

FLOUR POWER

Whether you are a beginner baker or an experienced baker, it's important to know the difference between the variety of flours available today. Flour that is used for baking comes mainly from wheat, although there are other sources of flour available, which will be focused on in upcoming newsletters. This newsletter will be "sifting" through the facts on a variety of common wheat flours available.

All-purpose flour is one of the most commonly used flours. It is a blend of hard and soft wheat and has 8 to 11 percent protein (gluten). All-purpose flour may be bleached or unbleached. Flour that is labeled "unbleached" is bleached naturally as it ages, while "bleached" flour is chemically treated. Bleached flour has less protein than unbleached. Bromated flour is flour that has been enriched with potassium bromate, which helps promote the gluten in dough but has been classified as a potential carcinogen. At Grandma's Pantry, our all-purpose flour is unbleached and un-bromated and is considered a better and healthier quality product. All-purpose flour may be stored in a sealed container on a shelf for up to 8 months or up to a year in the refrigerator.

Bread flour is made from hard, high-protein wheat. It has from 12 to 14 percent protein which helps to increase the volume and create better texture for the dough. Bread flour may be bleached or unbleached and is the best choice for yeast products. It may be stored several months in a sealed container in a cool dry cabinet and up to a year in the freezer.

Pastry flour, also known as cookie flour, is made from soft wheat and has 9 to 10 percent protein and a high starch content. Pastry flour makes a tender pastry but is not recommended for yeast breads. Pastry flour may be stored in a sealed container on a shelf for up to 8 months or up to a year in the refrigerator.

Cake flour is a soft wheat flour with a fine texture and a protein content of 8 to 10 percent. It is chlorinated using a bleaching process that makes the flour slightly acidic and helps to improve the texture of the cake. It is best to sift cake flour before using in any recipe. To substitute bleached all-purpose flour for cake flour, subtract 2 tablespoons of flour for each cup used in the recipe. Cake flour may be stored in a sealed container on a shelf for up to 6 months or up to a year in the refrigerator.

In general, storing flour will cause the moisture content in the flour to vary. The longer it is stored, the more moisture it loses. This is why older flour on a dry day may require more liquid than new flour on a wet day. Proper measuring of your flour is also important, as too much flour will result in a tough and/or heavy baked good. When measuring flour, spoon your flour into a measuring cup and then level off the cup with a

knife. Do not pack it down. Flour gets compacted in the bag during shipping, so scooping your flour right out of the bag using your measuring cup will result in too much flour.

Grandma's Pantry would like to help you to have the flour power you need for all your baking products. Check out our entire list of baking supplies at www.GrandmasPantryVa.com.

***“So, whatever you eat or drink, or whatever you do,
do all to the glory of God.”*** (1 Cor. 10:31)