

*a lifestyle resource from Food Equality Initiative*

# Free-From MAGAZINE

3

Super fun recipes to spark your creativity in the kitchen

## X-RAY VISION!

Super powers are in the eye of the beholder.

## HAVE FUN WITH COOKING

New ways to use old ingredients.

## PLAY IN THE DIRT

Gardens are gifts that keep on giving.

## ETHNIC FOODS

Should you avoid them if you have allergies?



## LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers,

There is that saying we learned in Kindergarten that goes “April Showers Bring May Flowers.”

As I have gotten older, I have come to interpret this as just a nice way to say: expect lots of rain in the spring. While it is true that our earth needs the liquid nourishment, it is not very fun for us to deal with. Spring teases us with warm weather, but then sends us a shock of snow or cold breezes that remind us that it isn’t summer yet! I guess you could say that April is the most playful month of the year.

It is also the one year anniversary of socially isolating at home, which I am sure you are well aware of. Even though more and more people are getting vaccinated and places are starting to open back up, thanks to the rain of the spring, we are still forced to stay at home. So while you are looking for new things to keep you busy inside on those rainy days, we have assembled some creative ways to be playful with your food, keeping in step with the month of April. We have lots of recipes, inspired by childhood favorites and new ways

to utilize the same old ingredients. Cooking new meals is a great way to break up the monotony of the cold, and as more and more ingredients come into season, it is exciting to get the chance to re-add them to our diet.

So this April, we hope you stay dry, or, if it pleases you, not be afraid to get wet every once in a while! The heat of the summer is just around the corner, so embrace the playfulness of April and springtime while we have it. Happy reading!

Warm regards,  
Sofia Gillespie  
Editor in Chief,  
Free-From Magazine



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# Free-From MAGAZINE

a lifestyle resource from Food Equality Initiative

## In This Issue

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Having food allergies can give you x-ray vision

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# FOOD ALLERGIES Give You Super Powers

Cindy Kaplan

## Living with food allergies presents many difficulties,

**F**rom the mildly frustrating (bringing your own food to social events, asking servers at restaurants a laundry list of questions before placing an order, reading and rereading food labels) to the downright scary (not having access to safe food, going to the ER after a reaction, and knowing one mistake may cause you physical harm). It's hard not to get bogged down by the negative -- but there are actually some gifts that come with living food allergies!



## Playing with your perspective on food allergies can give you X-Ray Vision!

One of the coolest things about having a food allergy is that it means you pay attention to the world around you in ways other people don't. There could be invisible poison lurking around you, a kryptonite only you're susceptible to. But like Superman, your eyes are trained to see beyond what's obviously visible.

When you're at an event with food, whether it's social, school-related, or at work, you're likely scanning the room like a hawk to find out where your allergens may be lurking and who may have come into contact with them. You notice the details -- the kid in the corner who popped some mixed nuts into his mouth and then grabbed a plate from the buffet stack, contaminating the whole bunch; the girl who used the same serving utensils from the sesame chicken for the lo mein platter; the friend who swears that she never touched her food

and her hands are clean before high-fiving you, when just a minute ago she brushed some crumbs off her chin.

## Like Superman, your eyes are trained to see beyond what's obviously visible

### Noticing people's behavior is good for your career.

These are the inevitable human behaviors that happen whenever we're around food, and most people are completely oblivious to them. But to protect our lives, people with food allergies have to notice. We don't even realize the ways our brains have adapted to scan, categorize, and memorize. This is a super helpful superpower, and not just when it comes to self preservation.

For one thing, watching people's small actions helps us learn about human behavior in general. We're able to see what choices people make when they think no one is watching, or even when those choices are relegated to their subconscious. This insight can be helpful for a range of careers, including acting, writing, psychology, marketing, education, law, investigation, journalism, and research.

### Being detail-oriented is more than a survival skill.

Additionally, noticing the little things people do means we're naturally detail-oriented. People with food allergies are more likely to catch small errors and correct problems before they get to be too big. Many people have to work hard to cultivate this skill, but people with food allergies hone it with life-or-death stakes, often over the course of their whole lives -- that puts us way ahead of the pack.

Plus, keeping track of all of that information means we're especially adept at multitasking. When you're hanging out with friends and logging their contact with food and other items around you, they have no idea! That's because you're not constantly interrupting the conversation to note their behavior, but rather, you're engaged with them and enjoying their company. You just know in the back of your mind that you need to wash your hands before you eat or touch your face, or that you can no longer eat whatever dish has been contaminated. Unlike in most situations, if you see something, you don't necessarily have to say something, at least not immediately. Your brain is fully trained to be present in the moment and keep a running log of everything that's happening around you. Your multitasking muscle will come in handy in so many ways in life, whether it's juggling school work with family obligations and extracurriculars, or managing multiple projects at your job.

