

Avoiding Genetically Modified Organisms in Restaurants

When eating at restaurants, it is not too hard to identify non-GMO options if your restaurant cooks from scratch. If they used processed foods, which is true of fast food places, they will have hidden GM ingredients.

For those restaurants that do cook from scratch, you will be able to easily identify most food items that may be GMOs. Corn products include tortillas, corn bread, corn on the cob, polenta, and corn chowder. Soy products include tofu, teriyaki and soy sauce. Any item that contains zucchini or yellow crook neck squash is a gamble, since a small amount of these are GMOs.

The hidden ingredients are usually the oils used for cooking and for salad dressing. Most restaurant cooking oil is from soy, corn, cottonseed, and canola—all GMOs. If they say vegetable oil or margarine, it means it is almost certainly one of these.

So the first question usually is, "What oil do you cooked with?" If they use GMO oils, ask if they have anything that is cooked without oil, or if olive oil or some other oil can be used. If they have olive oil, be sure it's not a blend. Many restaurants blend canola and olive. (In fact, some shady olive oil companies actually blend other oils into their olive oil but don't reveal that on the label.)

You may go through the same routine for the salad dressing, to make sure it is pure olive oil. Same for desserts; make sure they don't use margarine and vegetable oil as shortening. But for desserts, you also have to think about the sugar. Unless sugar says pure cane or organic, it likely contains sugar from GM sugar beets.

To avoid dairy products from cows treated with genetically modified rbGH, in U.S. restaurants you will likely have to avoid menu items with dairy. (The hormone is banned in practically every other country.) Very few restaurants buy milk from non-treated cows, but it doesn't hurt to ask. In fact, it is always good to ask every time, so the restaurant realizes it's an issue, and can take steps to eliminate GMOs.

Since most processed foods contain GM derivatives (corn and soy, for example), ask what foods are freshly prepared. But check if packaged sauces are used.

Other common sources of GM foods at restaurants include ketchup, bread, and mayonnaise.

If you plan ahead, you can call or email the restaurant you plan to visit and ask for a list that let's you know: Going through this process will not only give you a superb list of healthy eating options, but informs the restaurant that you prefer healthier non-GMO options when you dine out, a win, win situation for everyone.

Give a copy of the [Non-GMO Shopping Guide](#) that lists "at-risk" ingredients to your waiter, waitress, chef, or restaurant owner. And add the [GMO Health Risks brochure](#), so they understand why you are concerned, and why they should be too.

To learn more about the health dangers of GMOs, and what you can do to help end the genetic engineering of our food supply, visit www.ResponsibleTechnology.org.

To learn how to choose healthier non-GMO brands, visit www.NonGMOShoppingGuide.com.

International bestselling author and filmmaker Jeffrey Smith is the leading spokesperson on the health dangers of genetically modified (GM) foods. His first book, [Seeds of Deception](#), is the world's bestselling and #1 rated book on the topic. His second, [Genetic Roulette: The Documented Health Risks of Genetically Engineered Foods](#), provides overwhelming evidence that GMOs are unsafe and should never have been introduced. Mr. Smith is the executive director of the

[Institute for Responsible Technology](#), whose [Campaign for Healthier Eating in America](#) is designed to create the tipping point of consumer rejection of GMOs, forcing them out of our food supply.