Everything you need to know about wheat flour

Each type of wheat flour is milled with a purpose, contributing distinct characteristics, nutrients, and performance to your cooking and baking. Choosing the right flour can have a big impact.

TYPES OF FLOUR

ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR

Labeled as enriched wheat flour in Canada, it's made by milling the wheat kernel to remove the bran and germ. It's then enriched and fortified with key nutrients like iron, folic acid, and B vitamins.

With a protein content around 10-14%, all-purpose flour provides the ideal functionality for cookies, muffins, pancakes and pizza dough, and everyday uses.

PROTEIN %	FIBRE PER 100G	ENRICHED & FORTIFIED
10-14%	3 g	Yes

WHOLE GRAIN WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR

Whole grain whole wheat flour is made using 100% of the wheat kernel: the bran, germ, and endosperm. It's finely milled to include the grain's full complement of fibre, B vitamins, and minerals like iron and magnesium.

Because it contains all of the germ, it has a shorter shelf life than other flours, but storing it in a cool, dry place helps maintain freshness for up to 6 months.

With its deep, nutty flavour and dense texture, it's the ideal flour for sourdough bread, high fibre muffins, and artisanal crackers.

PROTEIN %	FIBRE PER 100G	ENRICHED & FORTIFIED
13%	13 g	No

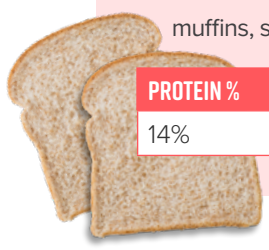
WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR

Whole wheat flour adds fibre, additional nutrients and texture to your baking.

In Canada, it's made from the whole wheat kernel, though some of the germ may be removed to extend shelf life—making it slightly different from whole grain whole wheat flour.

It can be swapped 50/50 with all-purpose flour to boost fibre in recipes—just be prepared to add a little extra liquid for best results.

Its fuller texture and nutty taste make it a great choice for muffins, sandwich loaves, and everyday baked goods.



PROTEIN %	FIBRE PER 100G	ENRICHED & FORTIFIED
14%	8.9 g	No

BREAD FLOUR

Made from hard wheat and milled to contain only the endosperm, this flour has a higher protein content (typically around 12–14%) that supports the formation of a strong gluten matrix.

The higher protein content gives dough the strength and elasticity it needs to rise well and hold its shape, creating a chewy interior with a well-developed structure.

In Canada, bread flour is enriched and fortified.

Ideal for yeast and sourdough baking of hearth and sandwich loaves, crusty rolls, artisan bread, and pizza dough.

PROTEIN %	FIBRE PER 100G	ENRICHED & FORTIFIED
12-14%	3 g	Yes

CAKE OR PASTRY FLOUR

This enriched refined flour is made from the endosperm of soft wheat and has a lower protein content (typically around 6-10%), which creates tender textures and a fine crumb. It forms a weaker gluten structure when mixed, making it ideal for delicate baking where softness and lightness are key.

Perfect for cakes, cupcakes, pie crusts, and pastries, it helps achieve fluffy, melt-in-your-mouth results without being dense or chewy.

PROTEIN %	FIBRE PER 100G	ENRICHED & FORTIFIED
6-10%	3 g	Yes

DURUM FLOUR

Also milled from durum wheat, durum flour is finer than semolina. With a protein content of around 12–13%, it forms a firm gluten structure that creates sturdy, slightly chewy results—ideal for pasta, flatbreads, and Mediterranean-style breads.

In Canada, it's sold as enriched wheat flour. Durum flour can also be blended with all-purpose flour to enhance strength, colour, and flavour in specialty baking.

PROTEIN %	FIBRE PER 100G	ENRICHED & FORTIFIED
12–13%	4 g	Yes

ATTA FLOUR

Atta flour is a traditional whole wheat, whole grain flour used widely for making flatbreads like chapati, roti, and paratha.

It's made by stone-grinding the entire wheat kernel (bran, germ, and endosperm) into a fine flour.

Unlike typical whole wheat flour, atta is produced using a stone mill, which provides a characteristic flavour and alters the flour properties helping it absorb more water to produce soft, pliable dough to create soft, thin flatbreads with just the right amount of chewiness.

PROTEIN %	FIBRE PER 100G	ENRICHED & FORTIFIED
13%	6 g	No

00 FLOUR

Milled to an ultra-fine consistency, this specialty flour is prized for its smooth texture and performance in baking.

It typically has a moderate protein content—around 8–12%, depending on whether it's intended for pizza, pasta, or pastry.

The "00" refers to the finest grade of milling, resulting in a silky flour that forms soft, elastic doughs with excellent stretch and structure, perfect for thin-crust pizza, homemade pasta, and delicate Italian pastries.