Your food allergies give you an awesome super power. Now, if only they also came with a cool cape... :)



#### ABOUT CINDY

Cindy Kaplan is a writer, producer, and entrepreneur navigating life in Los Angeles. She blogs about life with 35+ allergies at [www.allergyepisodes.wordpress.com](http://www.allergyepisodes.wordpress.com) and <https://medium.com/@cindyf.kaplan>



# ADAPTING CULTURE & RECIPES

Sharon Wong

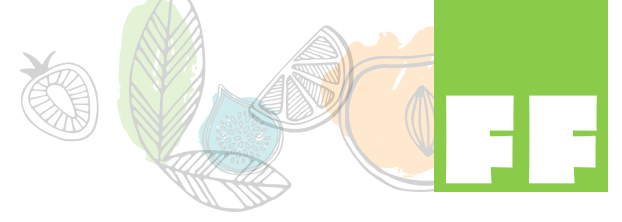
WWW.NUTFREEWOK.COM

## My parents were immigrants to the United States.

I grew up listening to their nostalgic stories from their childhood, including memories of their favorite foods that they miss. Sometimes when the nostalgia got too strong, they recreated their favorite dishes. However, not all the right ingredients were available in grocery stores here, but my parents told me that the substitute ingredients were good enough.

My parents didn't know it, but they prepared me well to be a food allergy mom. When we have life threatening food allergies, we avoid those certain allergens to stay healthy, but we might miss out on what we can't have, including family favorite recipes or new cultural culinary experiences. Through the adaptation of family and cultural recipes to what was available here in the United States, my parents had given me the mindset for adapting recipes for food allergies. When I thought about it that way, it didn't seem too hard. At any given point in my family's history, we have had a long list of allergens and a short list of safe foods and recipes we loved. Now we mainly avoid peanuts, tree nuts, and

some fruits and veggies. (In the past we have had to avoid 30+ different foods; it was exhausting). It seemed like we ate lots of mac and cheese, chicken, corn, and rice. However, my kids asked for specific foods we used to eat before life with food allergies.



Before my younger son was diagnosed with food allergies at age 2, my older son was quite the foodie. We had to restrict our dining options due to his food allergies and my older son told me how much he missed eating Chinese dim sum, noodles, and other favorite dishes. That's when I started adapting recipes and making his favorites at home. Later, when my older son was also diagnosed with food allergies as a middle schooler, I became determined to write down and share our family's recipes so they can always know how to prepare their favorite meals.

## Euro-centric cuisines such as French, German, and Italian foods contain just as many allergens as "ethnic foods," they are just more familiar in the United States.

I noticed that a lot of the recipes my kids requested were Asian foods. Many food allergy experts in the United States advise avoiding Asian foods if you have nut allergies, just to be safe. But this recommendation never sat well with me. It's a complicated issue and statements about what to avoid need

improvement to be more inclusive. Instead of saying avoid "ethnic foods" as a general statement, experts need to frame it as a case-by-case issue. Euro-centric cuisines such as French, German, and Italian foods contain just as many allergens as "ethnic foods," they are just more familiar in the United States. I knew there had to be a way to satisfy my family's food cravings, embrace our cultural heritage, AND be food allergy safe. I took it upon myself to become the Rosetta Stone of food allergy moms and translate traditional Asian foods into recipes my family can safely enjoy.

First, I checked out a variety of cookbooks from my local library to familiarize myself with different ingredients and techniques. I try out recipes that are safe for us or might be easy to adapt. I also make a short list of recipes and dishes to be aware of such as recipes with hidden allergens.



Next, I simplify recipes and ingredients to reduce allergy risk and exposure. For example, if a dish calls for a bottled sauce, it might be safer to substitute with simple ingredients that you already have.

Check out my blog: [www.nutfreewok.com](http://www.nutfreewok.com) for Asian inspired recipes free-from peanuts and tree nuts. To get you started, check out the next page for a recipe of one of my favorite customizable Asian dishes.

**"My parents didn't know it, but they prepared me well to be a food allergy mom."**



**ABOUT SHARON**  
Sharon Wong lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband and two teenaged sons. She blogs about food allergies, Asian food, and her food allergy mom experiences at [www.nutfreewok.com](http://www.nutfreewok.com).



## LETTUCE CUPS

Sharon Wong



Prepare the Lettuce: You can use your favorite kind of lettuce, I like butter lettuce because they're easy to take apart and are beautiful. But, I also love the crunch and taste of iceberg lettuce, so that is a good option, too.

Separate the lettuce leaves and use them as is. There might be some tears and the leaves might vary in size. You can also stack them and cut them into 7-8 inch circles.



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 2 tablespoons oyster sauce
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce
- 2 tablespoons cold water
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 1 medium sweet onion chopped
- 1 pound ground chicken
- 9 oz shredded cabbage or coleslaw mix
- 2 scallions or green onions chopped
- 1 head butter lettuce washed and leaves separated
- 1/4 cup hoisin sauce

### DIRECTIONS

Combine cornstarch, oyster sauce, soy sauce, and water in a small bowl, stir together and set aside.

Preheat a large skillet on medium heat for a few minutes, add oil and swirl to coat.

Add garlic and onions, saute until fragrant.

Add ground chicken and break up the meat into smaller pieces, saute for 3 minutes until it's no longer pink.

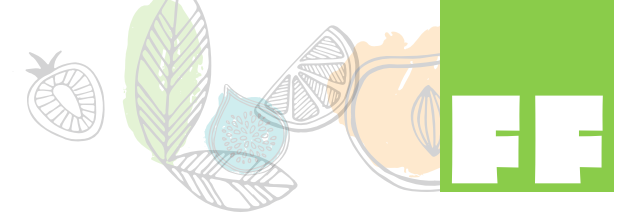
Add cabbage, scallions, stir the sauce, add to the pan, saute for 1 minute.

