

Plan ahead, eat, and pedal on

Cycling can be challenging on longer distances due to weather and terrain. If one has food issues as well, one has two choices: get creative or give up. Giving up was not an option for my wife, Sheree, and I a number of years ago when Sheree had her gall bladder removed and we discovered she had food allergies too.

We did make some stumbles early on but that was preferable to giving up our No. 1 hobby – cycling. Our biggest downfall initially was not checking food labels carefully enough or asking enough questions at restaurants. We didn't want to come across as finicky eaters. Sheree is allergic to dairy products, eggs, bananas, wheat etc. One would be surprised how many items, including soy sauce, that have wheat in them. Sheree's stomach started roiling shortly after we ate lunch in



Portland one day. We had to find a motel. You don't pedal for long when part of the fuel source is fouled up. We determined there was something in the sauce that she reacted to.

We've become comfortable with explaining the situation. We've found that our best success has come at "mom and pop"-type of eateries. They're more willing to work with us versus chain restaurants that have set menu items with set prices. One day we stopped at Grandma's Restaurant in Cascade, Idaho. There was nothing on the menu Sheree could have. The waitress said, "Let me go ask my grandma." The cook (also the waitress's grandma) came out, tossed out some ideas and asked us if \$6 was a fair price. Ginger, at Ginger's Korean Restaurant in Woodburn, Ore., did the same.

Sheree also prepares food in advance in case we hit a stretch where fast-food eateries are the only places available. A gallon plastic Ziploc filled with ice, for instance, can keep soymilk fresh. We've found co-op-type markets have a good selection of food items for people with dietary issues. During our travels, we've asked motel owners, firemen, police officers etc. for directions to eateries and co-op markets. Our bike cart winds up being heavier, with the additional food, but that just means we get more exercise.

To help others avoid the trial-and-error process that we went through, Sheree started a blog to give people ideas on how to prepare tasty meals without certain ingredients: <http://www.catsinthekitchen.blogspot.com>. And the best news: Her recipes are healthy, which is good for any cyclist's "engine".