

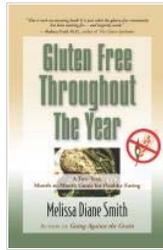
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First Interview with Melissa Diane Smith About Her New Book: *Gluten Free Throughout the Year*

By [Scott Adams](#) | Published 05/12/2010 | [Conferences, Publicity, Pregnancy, Church, Bread Machines, Distillation & Beer](#) | [Unrated](#)



Gluten Free Throughout the Year by Melissa Diane Smith Nutritionist Melissa Diane Smith, author of *Going Against the Grain*, has written a new book, *Gluten Free Throughout the Year: A Two-Year, Month-to-Month Guide for Healthy Eating*. I'm happy that today we at Celiac.com have the exclusive first interview with Melissa about her book.

Scott: Hi Melissa, thank you for stopping by to answer my questions about your new book. I think this is a book that will interest many Celiac.com readers and we're delighted to have you here.

Melissa: I am delighted to be here. I really admire the work you do on this site and I'm thrilled to have Celiac.com be the first place to begin spreading the word about my new book.

Q: Let's start with this question: **What was your primary goal in writing *Gluten Free Throughout the Year*?**

A: My primary goal was to help people learn how to eat gluten free and healthy so that they can experience improved health and protect themselves against disease.

If you stop and think about it, improving and protecting our health is the reason all of us began eating gluten free in the first place. We all know that it's quite a challenge to go from the diet that most of us were used to eating, to avoiding all sources of gluten in our diet. Because of that, many of us focus on gluten free and nothing else, either not knowing or just plain ignoring basic rules of nutrition that could keep us healthy. By doing that, we often end up getting brand new health problems, including unintended weight gain or blood-sugar- or insulin-related health problems such as [diabetes](#) or prediabetes. Many people think "Eating gluten free is so hard, I can't make any more improvements to my diet." But in my book, I wanted to show people that it's not as difficult as they think. You can live the gluten-free lifestyle you're currently living and gradually learn how to make better food choices that are very tasty and that keep you healthier over the long term.

Q: You have organized the information in your book in an interesting way. Can you tell our readers about the format in the book and how that came to be?

A: The chapters in the book are organized in a month-to-month format and cover seasonal topics or common issues that gluten-free eaters run into. The chapters are short, easy to read, and packed with practical tips. With this format, people who don't have much time can quickly grasp the main concepts that are covered and how to apply them in their gluten-free life.

That format came to me in large part because after the publication of

SCOTT ADAMS



In 1994 I was diagnosed with celiac disease, which led me to create [Celiac.com](#) in 1995. I created this site for a single purpose: *To help as many people as possible with celiac disease get diagnosed so they can begin to live happy, healthy gluten-free lives.* [Celiac.com](#) was the first site on the Internet dedicated solely to celiac disease, and since then it has become an invaluable resource to people worldwide who seek information about celiac disease and the gluten-free diet.

In 1998 I created [The Gluten-Free Mall](#), [Your Special Diet Superstore!](#) which was also another Internet first—it was the first gluten-free food site to offer a shopping cart-style interface, and the ability for people to order gluten-free products manufactured by many different companies at a single Web site.

I am also co-author of the book [Cereal Killers](#), and founder and publisher of [Journal of Gluten Sensitivity](#).

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my Going Against the Grain book in 2002, I held in-person Going Against the Grain Group monthly support meetings for six and a half years. From those meetings, I came to understand the issues and seasonal topics most people had questions about and wanted the most help with at various times of year. I also came to understand that people couldn't learn everything about nutrition all at once. People need time to learn how to eat gluten free and to improve their diet in other ways. They need time to learn helpful nutrition information, to have it soak into their minds, to learn how to choose tasty but higher-quality gluten-free foods, and how to combine gluten-free foods in simple yet delicious ways.

Because we're all busy, most of us learn in bits and pieces, and what we learn first is usually based on what is most timely, applicable or helpful to us right now. So, the book is organized as a handbook to help you eat better no matter what time of year it is. You can flip to the March chapter ("Spring-Clean Your Diet"), to July ("Eating Out in Restaurants"), to September ("Gluten-Free School Days!"), to December ("How to Have a Healthier Holiday Season"), depending on the information you need at the time.

Q: In your book you indicated that consumers seem to know how to manage their symptoms of gluten sensitivity, regardless of the fact that most doctors are still clueless. Why do you think doctors are so behind times with this vastly growing epidemic?

A: Many doctors are so busy in their everyday practices that they simply don't have time to stay up to date on the latest research. Most doctors who now practice medicine were taught in medical school that the only gluten-related disease was celiac disease and that it was very rare and only showed itself with severe [gastrointestinal](#) symptoms, such as diarrhea, [malabsorption](#) and weight loss. That's what doctors look for, if they're looking for gluten-related illness at all. We now know that all of that "information" is out of date.

We also know that gluten sensitivity is a bona fide medical condition that affects far more people than celiac disease and provokes an astounding array of symptoms, but most people with non-celiac gluten sensitivity simply aren't diagnosed with it and needlessly suffer from unwanted, uncomfortable symptoms. Without adequate help from doctors who understand gluten sensitivity, more and more people who were told they didn't have celiac disease started taking matters into their own hands and began taking gluten out of their diets to relieve and eradicate their symptoms. Going gluten free helped many people when modern medicine didn't and couldn't. When people go a bit further and eat gluten free and healthy, they can take their health to a whole new level.

Q: In your book you suggest that a gluten free diet can be harmful if done incorrectly. What do you mean by this?