Continue to stir to combine the meat and vegetables until the sauce thickens slightly, immediately remove from heat and serve with lettuce cups and hoisin sauce on the side.

### Adapt the filling for your allergies:

I use a combination of soy sauce and oyster sauce in the sauce and hoisin sauce on the side. This chicken lettuce wrap recipe is very easy to adapt.

If you are allergic to soy, oysters, or any ingredient in hoisin sauce, substitute the soy sauce and oyster sauce with [soy free soy sauce](#) and omit the hoisin sauce.



If you are gluten free, you are in luck because there are gluten free versions of soy sauce (tamari), hoisin sauce, and oyster sauce.

For a flavor variation or an allergy aware substitution, you could also saute with other Asian sweet and salty sauces in flavors that you like.

You can find the [recipe](#) and more information at Nut Free Wok.



## Playing in the Dirt

Kamisha York

PEYTON'S ALLERGY SHIELD OF HOPE

### As the old saying goes "April Showers Bring May Flowers,"

**A**nd as far as I am concerned, bring on the showers! I love the change of season. I love to wake up with a cool crispness in the air, and as the day goes on it warms up to a pleasant temperature, just exactly right. A little over a year ago this month, the pandemic hit, and all our lives changed, just like everyone we know. My family was home bound; all three kids going to school virtually, my husband and I working from home. We had to be creative.

Now it is Spring Break 2021. Who knew almost a year later we would all still be doing at-home school and work? This time last year, to bond with Peyton and my mother, I decided to start a vegetable garden. I guess since not all that much has changed, it is time to start it up again!



Initially, I started the vegetable garden to create memories for Peyton and my mom. I wanted her to have pictures and memories of her helping her Grandma Josie start the garden, but this grew into something so much bigger. I have never had a garden before in my life, but it sounded like a simple enough task. From day one since we moved into our home, we have had a garden box in our backyard. For the past 5 years of living there I have been saying to the kids that we are going to plant seeds in the garden box, but last year we finally did!

**"If I learned anything from starting my garden, I would say it has given me more patience."**

My husband and I headed out to Home Depot with our masks on, with a list of everything that we needed to buy. We purchased the soil, seeds, a shovel, and a garden hose. My husband came home and tilled the soil that was in the garden box, we mixed and laid the new organic soil, and then my mom and Peyton got right to planting.

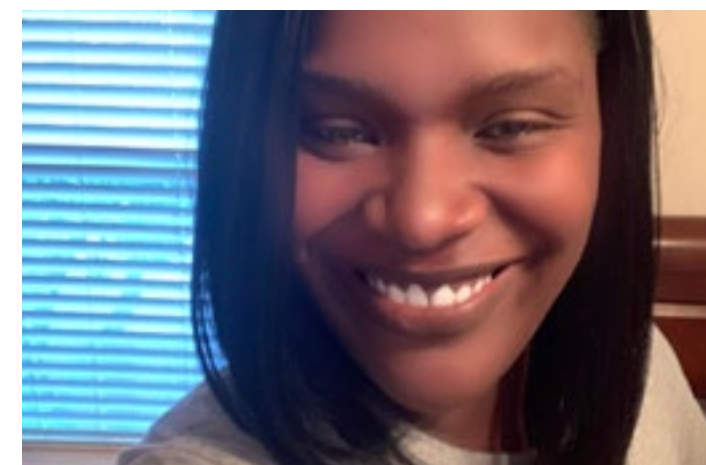
Peyton and Grandma Josie planted carrots, beets, tomatoes, green beans, squash, okra, blueberries, chives, and cilantro. For the longest time I thought that I would not harvest any vegetables in my garden. I watered in the morning, and in the evening when the sun went down. I saw no change. For a person like me with no patience, I just knew there was not going to be anything but green leaves and no vegetables. But I just kept watering and watering. A few days later I saw buds growing on the okra and green beans. If I learned anything from starting my garden, I would say it has given me more patience. Change does not happen overnight; good progress takes time.

Originally being nothing more of a fun science project, I have now created a sustainable, organic food source to feed my family! I was able to serve my green beans and

okra from the garden to my family on Thanksgiving, this warmed my heart to see the fruits of my labor in the garden being passed around the table. The day I saw Peyton walk out to the garden and grab a handful of green beans during her lunch break for a snack is when I said to myself, "job well done Mama."

I am so excited for our garden spring of 2021!! I have already started on the collard greens, we will add more tomatoes, green beans, and okra again. I am also looking forward to adding citrus trees to the garden!

If you are looking for a great way to bond with your family and get outdoors in a safe environment this spring, why not start a food allergy friendly garden?



#### ABOUT KAMISHA

I am Kamisha York (Misha for short). I am the Executive Director of Peyton's Allergy Shield of Hope, a 501 © (3) that my husband and I started in honor of our 13-year-old daughter Peyton. Peyton's Allergy Shield of Hope is a non-profit that is here to advocate and educate for those living with food allergies. In my free time I love to relax and listen to a good audible book, bake, and blog about how my husband and I navigate our crazy life with 3 kids and managing Peyton's food allergies at [www.foodallergyjourney.com](http://www.foodallergyjourney.com)

# MAKING COOKING FUN AGAIN

## Creative Uses for Pantry Basics

Cherie Gough

### Got Beans, Broth, or Pasta? We've got easy dinner ideas

#### Level up! Ideas to turn basic staples into new, nutritious dinners and get your kids cooking too

**T**ired of the same old thing for dinner? With a few changes, easy, affordable recipes turn pantry item basics like beans, pasta and broth into new, delicious dishes. These items are also accessible through your FEI delivery box!

