



New York Birthday Bizness...

Birthday parties were always the hardest events for me.
Pizza, cake, cookies... are all typically not **gluten-free**.

I usually had to ask the host as many questions as could be...
To make sure everything I touched was a "**gluten-free** guarantee."

My mother started to send me to parties with a **gluten-free** snack to eat,
I was a little embarrassed, but I was grateful for my special **gluten-free** treat.

Growing up, some moms would call mine...
They'd ask her to join the party, to make sure I was fine.

As a little girl, it isn't so easy to pretend...
Especially when the non-**gluten free** treats come out towards the end.

I sometimes chose to skip parties where I knew I'd feel sad...
However, this choice only made me feel more insecure and bad.

Although I felt weird eating something different than the rest,
This definitely put my leadership and confidence to the test.

As I emerged into my adolescent years,
There were no more birthday parties filled with tears.

Birthday parties became events I loved to attend...
I would be the last girl standing, at the very end!

Now with this past year in quarantine,
My birthday plans were not so mainstream.

There hasn't been one June 5th day...
Where I haven't felt comfortable to navigate a party my own way.

My mother has always planned the most special birthdays for me in June...
Her planning skills and artistic abilities are always in tune.

Looking back, these are the moments that shaped me to be who I am today...
I'm **gluten-free** lz, mentoring kids with Celiac in every which way!