



## **Free-from: A Guide to Your New Free-From Offer**

Star Pubs & Bars have created a free-from menu consisting of sixteen delicious dishes to use or take inspiration from within your establishment. The menu consists of four starters, eight main courses, and four desserts. The selection is made up of a mix of gluten-free, vegan, dairy-free and vegetarian dishes.

The free-from market is ever-growing, and for some it may be difficult to know where to begin when it comes to creating an offer. We have designed the free-from menu in order to make this easier for you; what you choose to do with the menu is up to you!

A good option, would be to choose a starter, main and dessert, or perhaps both vegan and gluten-free starters, mains, and desserts. The menu is fully designed and can be adjusted to include your pub name, prices and the dishes you choose. Allergen information, dish specs, and order codes are also all readily available for your convenience.

When it comes to choosing which dishes will work for your pub, it all comes down to what will appeal to your typical consumer with dietary requirements. Our research shows that just because a customer might choose to be vegan, or has a gluten intolerance, doesn't necessarily mean that they want healthy; they still want that feeling of indulging and having a treat when eating out of home. Items such as the Loaded Nachos, Burger, Thai Curry and Chocolate Torte are the most similar to classic pub fair and so would tick that box perfectly.

It might also help you to look at what exists on your current core menu, in order to offer similar items but in free-from form.

If you wish to use elements from the menu, the process for this is to enquire through Star Pub Support. You will then be able to discuss the options with your BDM, before arranging printing and personalised menu design with Low Cost Menus directly.

### **Implementing Free-From Safely**

However you decide to use the free-from menu, it is important that the meals are correctly created in a safe kitchen, in order to avoid incidents such as customer allergic reactions.

The following paragraphs are a short guide on how you can reduce cross contamination, and safely implement your new free-from offer.

#### **What is Free-From?**

The term free-from refers to food products that are free of ingredients which are known to cause a reaction within those who suffer with allergies or intolerances. People also choose to follow a free-from diet, such as dairy-free/vegan for health, ethical and lifestyle reasons.

The Star Pubs & Bars free-from menu focuses on the most common dietary requirements within the free-from category: dairy free/suitable for vegans, and gluten-free.

### **What is Gluten-Free?**

Gluten is a generic term for the protein found in wheat, barley, rye and malt, spelt and kamut. Oats contain similar protein called avenin and are contaminated with wheat from flour and so should also be avoided when cooking for those who are gluten intolerant. To follow a gluten-free diet, items such as the following must be avoided:

- Wheat/hops/barley based drinks – beer, stout, barley based cordials
- Bread
- Pastry
- Pasta
- Flour
- Crackers
- Biscuits
- Cereal

### **What is Vegan and Dairy-Free?**

All of the dishes within Star Pubs & Bars free-from menu are free of meat, however some of the gluten-free items contain dairy making them unsuitable for vegans and those who are dairy intolerant.

To be a vegan means to exclude all forms of animal product from your diet. This includes:

- Dairy - milk, cheese, butter etc
- Meat
- Fish
- Eggs
- Honey

For further and more in-depth training on allergens and free-from diets, it is essential to complete the health & safety and allergen course on CPL Training.

## Health and Safety: Separating Foods and Avoiding Cross Contamination

When putting together dishes which are free-from, it is good practice to separate the preparation and cooking from the non-free-from foods. For example, using fresh water for boiling, use clean oil for frying, and use different equipment and utensils when cooking. This should help reduce the risk of cross-contamination within your kitchen.

When it comes to utensils, colour coding is the easiest way to simply ensure that dietary requirements are being accommodated safely. Purple is widely becoming known as the industry colour for gluten-free, and so purchasing purple chopping boards and purple handled utensils is a good option. For dairy-free, use the appropriate colour coded chopping boards within your kitchen e.g green for salad and fruit, brown for vegetables. In common practice, the white chopping board is used for dairy and baked goods, so it is worth buying an extra board which is used only for baked goods for those with dairy intolerances.

### Follow these rules:

- Do not use pans, utensils or surfaces that have been in contact with anything containing gluten containing or dairy containing foods
- A separate preparation/cooking area is the safest option
- Hands must be washed if have handled any non-free-from foods, even if some time ago
- Use fresh oil, or a completely separate fryer for gluten-free foods
- Gluten-free bread should be toasted within pockets in a shared toaster, or in a designated gluten-free bread toaster
- Use separate utensils for stirring, chopping etc for gluten-free items
- Use designated chopping boards for prepping free-from foods

If you wish to order purple utensils, our partner Nisbets offers a selection. See below the link for order codes and to place your order <https://www.nisbets.co.uk/search/?text=mercier+purple>

**Do note** that if you have not undertaken any such measures such as these within your kitchen, the customer must be made aware that the same equipment is used for all dishes, and of the risk involved.