I'm the mom of a celiac girl and a growing tween boy who eat through the fridge like crazy. I know what it's like to read every label and stick to a tight budget. The pandemic taught me that by giving my kids choices in the kitchen, they're willing to get creative and help out.

Ready to play with pantry ingredients and keep your family smiling? Read on to find fresh dinner ideas allowing you to mix and match ingredients, use what's on hand, and cook quickly, no fancy equipment necessary.

#### PASTA: Use Your Noodle

Quick-cooking pasta is what's for dinner every Monday at our house. By declaring Monday "pasta night", dinner's a no brainer at the beginning of the week. Spaghetti and meatballs is a family favorite, especially when the kids get to roll meatballs.

#### Cook's Tip

Gluten-free breadcrumbs are super easy to make. Save several of your gluten-free bread ends in a freezer bag. Break frozen bread into bits in a blender or food processor. Blend into crumbs. Bake at 300 degrees for 15-20 minutes until dry. Store in an airtight container.

Out of red sauce? When you don't have ingredients on hand, ask yourself if there's something you do have instead. Don't be afraid to experiment and make recipes work for you.

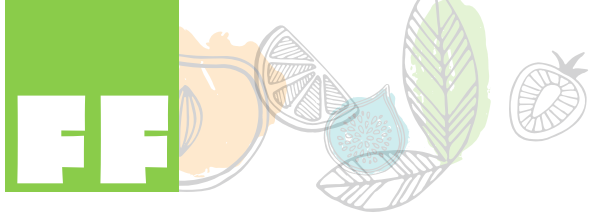
#### Try This

- Sauce your pasta with: canned chopped tomatoes, fresh cherry tomatoes, pesto, olive oil, or alfredo.

#### Winning Flavor Combinations

- Alfredo or pesto and: broccoli, peas, spinach, bacon, chicken, or shrimp, or tuna.
- Cherry tomatoes and basil.
- Olive oil, parmesan, red pepper flakes
- Olive oil, lemon juice and zest, mint, parmesan.





### Make It Fun

Use TV cooking shows like “Chopped” as inspiration to use up ingredients. During quarantine, Dad cooked one leftover burger patty with diced veggies and sauce to make “Dad’s Bolognese,” a new favorite. Getting family in the kitchen adds variety and gives you a break.

### Do your kids love breakfast for dinner?

Pasta with eggs is surprisingly delicious, protein-filled, and inexpensive.

- Pasta Carbonara cooks in minutes and just requires adding cooked spaghetti to bacon, scramble in eggs, top with parmesan.
- Frittatas are an easy, no-fail dish that cook in one pan in 20 minutes. Simply mix eggs with leftover pasta and any ingredients you have to make it your way.



### Love Chinese take out?

Cook your spaghetti, drain, then pan fry with Asian flavors. Gluten-free soy sauce (Tamari), sesame oil, minced garlic and crushed ginger last long and add a ton of flavor without having to buy expensive sauce mixes that may contain allergens. Stir fry is ready in minutes, especially when using frozen veggies.

### One-Dish Magic

One-pan cooking saves steps and dishes! Casseroles and crock pot meals are a great option for busy weekdays offering endless flavorful combinations that smell great while they cook.

### Try This

- Baked chicken parmesan over pasta.
- Chicken cacciatore in the slow cooker served over spaghetti.
- Tuna casserole.

## BEANS: Plant-based Wonder

Beans are a secret ingredient to healthful eating. They provide fiber which keeps you feeling full, and are great for digestion and heart health.

### Spice up Taco Tuesday

- At breakfast, fried eggs with refried beans and country potatoes.
- A breakfast scramble served in a tortilla becomes a breakfast burrito.
- Black bean enchiladas or quesadillas.

Check out the recipe on page 24 for 2 Bean Veggie Nachos from Karen of [Healthy Gluten-Free Family](#); it is a perfect cozy, satisfying dish everyone will love sharing.

### Serve Chili 4 ways

Over spaghetti, on nachos, as a baked potato topping, as a filling in an omelette.



### Make It Fun

Chili is simple for kids to make and freezes well. Challenge family to a chili cook off. If you have pantry items to use up, be adventurous and try using random ingredients like canned pumpkin or fresh squash in creative ways.

### Let beans inspire your salad

My kids never ate salad until Grandma taught them to use a small knife and make chopped salad. They gained confidence, loved trying new flavor combinations and I realized salad doesn't have to include lettuce.

Chickpeas, black beans, and refried beans add flavor, texture, and protein to any salad. Salads are also a great base to use up leftover grains and roasted vegetables.

Try this winning salad formula: Something soft, something crunchy, herbs or vegetables, and toppings.

