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Meet the Hieberts

We are George and Betty Hiebert and live with our family on an acreage near Olds, Alberta. We are so thankful for thirty-two years of marriage. Our oldest daughter Nicole (Hiebert) Bergen, is married to Benjamin Bergen and they live in Grande Prairie, Alberta. Benjamin and Nicole enjoy music, reading and studying together, and using their teaching gifts in discipleship opportunities. Michelle, Brianne, Kaitlyn, Matthew, Melissa and Emily are all living at home at this time, busy with work, school, music, and ministry. Some of the children are raising miniature goats and we enjoy our resident cat and faithful dog. There is much laughter and discussion in our home and we love to show hospitality, and enjoy being able to be a “safe haven” for gluten-intolerant friends. Our greatest love and passion, however, is in knowing and loving Jesus Christ—our Lord, our Redeemer, and our Friend. The focus of our life revolves around getting to know Him better and serving Him each day.



Matthew · Brianne · Benjamin & Nicole · George & Betty · Emily · Michelle · Melissa · Kaitlyn

Preface

My family's situation is unique. Out of nine members, six eat gluten-free. After I was first diagnosed with celiac disease in 1988, for many years there would be a big pot on the table ("regular spaghetti") and a little pot ("Nicky's spaghetti"). At Grandma's house, there would be the big selection of cakes and pies ("the regular desserts") and a little plate with brownies or a slice of jelly roll ("Nicky's desserts"). But over the years, more and more of my sisters joined the ranks of the gluten-intolerant, and it was amusing to see the change reflected in pot size and vocabulary. Big pot on the table—"the spaghetti." Little pot on the table—"wheat stuff for the guys."

We mastered gluten-free cooking in bulk. It was simpler to feed one dish to the family instead of two—besides, we saved ourselves the risk of cross-contamination. We would buy 25-lb. sacks of brown rice flour . . . and often two or three at a time!

But one day a wonderful man entered my life, and I realized that my definition of normal was likely to change. I was in my mid-twenties, and I had never baked a loaf of wheat bread or made wheat buns. Among the throngs of budding housewives around the world who had mastered the art of the perfect loaf of wheat bread, this solitary one shied from getting her hands dusted with flour, and knew nothing about kneading bread dough.

But the first seeds of early love were taking effect, so I opened the cookbook and meekly took one or two lessons in bun-making from one of my less-gluten-sensitive sisters. That was all the instruction (or practice!) I ever received, for in one of our visits shortly thereafter, Benjamin told me that he wanted to eat gluten-free with me. He didn't

think it would be fair to expect me to make two dishes of everything for only two people, and he was very willing to lay aside the foods he knew to join me in my gluten-free lifestyle.

Talk about winning a girl's heart! I was blown away by his offer. I pitied him and figured he just didn't know quite what he was getting into, but after almost four years of marriage, he is still very happily eating gluten-free with me.

I do keep store-bought wheat bread on hand to make his daily sandwich, since we would go through far too much gluten-free bread if he ate it for every lunch! But that is the only thing in our entire house which isn't gluten-free. (And he has told me repeatedly that he prefers my gluten-free bread over wheat bread! Now there's a compliment that makes a girl smile!)

Marriage did bring some learning curves with it in the kitchen department. Everyone jokes that a new bride from a big family can only cook in bulk, but that is not true, and I proved it on our honeymoon. We had been traveling all day, and I was making a late supper of spaghetti. Since we were in the midst of a road trip, I couldn't afford to have any leftovers, so I carefully trimmed down my measurements. Too carefully. When I dumped the pasta into a colander to drain, to my chagrin I realized that I had made barely one serving's worth. Benjamin assured me that he really wasn't that hungry, so we ate out of one plate that night!

In my parents' home, pancakes were made by multiplying the recipe a minimum of six times. I found that a single recipe wasn't quite enough for two, but a tweaked double left us with some leftover pancakes in the fridge to be toasted up for another meal.

Instead of our Plain Muffins making a whopping 24 muffins, I trimmed it down to six...especially since those muffins have a very short life span and are meant to be eaten within 24 hours.

Some of the recipes in this cookbook will serve two and no more. Others can be stretched to feed three. Others will feed two or three with some leftovers for the next day. I am not adverse to leftovers! Leftovers that accumulate over the week get eaten on the weekend, which gives me a break from meal-planning!

I've included some time-saving tips which I have developed over the years to simplify recipes and help save some money. They're economic and from-scratch, and I hope you find some benefit in them as well.

All the best on your gluten-free journey!

