet, sticky sushi-rice and salty nori. But, it isn’t

really a Rainbow Roll without its signature paper-thin filets of ruby-red tuna, salmon, whitefish and avocado neatly arranged on top. Whether it's smothered in gluten-free soy sauce (ask your server!), or topped with ginger, the Rainbow Roll is a tasty and refreshing alternative.

Upon heading home, a light drizzle pitter-patters against the window of the taxi and the lights of downtown Plattsburgh blur in the distance. Once you loosen your belt to its final notch, the familiar "thank you" bag with those canary-yellow smiley faces peeks from the depths of the taxi floor, telling you one thing: leftovers.