**Soft-** spinach, butter lettuce, beans, cucumber, avocado

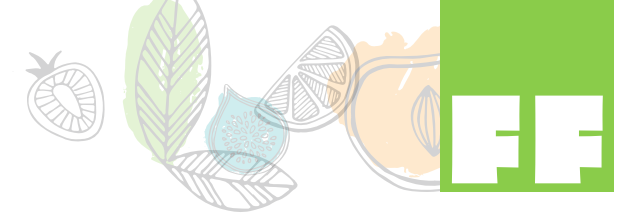
**Crunchy-** celery, apple, radish, peppers

**Herbs and Veggies-** basil, mint, cilantro, tomatoes, olives, spicy peppers, corn

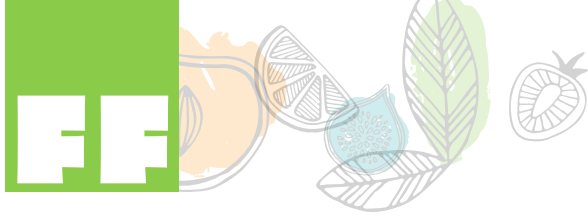
**Toppings-** sunflower seeds, bacon, egg, cheese

### Cook's Tip:

Crushed tortilla chips from the bottom of the bag make a yummy taco salad topper.







### One pot classic: Greens and beans

Many scientific studies have shown that dark, leafy greens provide the body with antioxidants protecting it from damage, making greens some of the most nutritious vegetables.

Cook chopped greens, a can of white beans, chicken broth, garlic, lemon, and olive oil and stir until the greens are tender. Make it a meal by adding pork chops to the same pan.

Growing veggies taught me that greens are interchangeable. A recipe that calls for kale can also use collards, beet greens or the tops of vegetables I grow like broccoli leaves and beet greens and it's just as delicious.

### Make it Fun:

Growing food with kids is a great family activity that you can do in any space. [Get easy how-to tips.](#)



## BROTH IS SUPER

Broth is the king of soup, but it's also a flavor-booster that transforms dishes from plain into surprisingly rich and delicious.

### Try This:

- Cook rice in broth and toss with herbs.
- Bake fish in one pan with quinoa, broth, and herbs.
- Mash potatoes with broth to add flavor and creaminess without dairy.

Dump 1-2 cups of broth in the crock pot to cook pork, chicken, or beef. Inexpensive cuts become tender when cooked low and slow. Shred the meat, then make it your way: Hawaiian pulled pork, BBQ beef, or shredded chicken tacos.

### Simple Soup Tips:

- Egg drop soup is just broth cooked with a bit of gluten-free tamari and a beaten egg.
- Create instant healthy ramen using broth and fresh or frozen veggies instead of flavor packets.
- Blend beans with broth to create a thick, creamy soup without the cream.



### ABOUT CHERIE

Cherie Gough is a freelance writer based in San Diego. She is passionate about food equity, outdoor adventure, gardening, and education. Her daughter's diagnosis of celiac disease prompted her to pursue food writing and share simple solutions for eating, cooking, and traveling with food allergies and celiac. Find her at [cheriegough.com](http://cheriegough.com) and on Instagram @cgoughwrites.





## THE KEMPER KITCHEN

### FEI Family Members

Sarah Guthrie

**“I get that question a lot,” says Melissa Kemper, mother of 10-year-old Othoniel (O-tho’-ni-o) and 6-year-old Noeida (No-a’-da): “What can my kids eat?”**

**W**ith more than a dozen food allergies, a diagnosis of EOE (Eosinophilic Esophagitis), some food intolerances, and a child with texture aversions, it’s a valid question.

Melissa’s food allergy journey began soon after her son was born. Because she was medically unable to nurse him, she started him on formula.

“From the beginning he could not keep anything down,” she said. “He was at the point of failure to thrive.”

Melissa thought he might have celiac disease because she has celiac, but none of the tests indicated that.

With guidance from his doctors at Children’s Mercy Hospital, and her mother’s help, she began experimenting with different formulas. Later she made baby food for him. Then he required therapy

to help him learn how to swallow correctly. As he got older, skin and blood tests revealed allergies to dairy, gluten, soy, and peanuts.

“I cried a lot,” Melissa remembers. “I know it’s not true, but I thought I must have eaten something during pregnancy that caused his allergies.”

Despite her best efforts, Othoniel still got sick.

**At age 4 he was still only 20-25 pounds,” said Melissa.**

After years of allergy tests and food challenges, she now knows that Othoniel is allergic to eggs, dairy, beef, chicken, corn, rice, almonds, peanuts, soy, barley, shellfish and quinoa. The EOE, a chronic immune system disease triggered by food allergies, also causes other symptoms including:

- Difficult and/or painful swallowing
- Food impaction (food gets stuck in the esophagus)
- Chest and upper abdominal pain
- Vomiting/diarrhea
- Failure to thrive

Her daughter, six-year-old Noeida (No-a’-da), who was born three years after Othoniel, also has dietary restrictions. Although she has not been technically diagnosed with food allergies because of delays caused by COVID, she does have intolerances for gluten, dairy and fish. And, because she has autism, she is texture adverse to many foods.