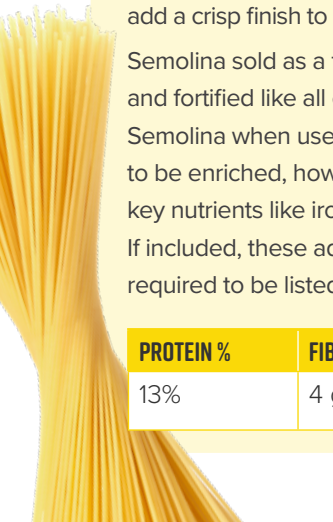
In Canada, 00 flour is considered a refined flour and must be enriched.

PROTEIN %	FIBRE PER 100G	ENRICHED & FORTIFIED
8–12%	3 g	Yes

SEMOLINA

Semolina is a coarse, granular product made by milling durum wheat, the hardest type of wheat grown in Canada. Known for its rich yellow colour and good protein content, semolina is most often used to make pasta or couscous but can also be sprinkled on baking surfaces to add a crisp finish to pizza or crusty loaves.

Semolina sold as a flour is required to be enriched and fortified like all other refined flours in Canada. Semolina when used in pasta production is not required to be enriched, however many pasta producers add key nutrients like iron, folic acid and B vitamins. If included, these additional nutrients are required to be listed on the label.



PROTEIN %	FIBRE PER 100G	ENRICHED & FORTIFIED
13%	4 g	Not required, if added will be on the ingredient label

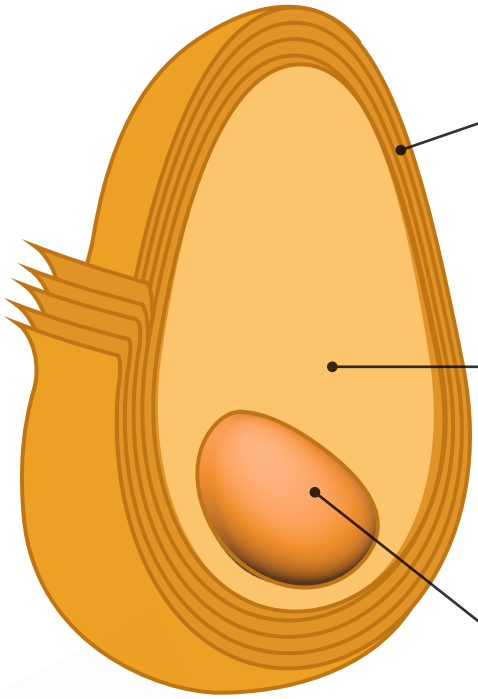
SELF RISING FLOUR

This convenience flour combines enriched refined wheat flour with added baking powder and salt, making it a ready-to-use option for recipes that require leavening.

Self-rising flour typically has a moderate protein content, similar to all-purpose flour, and is best suited for quick breads, biscuits, pancakes, and muffins.

PROTEIN %	FIBRE PER 100G	ENRICHED & FORTIFIED
10%	3 g	Yes

PARTS OF A WHEAT KERNEL



BRAN

The outer layer of the kernel. It's rich in fibre, iron, B vitamins, and minerals. Bran adds texture and a slightly nutty flavour to whole grain products.

ENDOSPERM

The largest portion of the kernel, composed mostly of carbohydrates and protein. It supplies energy to the growing plant and is the part of the kernel primarily used to make all-purpose flour.

GERM

The nutrient-dense core of the kernel, where a new plant sprouts. It contains healthy fats, B vitamins, vitamin E, and minerals like zinc and magnesium.

STORAGE TIPS

Proper storage helps maintain flour's freshness, flavour, and baking performance:

- Store in an airtight container in a cool, dry place.
- Refrigerate or freeze whole wheat and whole grain flours to extend shelf life.
- Keep away from heat, humidity, and strong odours.
- Check best-before dates and use older flour first.

In 2024 Canada grew enough wheat to make **59.5** billion loaves of bread.

From sandwich loaves to noodles and pasta, Canada's wheat is feeding Canadians—and helping nourish the world.

Canada is one of the world's top wheat producers and exporters, known for supplying high-quality wheat to over 80 countries.

This reputation is built on wheat varieties developed for consistent protein strength, gluten performance, and milling quality—traits that make Canadian wheat ideal for flours and semolina used in bread, pasta, noodles, and pastries.

Canadian millers are the largest domestic buyers of Canadian wheat, transforming it into enriched, specialty flours and semolina that meet the needs of professionals and home cooks.

Behind every crop are the Canadian farmers who grow these premium grains, contributing over 32 million tonnes of wheat every year (*) —a vital part of food systems in Canada and around the world.

Want to know more about how flour is milled? **Scan the QR code to watch this video**

* The five-year average wheat production (2020-2024) is 32.4 million tonnes.

WHAT ABOUT WHEAT?

What About Wheat? is brought to you by the Canadian Wheat Nutrition Initiative (CWNI), a group that knows wheat from farm to fork. CWNI members include grower associations and millers from across Canada. Find out more at **www.whataboutwheat.ca**