A: Far too many people who avoid gluten for their health eat foods that are made with disease-causing processed ingredients, including refined flours (such as white [rice flour](#)), refined sugars (such as sugar or evaporated cane juice), and refined fats (such as soybean oil, corn oil, and partially hydrogenated oil). Refined flours, sugars and fats don't cause illness in the same way that gluten does, but they interfere with healthy blood sugar metabolism and fatty acid metabolism and set the stage for degenerative diseases to develop and worsen over time. Overall, many people who eat gluten free are so focused on avoiding gluten that they often don't concentrate on selecting healthy sources of carbohydrates, fat, and protein, and foods rich in [vitamins](#) and [minerals](#). That takes its toll on health in the long term in a different way than what gluten was doing to them.

Earlier this spring many people saw Jamie Oliver's Food Revolution TV show, which focused on teaching people that they need to avoid junky processed foods and eat more fresh foods, especially more vegetables, to lose weight and improve their health. Well, we need a food revolution in the gluten-free community. We need to realize that we are not immune to the negative health effects of junky processed foods, even if those foods are gluten free, and we need to bring more fresh, nutritious, whole foods into our diets. That's what my book is all about.

Q: What do you think is the biggest mistake people make when initiating a gluten-free diet?

A: The biggest mistake by far is trying to eat what most people in the United States eat but just make it gluten free. The United States is the fattest nation on Earth. We shouldn't want to emulate the Standard American Diet, appropriately abbreviated SAD, with all its [pizza](#), [pasta](#), [bread](#), baked goods, desserts and [snack](#) foods. It's not a healthy diet. It spikes blood sugar levels, which spikes insulin levels, which sets off a cascade of events to occur in the body that promote unhealthy weight gain and numerous heart disease risk factors to develop. You can switch to pizza, pasta, bread, baked goods, desserts and snack foods that are all gluten free. By doing that, your immune system won't be reacting to gluten. But, unfortunately, gluten-free versions of those foods still are high in blood-sugar-spiking carbohydrates, wreak havoc on blood sugar and hormonal systems in the body, and set off that same cascade of events to occur that lead in time to insulin-related conditions, including weight gain, type 2 diabetes, heart-disease risk factors, and more.

It's great that we have so many gluten-free food options available today, and we can have substitutes for wheat-based foods occasionally. But all of us really need to cut down on grain products and sweets, select those that we eat more carefully, and eat more lower-

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T-Shirts & Clothing

Vitamins (Gluten-Free)

carbohydrate, nutrient-rich, fresh vegetables and fruits. That is the answer to long-term weight control and good health that many people, including those who eat gluten free, miss.

Q: What are some of the main issues and topics you cover in your book?

A: Everything from gluten-free traveling and gluten-free parties, to the difference between lactose intolerance and a milk allergy, to the little-known troubles that people have with corn. I of course also cover the various seasons, such as in the chapters, Enjoying the Juicy Fruits of Summer and Celebrating Autumn's Bounty. And I have a recipe or two at the end of every chapter.

Q: Could you give us a little taste of some of the practical information you offer in your book? For example, we're getting to that time of year when people have outdoor picnics but some of us who eat gluten free get stuck as to what we can take on picnics. Can you name a few suggestions from your book?

A: Sure. For a quick brown-bag type picnic, you can make sandwiches with meat leftovers or gluten-free deli meat on gluten-free bread, organic corn tortillas, or a lower-carbohydrate, grain-free tortilla substitute that is just now coming to market. Throw in some veggie sticks and fruit for a quick, well-balanced meal.

Picnics also are a great time to use salads as main dishes, side dishes or desserts. You can make a main-dish salad with greens, assorted vegetables, nuts or seeds, and chilled cooked steak, chicken or fish. You can fix a nutrient-rich side dish using Quinoa in place of couscous to make tabouli or iodine-rich Sea Tangle Kelp noodles in place of rice pasta to make pasta salad. Or make the recipe in the book for Greek Potato Salad made with olive oil and lemon juice instead of soybean oil-based mayonnaise. For dessert, you can prepare a colorful assorted fruit salad such as blueberries, raspberries and sliced strawberries.

Finally, you don't have to take a big assortment of pre-made food. Sometimes the best picnics of all are spreads of finger food to nibble on, such as slices of cold pot roast or roast chicken or meat kabob pieces, garlic-stuffed olives, guacamole or salsa with organic blue corn chips or Mexican-style flax crackers, assorted nuts, and red or green grapes. These foods are fun to grab as needed in between good conversation or throwing a Frisbee or football back and forth.

Q: Would you say the recipes in your book are different in any way from recipes in other books? And could you name a few of your recipes?

A: My recipes are as no-fuss as possible and they're also as nutritious as possible.

Contrary to what many people think, eating food that is good for you does not need to involve a lot of work or deprivation. In fact, when you do it right, simply prepared food actually has a gourmet taste. My grandfather was a Greek chef and I love good, tasty food. A few of the recipes in the book are Dairy-Free Brown Rice Pudding, Almond pancakes, Chestnut Stuffing, Pink Rice Pilaf with Roasted Asparagus and Mushrooms, and Chicken and Strawberry Salad with Cilantro-Lime Dressing. I even have the recipe for Quinoa Pancakes with Peanut Sauce that Dr. Rodney Ford, his wife Chris, and I shared at a local restaurant when they visited my hometown last year. In my recipes, common food allergens are avoided as much as possible, and the book mentions convenient, healthy, gluten-free food products to try by name.

Scott: Your book is really unique, and informative. I loved the recipes and can't wait to try them! Thank you for stopping by and answering my questions, Melissa.

Melissa: It was my pleasure. Thank you for having me.

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