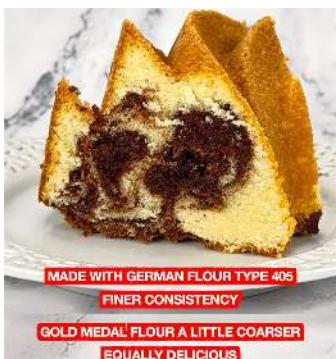


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Marble Cake Made with Gold Medal Flour



Video
How to
Measure Flour
with Protein
Content in
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Video
How to Adjust
Flour Making
Shortcrust

How Flour Influences Your Baking: Baking Tips for Better Dough and Batter

Did You Know Measuring Cups, Flour, Eggs, and Butter Influence Your Baking?

Dear Bakers

Before I start the February newsletter, I have an important update. Please correct this in your book and print the last page to keep with your book.

Important Recipe Update

Apricot Nut Cookie Correction

The correct flour amount is 2 cups (a typo in the book indicates 3 cups).

Bake in the middle of the oven.

The recipe will be updated in the next print run.

Questions about how to work the flour in shortcrusts (Mürbeteige) and cookie doughs have arisen, so I created a summarized printout for my followers.

The introduction in my book *German Heritage Baking, Volume I* discusses how to measure flour and how flours from different brands absorb liquid in various ratios. This information is on pages seven to nine. Rack placement is also essential, depending on the size of your oven and the number of racks in it. Information on this subject is on page ten.

This newsletter summarizes how to measure flour, addresses egg sizes, and discusses fat content in various brands of butter, all of which contribute to variables in baking. The baker will learn to be aware of variables and adjust accordingly. Read on to acquire an in-depth understanding of the differences in baking ingredients and how to adjust them.

Key Variables in Baking: Measuring Cups, Flour, Eggs, and Butter

There are brand and weight-specific variations to be aware of when baking!

Understanding these variations is crucial for perfecting your baked goods. Unlike in Europe, where consistency is prioritized, U.S. ingredients often fluctuate due to retail strategies. Even in the seven years since I began writing my book, I've noticed changes in ingredient packaging, such as reduced net weight in canned fruit and dairy containers and variations in egg size, butterfat content, and flour. These factors can affect recipe accuracy. Bakers should be aware, flexible, and prepared to adapt. A few minor adjustments can make a big difference!

Measuring Cup Sets Vary Slightly in Volume

If your measuring cup set is smaller, you will have less flour in ratio to the other ingredients.

An evaluation by Cookware Junkies found that the Simply Gourmet measuring cups were highly accurate, with the $\frac{1}{2}$ cup measuring precisely, and the 1 cup measuring only 2 milliliters over. On the other hand, the NorPro plastic measuring cups were less accurate—the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup measured 5.1% short, and the 1 cup measured 3.8% short. These discrepancies highlight the importance of selecting high-quality measuring tools, especially in baking, where precision is crucial. Opting for reputable brands known for their accuracy can help ensure consistent results in your culinary endeavors. Further reading: <https://www.cookwarejunkies.com/best-measuring-cups-spoons/>

Know How to Measure and Adjust Flour

Getting flour measurement right is crucial! Always hold back $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of flour after measuring and sifting and before adding other ingredients. Never measure by packing flour into your cup! Also, avoid scraping with a knife—this compacts the flour and produces more flour in the batter or dough. Instead, dip the cup into the bag and shake off excess for a scant measure. Aim for just above $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup rather than fully leveled. For example: When making dough or batter calling for $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups flour, take away $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the measured flour before mixing with the other ingredients and set it aside. Start with $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour to prevent excess flour issues and add more at the end if needed. Whether baking a pound, sponge cake, cookies, or shortcrust, get into the habit of keeping some of the measured flour back. For shortcrusts and cookie doughs that need handling or rolling, keep an additional "extra" $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup on hand for

kneading, dusting, and adjustments, even if you don't have to use it. Fiddling with the flour bag with sticky hands is not fun. Recipe directions may not always indicate to keep an additional extra $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour on hand but do it anyway. Extra flour is needed to handle and roll the dough.

Please watch my video on how to measure flour with protein content in mind (more details on protein content below): <https://vimeo.com/1057359716>

Protein Content and Brand Differences Affect Absorbency

There are many flour brands to choose from. For example, I like to bake with Gold Medal U.S. flour and 405 German flour. The texture of baked goods made with German 405 flour is finer and softer than those made with Gold Medal flour, but they taste the same. I don't have a preference between the two, but I developed the recipes in my book using Gold Medal flour because it is most readily available in my area. When baking with other brands, you may need a touch less or a touch more. Pillsbury, for example, needs a touch less.

Flour's protein content, texture after milling, and other variables affect its absorbency. I created a list of cake and pastry flour brands from various countries and examined their labels for protein content. I am well-acquainted with both German and American flours. German Type 405 is milled finer than the U.S. all-purpose Gold Medal flour. German Type 405 flour can be substituted despite the discrepancy in protein content. The list's information helps you understand how to adjust the flour choices available in your country. Note in US protein is measured per cup, in EU it is measured by gram. I converted Gold Medal flour protein to grams in the chart below.