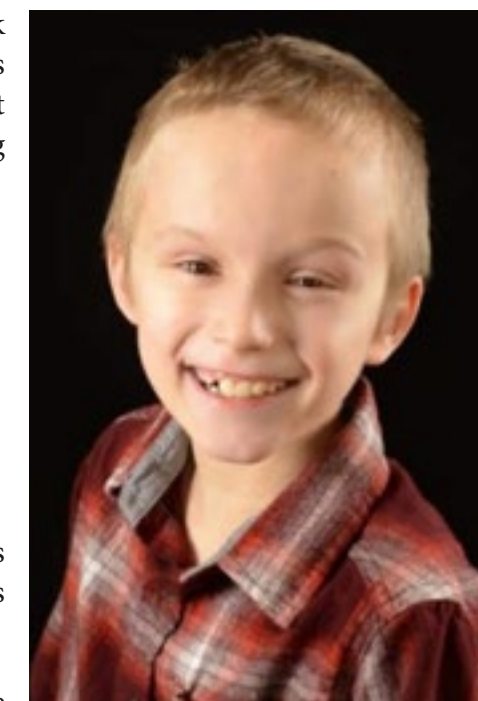
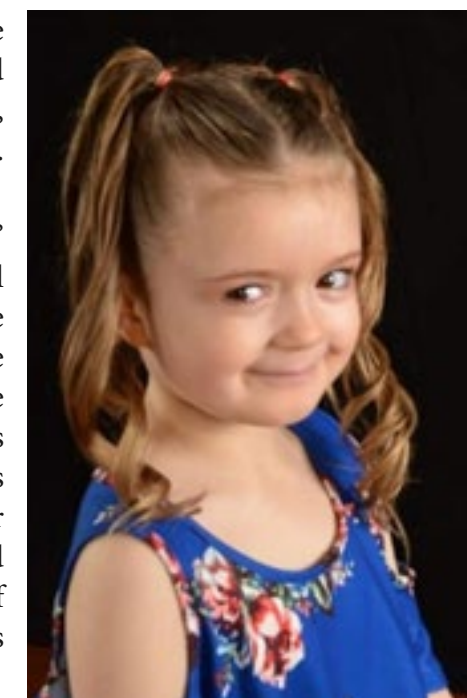
“I make multiple meals every day,” says Melissa, a former preschool teacher. After Othoniel got sick, she and her husband decided that she would stay home to help manage her children’s doctor appointments and dietary needs. She also makes her husband’s lunch. A truck driver who spends long hours on the road to help cover the increased costs of food allergies and EOE, he, too has food allergies.

“He has a food warmer in his truck and I make him whatever the kids get,” says Melissa. “He does not complain, unless he’s had something like three days in a row.”

**Both Othoniel and Melissa say that having food allergies is hard.**

“When you see people eating things you can’t have, it’s miserable,” says Othoniel.

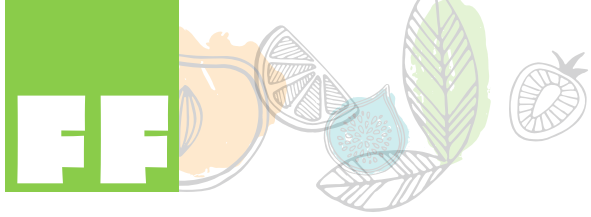
But his allergies also bring out the best in others. Melissa says they have an amazing teacher at his school, New Chelsea Elementary in Kansas City, Kansas, who personally buys him treats so that he will not be left out at class birthday parties.



Their family has been very supportive too. Her brother researches foods Othoniel can eat and brings them to him. They have a special time together, just the two of them, and they both try a new food.

And she has discovered resources, like FEI, that have helped ease the family’s food budget while giving Othoniel a chance to try new foods before buying them in the store. She lets Noeida try them, too, which means that the two of them get to explore safe foods together.

“We were referred to FEI by Children’s Mercy,” says Melissa. “They have amazing foods from companies I had never heard of that make food that takes his allergies into account. For example, I know I can’t add an egg to a mix, but with their mix I can add applesauce instead.”



Melissa says that Othoniel knows when the box is coming; he waits for it. Tortilla and bread mixes are favorites. She estimates that he gets about 20% of the food he eats from FEI.

**“When he gets his box, he is smiling – and I am crying because he’s so happy,” she says.**

So, back to the original question – what can her kids eat?

“We can all eat most vegetables and fruits, lamb, pork, turkey and dairy-free things. I had never had lamb before, but it tastes like steak,” Melissa says.

“I’ve learned to be creative -- I make taco “shells” with dairy-free cheese that I cook in a mini-waffle maker. I use ground turkey for the meat.”

And she has looked beyond American borders for food ideas. They are now trying a new African dish called FooFoo, that uses root vegetables that are boiled, mashed and formed into a dough that’s served as a side dish with meat or vegetable stew.

Melissa’s advice to others with food allergies: “I’ve learned that even though I am an American, I don’t have to stick with burgers and fries. There are lots of foods out there that we can eat and a lot of it is good. You can find it!”



**ABOUT SARAH**

Sarah Guthrie is an award-winning writer and seasoned development professional. She began volunteering for FEI in 2019, where she helps with fundraising and communications. Sarah is also a dedicated food allergy mom.



