
Gluten Free in Puerto Rico

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Swimsuits, check. Sunscreen, check. One very large carry-on stuffed to the seams with assorted gluten-free foods for myself and my two boys for a week, check. Reassuring myself for the tenth time that I've packed enough gluten-free items, check.

Well sort of. Does this sound like how your vacation always starts? If so, let me tell you about our experience at the El Conquistador Resort in Puerto Rico last spring. Suffice it to say, I lugged that huge carry-on of food and never once touched anything in it! Really!

I had seen on Trip Advisor in advance of our trip several comments specific to how well this Waldorf-Astoria property handled gluten-free guests. While this was great to read, I was not about to abandon our lifeline of gluten-free items in case we did not have the same experience.

Upon arriving at the hotel, I went straight to the concierge, who promptly introduced me to Juan Sanie, sous chef for all of the hotel restaurants. He pulled out his smart phone to show me photos of his gluten-free food pantry that he keeps separate from the regular one. I was amazed that he had



many of the foods we loved, and he was happy to make sure we ate well the entire week! Each morning, gluten-free pancakes, waffles, and muffins were available. My boys were convinced this was "the best hotel ever!" If I remember correctly, they ate chocolate chip gluten-free pancakes for breakfast every day we were there. Not exactly a "breakfast of champions," I know, but heck, we were on vacation!

At the poolside bar, Juan whipped up delicious gluten-free pizzas for us, and we gobbled up every morsel. Plates of cookies were delivered each afternoon as a special snack, and the ice cream shop was a favorite spot for dessert. Even the Italian restaurant had gluten-free pasta, and we all enjoyed dinner so much we returned another evening for more!

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We were quick to tell another family with celiac disease in our town about our trip. Every time they thought about doing a Caribbean vacation, the worry became too much, and they didn't go. I'm happy to say they returned last month with the same great stories. They never had to break out their carry-on bag either!

If you're in search of a beautiful resort to escape the cold next winter, the El Conquistador Resort and Juan Sanie! certainly made this vacation enjoyable and easy.

And that's not always easy to do in our gluten-free world!