Country	Flour Type	Protein Content. per 100 grams	Common Brands.	Uses
Germany	Type 405	10	Diamond, Aurora, Kathi, Bioland, 10 grams applies to all German flour	Cakes, pastries, soft-textured bakes
United Kingdom	Plain Flour	9.9	McDougalls plain flour 9.9 g, McDouglas plain sponge cake flour 7.9 g Home pride 9.73 g fiber 5.7g	Cakes, pastries, general baking
Australia	Plain Flour	9.7	White Wings 9.7g, Lighthouse cake, biscuit and pastry flour 8.5 g	Biscuits, pastries, general baking
Canada	All-Purpose Flour	10	Robin Hood Cake and Pastry 10 g Ardent mills 11.4 grams = 14.2 g per cup	General baking, pastries
United States	Gold Medal All-Purpose Flour	9.7	Gold Medal 12 g, per cup Pillsbury 12 g per cup 1 cup = 124 g = 9.7 g per 100 grams	General baking

Humidity levels across the U.S. range from 22% to 87%.

Dry climates: Use less flour.

Humid climates: You may need more flour for correct consistency.

Further reading:

Humidity guide by state: <https://www.currentresults.com/Weather/US/annual-average-humidity-by-state.php>

Egg Sizes Vary

A "large" egg isn't always the same size! Since eggs contribute liquid, slight weight differences can impact batters and dough. If large eggs at your local market seem to vary in size for different brands, pick the carton with the larger-looking eggs!

U.S. Large Egg: 56–63g

EU & UK Large Egg: 63–73g

Australia Large Egg: 58–67g

For precision, weigh your eggs when necessary!

Butterfat Content Affects Texture

Butterfat percentages vary by country and brand, impacting the flakiness and richness of baked goods.

U.S. Standard: Minimum 80% butterfat (know that U.S. brands are allowed to round up).

European: 82%+ butterfat (cannot be less).

Higher fat equals flakier pastries and richer texture!

U.S. Butter Brands:

Plugrà (European-style): 82%

Land O'Lakes, Challenge, Kirkland Signature: 80%

Whole Foods 365: ~78.6%

German Butter Brands:

For all brands fat content must not be less than 82%; water content must not be more than 16%. German bakers prefer baking with sweet cream butter.

Marken Butter

Fond O' Foods Butter (from the Allgäu region of Germany)

Andechser Natur (see a photo of the Andechs area at the beginning of my book)

Meggle

Landliebe

Other European Butter Brands:

Kerrygold (Ireland): 82%

Lurpak (Denmark): 82%

Isigny Sainte-Mère, Beurre d'Isigny (France): 82-84%

Président (France): 82%

Please Print And Keep With Your Book

Baking Variables Quick View Sheet

Please print this sheet and keep with your book.

Important Recipe Update: Apricot Nut Cookies

The correct flour amount is 2 cups (a typo in the book indicates 3 cups). Bake in the middle of the oven. The recipe will be updated in the next print run.

Flour Measuring and Adjustments

Refer to pages 7 to 9 of *German Heritage Baking, Volume I*, regarding how to measure flour. Getting flour measurement right is crucial for any recipe.

Always hold back $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of flour after measuring and sifting before adding other ingredients.

For shortcrusts and cookie doughs that require handling, always keep an additional "extra" $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup on hand for kneading, dusting, rolling, and adjustments, even if you don't have to use it. Fiddling with the flour bag with sticky hands is not fun. Recipe directions may not always indicate to keep an additional extra $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour on hand but do it anyway.

Never measure by packing flour into your cup! Dip the cup into the bag and shake off excess for a scant measure. Aim for just above $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup rather than fully leveled.

Avoid scraping with a knife—this compacts flour and produces more flour in the batter or dough.

For example: When making dough or batter that calls for $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups flour, take away $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the measured flour before mixing with the other ingredients and set it aside. Start with $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups to prevent excess flour issues and add more at the end if needed. If the recipe is a shortcrust or cookie dough that requires handling, also keep an additional "extra" $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of flour on hand.

Oven Rack Placement for Cookies

Knowing your oven is crucial! Even ovens of the same brand bake differently.

Older ovens (3-4 racks): Use the middle rack.

Larger ovens (5-7 racks): Use the upper third for cookies.

How to adjust:

Are the tops too brown and the bottoms too light? Lower the rack one level next time.

Bottoms too dark, tops too light? Raise the rack one level.

Read about rack placement on page 10 in *German Heritage Baking, Volume I*.

Heidrun's Go-To Brands

If you're new to my book, these brands match my tested recipes best:

Flour: Gold Medal (primary choice). I also bake with German flour Type 405.

Eggs: Large eggs – choose a carton with bigger eggs.

Butter: Challenge, Land O'Lakes, European, and Irish unsalted butter.

Final Pro Tip: Start with Less Flour!

When making batter or dough or when kneading shortcrust (Mürbeteig) or cookie dough:

Start with less flour and add gradually.

If the cookie or shortcrust dough is too sticky, add flour 1 tablespoon at a time.

If there is too much flour and the dough won't form a ball, remedy by adding 2-3 tbsp chopped butter or 2 tbsp water.

Bonus Video: Watch my step-by-step guide on making shortcrust!

How to make shortcrust with notes for adjusting flour: <https://vimeo.com/1054848066>

Here, you will find showcases organized by chapters from *German Heritage Baking, Volume I*:
<https://vimeo.com/trickhorseskeeter/albums>

Have questions? Email me—I'd love to hear from you! heidrun@heidrunmetzler.com

Heidrun Metzler

Hawaii, United States of America



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