**REIMAGINING Childhood Snacks**

Zoë Slaughter

Invisibly Allergic

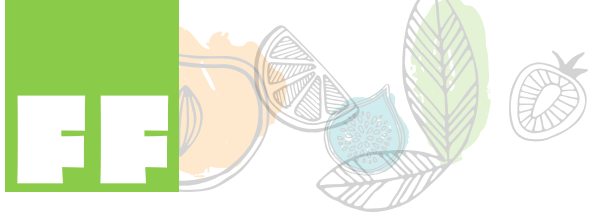
**Sometimes during a busy week or month, I’ll suddenly come to the realization I am eating mostly processed foods and pre-made type meals.**

**W**hen this happens, I will purposefully revert back to eating more fresh produce and limited ingredient products; the truth is, my body and mind feel better when I do. With fresh fruits and vegetables, I’m able to worry less about the allergens contaminating them, since there are no facilities or shared lines when “making” them. I just wash and scrub them really well, and voila! Perhaps a blessing in

disguise, having food allergies sets you up perfectly for food experiments.

Who says your snacks have to look like others? Since you may not be able to eat what they are eating, if you have the time, you can go all out in making new creations. There are no limits to creativity. Experimenting with different ingredients can be really fun if you aren’t afraid to make mistakes. (Sometimes combining flavors just does not work out, no matter how much you want them to.) Overall, fresh food is an incredibly forgiving medium and with its bright colors, is easy to turn into a work of art! In this act of getting back to whole, fresh foods, I’ve accidentally, but also happily, stumbled across a few simple snacks that bring me so much joy that I wanted to share them with others.

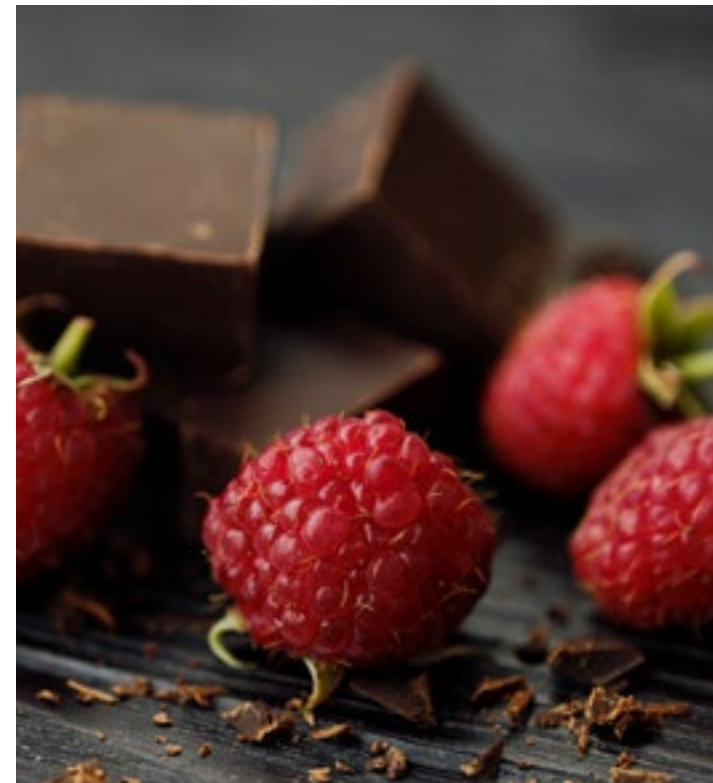
There’s a certain nostalgia of childhood I feel when I think about the snacks I’ll be sharing here. And hey, if you find that you want to arrange these snacks into the shape of a smiley face on your plate, like I sometimes do,



all the more power to you! Happy food = happy belly! I invite you to have fun with your food this month, and I hope these ideas spark some joy in you and your family:

### Raspberry-Chocolate Bites

Anyone else find raspberries adorable, or is it just me? Pick up a fresh raspberry in one hand, and a safe allergen-free chocolate chip in the other, and put the two together, my friend! These cute and easy snacks always leave me smiling and savoring each burst of a bite! Take a moment to admire how the raspberry perfectly hugs the chocolate chip, and it almost never seems to fall out, meaning, you can take this snack out and about with you easily. While they won't keep long if the temperatures are high, I've never had a problem since I've usually eaten half my bowl of them before I've even gotten out my front door!



### "Ants on a Log"

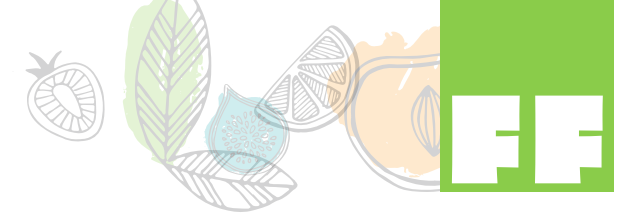
Ah yes, the classic ants on a log is here, but with a few new versions! This is a yummy, naturally sweet snack that feels decadent with any allergen-safe nut butter substitute. You can do this recipe a few ways - using the classic celery, apple slices (cut to be wide) or I recently started exploring whole medjool dates and have found them to be extremely delicious. Cut the celery/apple/or dates to size and fill with your nut-butter-alternative of choice. Try to not overfill, but make sure there's enough in them that you'll taste it. Enjoy as-is, or take a moment to artfully top these with raisins, and if you want a sweeter option, you could also drizzle with honey, add toasted coconut flakes, or allergen-free chocolate chips.

### Bell Pepper Pizza Bites

Once you try these, you won't want to go back to a standard crust. Halve and core a couple bell peppers of any color, so that they can be used as a little vessel to hold your toppings. Add a few spoonfuls of marinara sauce, or sliced tomato, and fill with your cheese of choice. You can also leave them without cheese if you don't do dairy.

