

# Flour

## About wheat flour

Wheat flours are milled from soft or hard wheat berries and vary in gluten content. *Gluten* is a type of protein that helps make bread rise. In general, soft wheat berries are lower in gluten and used for muffins and other quick-breads, while hard wheat berries are higher in gluten and used for bread and pizza dough.

## Whole or refined?

Whole wheat flour contains the outer bran and nutritious inner germ (which appear as brown speckles); in white flour, these have been removed and the flour has been fortified with vitamins and minerals.

## Common types of wheat flour

All-Purpose Flour - refined white flour used for either for bread or quick-breads, cookies, etc.

Artisan Flour - refined white bread flour blended with a little white wheat flour and ascorbic acid; said to approximate European bread flour

Sifted Flour – whole wheat flour that has been sifted to remove a small portion of the bran **(usually around 5%)**. **Sifted flour has traditionally been called 'bolted' flour.**

Whole Wheat Pastry Flour - whole wheat flour milled from soft wheat berries; soft and tender for quick-breads, cookies, pie, etc.

Whole Wheat Bread Flour - whole wheat flour milled from hard wheat berries; high in gluten and used for crusty bread and pizza dough

White Wheat Flour - milled from hard *white* wheat berries; lighter in flavor than traditional red wheat but still 100% whole grain; can be used for either breads that need to rise or quick-breads

## A note on spelt flour

Spelt is an ancestor of today's common wheat that has a wider spectrum of nutrients than wheat and is more versatile. It can be used for either breads or quick-breads and has a slightly hearty, nutty flavor. It is higher in protein than wheat, and some people find it more digestible.

## Other bread flours

Rye - produces bread with a rich, slightly sour flavor common in Germany; also quite moist and dense because it does not rise

Six-Grain - a mixture of wheat, barley, rye, buckwheat, corn, and millet flours that adds interesting flavors when mixed with bread flour

Cornmeal - great for cornbread and corn muffins; this is more finely ground flour than polenta (the Italian name) or grits (the Southern name), which are not typically used for baking.

## Storage

Store whole grain flour in the freezer for up to 6 months in a tightly closed paper or plastic bag or storage container to keep the naturally occurring oils in the germ from going rancid and to keep away moisture and insects.