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# Flour defined

The question of the day is: *What is the difference between pastry flour and all-purpose flour? Can I substitute one for the other when I don't have the correct one on hand?*

**What's cookin'**

Lori Gysel  
 Gerry Kentner



I saved this question to answer on a day when we had a pastry recipe featured. In order to give you an answer, I need to tell you a little more about flour.

First of all, there are several types of flour: rice flour, corn flour, potato flour, besan flour and more. But, in western countries, when the word 'flour' is used on its own, it is taken to mean wheat flour. There are different grades of wheat flour.

If all the wheat bran and wheatgerm are still present in the flour, then this is called wholemeal flour. If all the wheat bran and wheat germ are removed, then this is called white flour. Wheatmeal flour is in between wholemeal and white— some bran and germ remain.

Of the various varieties of white flour— you will find bread flour, all-purpose flour and cake/pastry flour to choose from. Bread flour is made from blends of hard wheat only and contains 12-14% (or more) protein. All-purpose flour is made from a blend of hard and soft wheat with 10-12% protein. Cake flour is made entirely of soft wheat, with about 9% protein.

The higher the protein content, the higher the level of gluten. Gluten, when exposed to warmth and moisture forms bonds within the dough (or batter). Strong bonds are desired for a really nice chewy bread, but they are to be avoided when trying to create a flaky pastry.

So, the answer to the question is this: you can fairly safely substitute all-purpose flour for either bread flour or cake and pastry. But you cannot substitute bread and cake/pastry for each other. And, the best solution of all is to use what the recipe calls for— your bread will be chewier, your cakes and pastry will be lighter!

Have fun and keep cooking!

# Tortiere

**Ingredients (pastry)**

- 2 cups cake and pastry flour
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 cup shortening • 2-3 tbsps cold water



**Method (pastry)**

Add salt to flour and blend in shortening with a pastry blender or two knives. Even blend in with your hands, using a gentle touch. Sprinkle in water slowly and mix only until pastry comes together. You can add another dash of water if necessary.

The pastry should not be sticky at all. Do not overwork the pastry. This seems to be a common problem with pastry makers. This causes the pastry to become tough and shrink.

Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured counter. Line bottom of 9-inch pie dish. Roll and cut a piece appropriate for the top of the pie. Set both aside (cover with a damp tea towel).

**Ingredients (filling)**

- 2 lbs lean ground pork
- 1 1/2 cups finely chopped onion
- 1 tsp ginger • 1/4 tsp cloves • 1/4 tsp allspice
- 1/2 tsp pepper • 1 tsp salt • 1/2 cup water
- 1 cup fine bread crumbs • 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 1 tsp cold water

**Method (filling)**

Combine meat and spices. Cook over medium heat, breaking up the meat until the pork loses its raw colour. Add a half cup water and simmer for half an hour. Stir in bread crumbs. Allow to cool.

Spoon mixture onto the pastry in the pie dish. Cover with the other piece of pastry. Cut a couple of slashes in the top of the pie. Mix the egg with the 1 tsp cold water and brush the top of the pie.

Bake at 425 F degrees for 15 minutes. Then continue baking at 350 F degrees for approximately 40 more minutes. Allow to cool for 15 minutes before cutting.

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