Next, top your mini pizzas with any desired additional ingredients (look below for some ideas) and bake for 10-15 minutes at 375°F, watching closely depending on how many ingredients you used. Remove when the peppers are still crisp but getting tender, and the cheese is fully melted. If you went cheese-less, a favorite topping of mine to sprinkle on the fully cooked pizza is nutritional yeast.

For the toppings, I like to go veggie heavy and top with any green veggies I have like broccoli, finely chopped kale, and thinly sliced zucchini (be sure to pat the zucchini slices to get out any extra moisture). If you like goat cheese, you can add it along with thinly sliced potato and beets, in addition to your regular cheese of choice! If you eat meat, you can top these pizza bites with pepperoni or sausage as usual! Maybe you want to have these mini pizzas with a kale and beet side salad? There are no rules!



### ABOUT ZOË

Zoë Slaughter resides in Louisville, KY and has a severe airborne and cross-contact reactive peanut allergy. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her rescue beagle, reading, painting and creating art, and recently started playing tennis. She started a blog called Invisibly Allergic in 2017 that is dedicated to living with severe food allergies. You can check it out here: [invisiblyallergic.com](http://invisiblyallergic.com)



## 2 Bean Veggie Nachos

### Healthy Gluten-Free Family



These vegetarian nachos are super easy to make, nourishing and so delicious! And they are adaptable to tastes and availability of ingredients.

1/2 red onion, diced  
1-2 cups shredded Mexican blend cheese or any cheese you love  
1/2 cup jarred mild jalapeños nacho sliced

### INGREDIENTS

**Note:** The quantities are guidelines and you can add more or less according to tastes or availability of ingredients.

A large bag of your favorite gluten-free corn chips  
1 cup canned black bean, drained and rinsed  
1 cup canned kidney or pinto beans, drained and rinsed  
1 cup canned corn, drained and rinsed  
1 4oz can mild green chiles, drained and rinsed  
1/2 cup canned black olives, sliced



### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Spread tortilla chips evenly on 9x14 baking sheet or on half a large baking sheet.

Add half the beans, corn, green chilies, olives, onion and cheese.

Add a second layer of tortilla chips and top with the remaining beans, corn, green chilies, olives, onion and cheese.

Top with jalapeños.

Place baking sheet in pre-heated oven for 10-12 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Enjoy as is or serve with sour cream or salsa.





# Sweet & Salty Marshmallow Carob Chip Cookies

Renia Butler



These sweet and salty marshmallow carob chip cookies are the best soft and chewy cookies in town. They are loaded with salty gluten-free pretzels, vegan marshmallows, and carob chips. This is an easy and fun recipe to make (and enjoy) with your little ones.

## NEW INGREDIENT: CAROB

### Curious About Carob?

Carob comes from the pod of a carob tree, a small Mediterranean shrub. The pods are dried, roasted, and ground into carob powder before being made into chips or used in other applications. Traditionally, it was used to soothe an upset stomach.

Carob chips have a roasted flavor that makes them similar to chocolate, but lack chocolate's richness and melty texture. Carob is less bitter than chocolate and has a natural sweetness.

Additionally, **Carob chips are low in fat, high in fiber, and contain no caffeine.** Both carob chips and carob powder can be substituted one-for-one with chocolate chips/cocoa powder in any recipe. Carob is also useful when making vegan and caffeine-free treats.



## INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 Cup Plant-Based Butter
- 1/3 Cup White Sugar
- 2/3 Cup Brown Sugar
- 1/4 Cup Unsweetened Applesauce
- 1 tsp Vanilla Extract
- 1 3/4 Cup Gluten-Free Flour
- 1 tsp Baking Soda
- 1/4 tsp Salt
- 1 1/2 Cup Vegan chocolate chips or carob chips
- 1/2 Cup Marshmallows
- 1/2 Cup Salty Pretzels

## DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350F degrees. Line baking sheets with silicone baking mats or parchment paper.

Using a stand mixer (or a hand mixer with a large bowl), cream softened plant-based butter, white sugar, and packed brown sugar for 3-4 minutes on medium speed, or until soft, smooth, creamy, and evenly incorporated.

Add applesauce and vanilla extract.

Turn the mixer back on to medium speed and cream together another minute.

Gently stir dry ingredients (flour, salt, baking soda) into wet ingredients. Followed by slowly mixing on low speed

until just combined. (I added this step because it's the only way I know how to stop the flour from going everywhere!)

Stir in carob chips, marshmallows, and pretzels. Using a small or large ice cream scoop (or tablespoon), scoop cookie dough onto parchment paper-lined baking sheets.

Don't overcrowd the cookie sheet as cookies will spread. Place cookies a couple of inches apart, 6 cookies per baking sheet.

Bake for 17 minutes, or until the desired crispness. Remove from the oven and let cool on the baking sheet a few minutes before transferring to a wire rack.



## ABOUT

Renia S. Butler is the content creator behind [GristleandGossip.com](https://www.gristleandgossip.com), a space where parents of children with food allergies, and those looking to modify their current diet can find simple, quick, and delicious free-from soy, wheat/gluten, dairy, egg and nut recipes!



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