

What's in a name?

Over the past 50 years in the UK our diet and the range of foods available to us has changed beyond all recognition. So many non-indigenous foods are commonplace commodities and many recipes with exotic sounding names are standard restaurant fare. With the influx of different cuisines, especially from Asia and the Far East, choosing something to eat that is "safe" can be a challenge for the Food Hypersensitive (FHS) customer who has issues to certain foods. In many cases, the standard recipe contains an allergen which is reflected in the title of the dish but there are so many different variations and it's a matter of recognising the style of cuisine, the name of the dish and the predominant allergens used in it. It also helps if you can familiarise yourself with the local translations for the most common allergens.

ASIAN cuisines, from Japanese, Vietnamese and Chinese to Thai and Korean vary in flavour but share several major allergens as ingredients.

Peanuts, fish and shellfish, soy and eggs.

Cross-contact can be an issue for those with an allergy when it comes to Asian cooking techniques. Woks, for example, are not meant to be thoroughly washed between each preparation, so they can retain, over time, the flavours and oils of foods cooked in them. If a person with a shellfish allergy has ordered a seafood-free dish made in a wok that was used to cook prawns, it is very likely that some shellfish proteins can contaminate the food and lead to a potential reaction.

Sesame seeds are widely used in **MIDDLE EASTERN** foods, whole, as oil or ground up into a thin sauce called **tahini** which is found in many dishes and used as a dipping sauce for spicy chickpea cakes known as **falafel** or made into a dip called **hummus**. Middle eastern sweetmeats contain nuts and seeds and should be avoided by those with a nut allergy. **Baklava**, a pastry made with filo pastry containing **gluten** is drizzled with honey and very often contains **pistachio nuts or walnuts**. One of the most prominent allergens in **AFRICAN** cuisine is **peanuts**, often referred to as groundnuts. They are used in soups, stews, and as sauces for meat and rice dishes.

In traditional **FRENCH** cuisine many salad dressings and vinaigrettes can be a hidden source of nut and seed oils and eggs. First pressed oils such as **walnut, sesame and hazelnut** are used for their intense flavours and can be very allergic. Many French and Italian desserts use nuts especially **almonds**. The recipes for **frangipane, marzipan, nougat, turron, praline, gianduja, macarons, Florentines and tuiles** all traditionally contain tree nuts particularly almonds.

SOY SAUCE

This sauce is widespread in many Asian restaurants and can sometimes be tolerated by those with a soy intolerance dependent on the levels to consume due to the soy proteins are broken down by the fermentation process. Soy sauce does however contain **wheat** which can be a bigger issue in **soy, miso, tamari or fish sauce** condiments as they can contain **gluten** proteins.

MASALA SPICES

Some of the most common spices are ground and mixed into masalas as a flavourful base for vegetable and meat curries, rice and other savoury dishes. Always check the masala ingredients before eating as they could include **mustard, sesame or fenugreek**. Lentils and legumes are a major source of protein in a country such as India which has a very large population but be aware that these foods are in the same "family" as **peanuts** and may trigger an allergic reaction, also high risk of may contains nuts and peanuts due to processing.

COOKING METHODS

- Shu in Chinese means "barbecued"
- Kow means "roasted"
- Al horno in Spanish means "oven baked"
- Frito means "fried"
 - Be aware that there are many different types of oil used to prepare and cook food.
 - Mediterranean countries use predominantly olive oil but may also use blended vegetable oils which can contain **soybean**.
 - Asian cuisines commonly use coconut oil, palm oil, **peanut** oil, **sesame** oil and **soybean** oil as they are low-smoke, ideal for stir-frying and do not break down easily.

POPULAR RECIPES

THAI- Pad Thai, Green Thai Curry, Penang Curry all traditionally contain nuts, either sprinkled on top or added to the sauce to thicken. Usually **peanuts** but also **cashews** are used.

INDONESIAN- Soto, Gado-Gado, Rendang, Nasi Goreng and Satay are the 5 national dishes and may contain **peanuts** and **eggs, soya, or seafood** dependant on the choice of protein.

KORMA sauce- traditionally contains ground **almonds** to add richness and to thicken the sauce. Sometimes ground **peanuts** are used as they are cheaper - **ALWAYS** check which nuts are used.

TOFU-Soybean curd **TEMPEH**- Fermented **soybeans** **TVP** -Dehydrated and extruded **soya** protein

PANEER-curdled dairy **milk** (cow/sheep/buffalo) **SEITAN**-A vegan meat alternative made from hydrated **gluten**

<https://foodallergyaware.co.uk/resources/factsheets/>