

Are Shirataki Noodles Gluten-Free?



The term gluten is the generic term for a group of storage proteins that develop naturally in grains such as wheat, barley and rye. When people with celiac disease ingest these forms of gluten, their bodies launch an autoimmune attack that damages the gastrointestinal tract. Shirataki noodles are a pasta alternative manufactured by House Foods America Corporation in the shape of spaghetti, fettuccine and angel hair.

Effects

When people with celiac disease eat or drink something containing gluten, their bodies identify the protein as a foreign object and respond accordingly. As the autoimmune response progresses, it damages the villi, tiny finger-like projections inside the wall of the small intestine. The damaged villi gradually lose their ability to absorb vital nutrients from ingested food and drink, and people with untreated celiac disease become malnourished.

Identification

Traditionally, commercial pastas are manufactured from wheat or other gluten-laden grains forbidden to people with celiac disease. Shirataki noodles, however, are made from a combination of tofu, a soy protein and konnyaku, a type of Japanese yam. According to House Foods America Corporation, these two compounds are gluten-free. The main protein in shirataki noodles is glucomannan, a gluten-free dietary protein, says ShiratakiNoodles.net.

Preparation

Shirataki noodles are sold as wet noodles in see-through plastic packaging. They're ready to serve when opened or can be cooked with garlic, spinach or tofu for added flavor.

Tips

While shirataki noodles are often cooked in sauces for added flavor, many soy and teriyaki sauces contain significant amounts of gluten, according to MayoClinic.com. Read labels carefully before using any sauces or condiments.

Warnings

Even when products like shirataki noodles are gluten-free, they can easily become contaminated with gluten during the cooking and serving processes, says the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness. Store gluten-free products in a separate spot in the kitchen, clean all food preparation surfaces and cooking utensils carefully and don't place gluten-free products in the same bowl or on the same plate as those that contain gluten.