



The Celiac Scene™

Guides for the **Gluten Free**

Ellen Bayens was diagnosed with Celiac disease in 2005. Like so many celiacs, symptoms of the disorder were present since childhood. Her mother shared her diagnosis as did her mother before her. Ellen joined the Victoria Chapter of the *Canadian Celiac Association* almost immediately and so began her career as a celiac activist!

As a way to welcome delegates to the National Conference that the Victoria Chapter hosted in 2008, Ellen created a simple map featuring the restaurants that Victoria's celiac community trusted. With maps in hand, delegates ventured out from the conference area with confidence in their hearts.

"Make a map for our city," was the delighted cry that inspired Ellen to create The Celiac Scene, a comprehensive and easily accessible online resource that transforms the considered restaurant recommendations of local celiac communities across Canada into an easy to use map format. www.theceliacscene.com was born!

The Celiac Scene is proud to be the only restaurant resource in North America whose entries are pre-screened by celiacs, *for* celiacs. Posted restaurants have a reputation within the local celiac community for providing consistently safe and delicious celiac-friendly meals. Most importantly, restaurants cannot post their own testimonials nor can they purchase a listing on the site.

It should be noted that The Celiac Scene exists as a guide and not a guarantee. Dining out carries risks that every gluten-free diner must calculate for themselves. Any given meal is only as safe as the server and chef on shift. The decision to partake always rests solely upon the individual diner. See <http://bit.ly/CFConversation> for tips on how to separate the wheat from the chaff when it comes to celiac-friendly dining.

The Celiac Scene solicits and, more importantly, acts upon the feedback it receives from its users. Those restaurants that fail to maintain the standards that celiac diners require are promptly removed from the site and if applicable, the respective local support group is informed so that they may also remove that restaurant from their list of recommendations.

Proactive restaurateurs who contact The Celiac Scene on their own behalves or are recommended by visitors to www.theceliacscene.com are invited to share how they source gluten-free ingredients; outline the practices they have in place that minimize or prevent cross contamination and provide information on their staff awareness program. Where possible, participating celiac support groups are notified and a follow-up phone call or in-person visit takes place before the restaurant is finally posted on the site.

The Celiac Scene provides links to over 75 fast-food chains in North America that make a corporate commitment to meeting the needs of gluten-free diners. Identifying logos, links to locations, nutritional information, allergen guides and even gluten-free menus are offered so that the gluten free can navigate their lives with confidence no matter where they are. Please see <http://bit.ly/GFNACHains> for Celiac-Friendly Fast Food.

Ellen Bayens welcomes your comments and is dedicated to working with you on Your Celiac Scene.