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Types of Flour Used in Baking

The use of different flours will result in varied textures, flavors, and nutritional value. Some flours will produce a heavy, compact bread, while others will produce a lighter bread. Some flours may cause a full-bodied or bitter flavor while others present a nutty, woody flavor. Follow your recipe for best results. With practice you can begin to substitute flours with good success.

All-purpose flour is a blend of hard and soft wheat.

Self-rising flour is simply all-purpose flour pre-blended with baking powder and salt.

Bread flour is made from hard wheat, which has a high protein content. It is the preferred flour for making bread.

Enriched flour has the B-vitamins and iron, that are lost during milling, added back to the flour.

Whole-wheat flour is milled from the whole kernel. When used alone, whole-wheat flour produces a heavy, compact, dark bread. The germ and bran cut the developing gluten strands.

Whole-wheat bread flour is ground from hard wheat and has a higher gluten content. To create your own whole wheat bread flour, add one tablespoon gluten to each cup of whole-wheat flour.

Graham flour resembles whole wheat flour in taste but has less protein.

Durum flour is made from the hardest of wheats. A bread made entirely from durum wheat is inedible.

Semolina flour is durum flour minus the bran and wheat germ. It is usually used as a pasta flour but can be used in breads.

Kamut flour is a relative of durum wheat. It is high in protein but low in gluten, so it must be combined with a higher gluten flour to produce an acceptable bread.

OTHER GRAIN FLOURS

Amaranth flour is higher in protein, lysine, iron, and calcium than most other grains and is often used in vegetarian cooking. Use ½ cup of amaranth flour per loaf in combination with a wheat flour.

Barley flour adds a nutty, malty flavor to a loaf. Use no more than one part barley flour to three parts wheat flour.

Buckwheat flour has a full-bodied, earthy flavor. Use ½ cup of buckwheat flour per loaf in combination with a wheat flour.

Corn flour has a sweet flavor. Use no more than one part corn flour to four parts wheat flour.

Cornmeal gives a crumbly texture and sweet flavor. Add ½ cup of cornmeal per loaf.

Legume flours are gluten-free and include pea, mung, lentil, soy, and garbanzo bean flours.

Millet flour adds a nut-like, sweet flavor. Use no more than one part millet flour to four parts wheat flour.

Oat flour contains a natural antioxidant that will improve the shelf-life of bread. It adds a sweet earthy flavor but retains a light texture. Use one part oat flour to three parts wheat flour.

Potato flour is made from steamed potatoes that have been dried and ground, imparting a definite potato flavor. To avoid lumping, mix it with the sugar and fat before adding liquids. It is a suitable flour for people on a gluten-free diet.

Quinoa flour has a nutty taste that is usually used to make gluten-free pasta.

Rice flour comes in both brown and white varieties. Brown rice flour contains the rice bran and germ. It has a nuttier, richer flavor than white rice flour and produces a darker loaf. Use one part brown rice flour to four parts wheat flour. Rice flour absorbs more liquid and absorbs it more slowly than wheat flour so adjust recipe mixing times accordingly.

Rye flour is sold in both medium and dark varieties. Dark rye contains bran, and medium rye sometimes does. Both produce a full-bodied, bitter, slightly sour flavor. For best results, use one part wheat flour to two parts medium rye or one part wheat flour to one part dark rye.

Soy and soya flour are derived from soybeans. Soy flour is ground from raw beans and soya flour from lightly toasted beans. Both varieties have a high fat content. However it is possible to find these flours with less fat or as no-fat flours. Soy and soya flours add a slightly sweet, pleasantly musty flavor to breads and improve shelf life. Use one part soy or soya flour to four parts wheat flour. Breads containing soy flour brown quickly, so reduce the oven temperature about 25°F.

Spelt flour contains enough gluten to be substituted for wheat flours. Those people with allergies to wheat may be able to tolerate spelt wheat. Check with your physician first before substituting.

Triticale flour is a cross between durum, rye, and red winter wheat. It has a rye-like flavor but must be combined with a high-gluten wheat flour for an acceptable bread to be produced. Use a one-to-one ratio.

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