

Title:

Don't Know What Flour To Buy?

Word Count:

382

Summary:

Confused at the array of flour available online or in the grocery store? Don't know what to buy? We can help.

Buy bread flour for breads. If you want tender muffins or cookies, buy pastry flour. It's the gluten content that makes breads chewy and the reduced amount of gluten that makes muffins crumbly. All-purpose flour is a compromise. (Many recipes call for all-purpose, not because it will make the best muffins but because the formulators know that all-purpose flour is w...

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Article Body:

Confused at the array of flour available online or in the grocery store? Don't know what to buy? We can help.

Buy bread flour for breads. If you want tender muffins or cookies, buy pastry flour. It's the gluten content that makes breads chewy and the reduced amount of gluten that makes muffins crumbly. All-purpose flour is a compromise. (Many recipes call for all-purpose, not because it will make the best muffins but because the formulators know that all-purpose flour is what most people have.)

Experiment with different flours until you find what works best for you and then stick with it. Start with major brands. We found that some of the smaller, regional mills couldn't guarantee us the same specification from season to season.

Except for white cakes, we don't use bleached flour. We prefer to avoid the bleaching agents. We like the creamy color of unbleached flour and we find unbleached flour easier to work with.

So your shopping list for the baking aisle might look like this:

- A high gluten bread flour for bread baking. We would suggest at least 11%

gluten. (While you are in the bread aisle pick up a good dough conditioner and a package of wheat gluten. The extra gluten is especially helpful when you are making whole wheat breads.) We always buy unbleached flour for bread.

- A whole wheat flour. We like a fine, stone ground flour.
- All purpose flour. We don't use it often but do so for gravies and sauces, for dusting counters, and when we feel to follow a recipe exactly. Again, we'll buy an unbleached flour.
- A pastry flour for cakes, muffins, and some cookies. (If we want a chewy cookie, we'll use bread flour.) We'll buy unbleached pastry flour.

We could buy a bleached cake flour white cakes but since we don't make many white cakes, we rarely do.

Once bought, store your flour properly—in a closed container in a cool dark place. When flour is exposed to air, the moisture content changes. In a dry climate, flour becomes drier. In a humid environment, moisture increases. The difference in the moisture content can affect the performance of your recipe.

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