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The Popular Modern Diet Anthony Bourdain Once Scoffed At

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food world. The late chef, food writer, and TV personality Anthony Bourdain was among those who had no trouble speaking his mind about various food choices. This includes many people who adopt a gluten-free diet, which uniquely sits at the intersection of being health imperative for some and possibly a counterproductive fad for others.

In a 2016 interview with Adweek (via [Thrillist](#)), Bourdain spoke out about why he took issue with it. "Look, before you start boring me to death at a party about how you got gluten-free, you know, if you think you have a disease as serious as celiac disease, shouldn't you see a f***ing doctor before you make this big move?" he asked. Bourdain went on to say, "I don't think half of these people even understand what they're talking about."

For context, celiac disease is an autoimmune disorder where the intestines are damaged by their reaction to gluten, a protein contained in many common grains such as wheat, barley, and rye. For those with the condition, preventing exposure to such foods is a necessity. Their bodies' response to the grain-based protein also raises the risk of bowel cancer and coronary disease. But [is there any health-related reason to avoid gluten if you haven't been diagnosed with celiac disease?](#)

Not all gluten-avoiders have celiac disease

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Anthony Bourdain correctly noted the seriousness of the condition, which requires medical testing to diagnose. It's estimated that the disease only affects roughly 1% of people. However, 2014 findings by the **NPD Group** indicated that 11% of Americans followed a gluten-free diet at the time. A 2019 survey by researchers at the **University of Nebraska** suggested that the proportion was as high as 20%. Bourdain's scorn seemed to be directed at the folks voluntarily ditching gluten.

He may have had a point, beyond any concerns about fussy eaters. There's no inherent health benefit in eliminating gluten for those who aren't sensitive to it. In fact, doing so can remove key sources of fiber, whole grains, and other nutrients, raising health risks. Many gluten-free foods are also noticeably more expensive than their traditional counterparts.

Additionally, there's a gray area involving the less-well-understood condition known as non-celiac gluten sensitivity. It's a broad term for those who experience negative health symptoms when consuming gluten, yet clinically test negative for celiac disease itself. Although it's impossible to say with certainty, it seems likely that Bourdain wouldn't have scoffed at these folks, either.

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Anthony Bourdain didn't just turn his ire on people who elected to go gluten-free. He notably **couldn't stand folks who follow vegetarian or vegan diets**, writing in **The New Yorker** that they were "enemies of everything that's good and decent in the human spirit." He was also famous for his **hatred of brunch**, which he argued was a way restaurants overcharged for leftover repurposed food.

However, when it came to gluten, the legendary chef and food personality summed up his views in a **Reddit "Ask Me Anything" post** with his trademark humor: "I believe celiac disease is a very serious ailment, and if you're diagnosed with it, I'm pleased that there are now gluten-free options, but these people who are treating gluten as, you know, an equivalent of Al Qaeda are worrying to me." Although the trend has shown no signs of slowing down, many fans may feel his words ring as true as ever.

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