The roasted turkey sizzles on its platter.

You’ve spooned the fat from the drippings in the pan, and now all that’s left is to thicken the remaining golden juices to make gravy. To do this, the recipe calls for flour or cornstarch as the thickening agent. Does it make a difference which you choose?

**How do thickeners thicken, anyway?**

Both flour and cornstarch use the carbohydrate, starch, to thicken sauces. Mixed with cold liquid, starch isn’t too thrilling, but add a little heat to the mix and the individual starch granules get to work, absorbing liquid and swelling.

By the time the mixture nears boiling, the starch granules will have grown to about ten times their size at room temperature. These swollen starch granules form a thick but tender matrix for the flavorful turkey drippings in your gravy, which thickens even more as it cools.

**Flour and cornstarch**

Although both flour and cornstarch owe their thickening powers to starch, cornstarch is pure starch, while flour contains starch plus protein. What difference does a little protein make? Protein takes up volume but contributes little to the thickening power of flour. As such, you need about twice as much flour as cornstarch to thicken a sauce.

That means flour could be more likely to add an undesirable pasty flavor. While pure starch becomes transparent as it swells with liquid, the protein in flour reflects light, making a sauce look cloudy. Cloudy, velvet-textured gravy can be delicious, but cornstarch is used more often to thicken fruit pie fillings, creating the gem-like transparency around the fruit.

烤火鸡在盘子上嘶嘶作响。

你已经从锅里的水滴中舀出了脂肪，现在剩下的就是将剩下的金汁加厚，制成肉汁。为此，配方要求将面粉或玉米淀粉作为增稠剂。你选择哪个有所不同？

### 无论如何，增稠剂如何变稠？

面粉和玉米淀粉都使用碳水化合物淀粉来增稠酱汁。与冷液混合，淀粉不太刺激，但添加一点热量混合，各个淀粉颗粒开始工作，吸收液体和肿胀。

当混合物接近沸腾时，淀粉颗粒在室温下将生长至其尺寸的约10倍。这些溶胀的淀粉颗粒形成一个厚而柔软的基质，可以让你的肉汁中的美味火鸡滴水，随着它的冷却，它会变稠。

### 面粉和玉米淀粉

虽然面粉和玉米淀粉都具有淀粉的增稠能力，但玉米淀粉是纯淀粉，而面粉含有淀粉和蛋白质。一点蛋白质有什么不同？蛋白质占据了体积，但对面粉的增稠能力贡献很小。因此，你需要大约两倍于玉米淀粉的面粉来加厚酱汁。

这意味着面粉更有可能增加不良的糊状风味。虽然纯淀粉随着液体膨胀变得透明，但面粉中的蛋白质反射光，使酱汁看起来混浊。多云，天鹅绒质地的肉汁可以是美味的，但玉米淀粉更常用于加厚水果馅饼馅料，在水果周围创造宝石般的透明度。