

Les Partitifs

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In [today's lecture](#), we explored the concept of **partitive articles** in French. Partitives are used to express an unspecified quantity of something, often paired with verbs related to eating, drinking, or buying. However, their usage changes in specific contexts, such as negatives, adverbs, and quantities. Let's dive deeper into this topic with clear examples to help you understand how partitives work and when they change.

What Are Partitive Articles?

Partitive articles in French are used to refer to an indefinite or uncountable quantity of something. They are:

- **du** (masculine singular),
- **de la** (feminine singular),
- **des** (plural).

These articles are typically used with verbs of quantity, such as *manger* (to eat), *boire* (to drink), or *acheter* (to buy).

When Do Partitives Change?

Partitive articles change in three specific contexts: **negatives**, **adverbs**, and **quantities**. Let's look at examples for each case.

1. With Negatives

In negative sentences, the partitive article changes to **de** or **d'** (before a vowel or silent *h*).

- *Je mange du pain.* (I eat bread.)
→ *Je ne mange pas de pain.* (I don't eat bread.)
- *Je bois de la limonade.* (I drink lemonade.)
→ *Je ne bois pas de limonade.* (I don't drink lemonade.)
- *J'achète des pâtes.* (I buy pasta.)
→ *Je n'achète pas de pâtes.* (I don't buy pasta.)

2. With Adverbs

When adverbs of quantity (like *peu*, *beaucoup*, *assez*, *plus*, *moins*) are used, the partitive article changes to **de** or **d'**.

- *Je mange du pain.*
→ *Je mange peu de pain.* (I eat little bread.)
- *Je bois de la limonade.*
→ *Je bois beaucoup de limonade.* (I drink a lot of lemonade.)

- *J'achète des pâtes.*
→ *J'achète assez de pâtes.* (I buy enough pasta.)

3. With Quantities

When expressing specific quantities, the partitive article is replaced by **de** or **d'**.

- *Je mange du pain.*
→ *Je mange une tranche de pain.* (I eat a slice of bread.)
- *Je bois de la limonade.*
→ *Je bois deux verres de limonade.* (I drink two glasses of lemonade.)
- *J'achète des pâtes.*
→ *J'achète une assiette de pâtes.* (I buy a plate of pasta.)