-Nicole (Hiebert) Bergen

June 2015



Our Journey

Practical Aspects of the Gluten-Free Lifestyle

Over the course of the past twenty-five years, we have learned much (sometimes by trial and error!) about how to “do” this gluten-free thing. It’s second nature to us now...but we understand that for many just embarking on this journey, there is potentially a host of questions—and perhaps an overwhelmed feeling of helplessness as you think of all the necessary changes. Perhaps some of the things we have experienced and learned will help you!

EATING OUT

You can imagine our joy in finding restaurants that know about the gluten-free diet. Gone are the days of calling the chef to our table and explaining carefully Nicole’s diet and that he would need to clean his grill and not allow any wheat crumbs at all to touch her food. Often now when we tell the waitress about the need for gluten-free food, she hands us a special menu just for the gluten-free eater!!

Of course, there are exceptions to this, such as the time when the waiter was very careful to eliminate the gravy from the turkey, but then served the turkey on two slices of wheat bread! Or the French-speaking waitress in a Quebec restaurant who didn’t know what “flour” was. To this day, we aren’t sure if she thought we meant “floor” or “flower.” What we do know is that we ended up sticking to the safe part of the menu: side salads!

EATING AT OTHER PEOPLE’S HOMES

It can seem overwhelming and discouraging to tell others what we *cannot* eat, so we usually try to share what we *can* eat. Most people are very surprised at the great variety of choices that are ours. We try to give

suggestions if they are very tentative in cooking for us. We make sure to tell them that all fresh fruits and vegetables are fine and that all unprocessed meats are also fine. One simple but delicious gluten-free menu choice is a roast or chicken dinner with potatoes, carrots, and onions. We just ask our hostess to read to us the labels of any seasonings they may add and then ask them to use cornstarch to thicken the gravy. If their menu includes pasta we offer to bring a bag of gluten-free rice or corn pasta and help them make that part of the meal. Arriving early to be on hand to read labels and answer questions is always appreciated. How about desserts? Fresh fruit or a gluten-free cake mix with whipped cream are delicious options.

Some of our friends excel in cooking for us because of choosing the gluten-free diet for themselves. When we arrive for a meal or for a few days' visit, they supply everything we need for gluten-free eating, including gourmet-style meals and snacks. What a treat!

But even most of our friends who are not on the gluten-free diet have learned how to cook gluten-free. We always offer to bring gluten-free bread or desserts, knowing that not everyone can bake gluten-free or even has gluten-free flours in the home. We have faced challenges, however; one being when dear, well-meaning people think that as long as the baking is made with *white* flour, it is wheat-free, which of course is not true! Nicole shares another challenge:

"Perhaps one of the greatest dangers to a celiac comes from well-meaning people who give the impression of being knowledgeable about your dietary needs. You feel like you should be safe with the foods they prepare for you, and besides, they might take offense if you question their hard efforts.

"When we were out for supper one evening, I was presented with a muffin which the hostess assured me was gluten-free. That night I woke up with severe stomach cramps and vomiting. In the back of my mind, I suspected that 'gluten-free' muffin, but didn't know for sure until some time later when we inadvertently learned that if our hostess didn't have quite enough gluten-free flour while she was baking, she would simply top off the measurement with



The image shows a rustic breakfast setting on a wooden table. In the foreground, a large blue and white patterned plate holds three golden-brown waffles, several sliced strawberries, and a whole strawberry. A silver fork is tucked behind the waffles. In the background, a smaller similar plate also holds waffles and strawberries, with a silver fork resting on it. A central white, scalloped-edge overlay contains the word "Breakfasts" in a gold, elegant script font.

Breakfasts

Pancakes/Waffles

4 eggs

1½-1¾ cups gluten-free flour mix

1 tsp. xanthan gum

1¾ cups milk

¼ cup oil

1 Tbsp. sugar

2 Tbsp. baking powder

1 tsp. salt

Beat eggs with hand beater until fluffy; beat in remaining ingredients until smooth. Pour into waffle iron or onto greased griddle. Add more liquid if batter is too thick.

French Toast

2 Tbsp. rice flour

1 tsp. sugar

pinch of salt

½ cup milk

2 eggs

4 or 5 slices gluten-free bread

Beat first 5 ingredients with hand beater until smooth. Soak bread in egg mixture until saturated. Cook on hot, greased griddle until golden brown on both sides.

Fruit and Yogurt Toast

For each piece of gluten-free bread:

⅓ cup fresh or thawed raspberries

⅓ cup fresh or thawed blueberries

⅓ cup vanilla yogurt

Lightly butter both sides of bread and fry in frying pan until golden brown. Gently stir the fruit into the yogurt, and spread over the toast. Top with maple syrup, cut up, and enjoy!