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What Is Semolina Flour?

A Guide To Buying, Using, and Storing Semolina Flour

By [Erin Huffstetler](#) Updated on 06/15/24



 The Spruce Eats / Christine Ma

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Semolina is a high-gluten flour made from hard durum wheat. It has a rather coarse texture, yellow color, and is high in gluten protein. The high gluten content means the flour is especially well suited for making pasta, but this flour is also a common ingredient in baked goods like bread or can be made as couscous. Semolina is available throughout the world but is most popular in Italy.



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Fast Facts

- Fiber and Protein: Significantly more than all-purpose flour
- Common Use: Homemade pasta
- Grocery Aisle: Baking

Varieties

Semolina flour can be purchased in coarse, medium, and fine textures. The most common is a medium grind, meaning the coarse and fine textures may be more difficult to find in stores. The fine grind is similar in texture to all-purpose flour.

Semolina Uses

The most common use for semolina flour is making pasta from scratch. It is an ideal flour because of the gluten content, which creates a less sticky dough and is much more elastic than other flours. This helps the pasta hold its shape when cooking, whether that shape is a long spaghetti noodle or an elbow.

Semolina is also used to make couscous, moistened semolina that is mixed until little balls form. In addition, this flour is good for making

flatbread, and it finds its way into cakes in countries like Greece and Turkey. In India, where it is referred to as rawa or sooji, semolina is cooked into porridge. It is used for sweet puddings in Europe and is a staple ingredient in Nigeria, where it's boiled with water and eaten with stews and soups. Semolina is also commonly sprinkled onto pizza pans before baking pizza crusts.

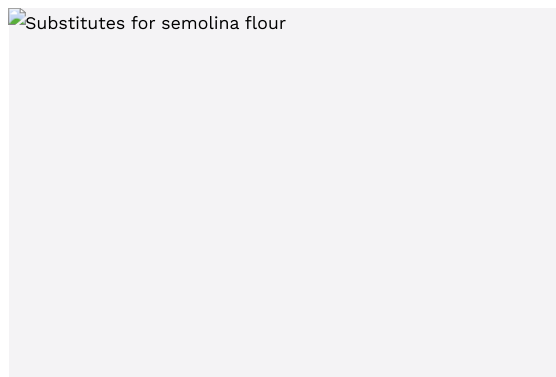
How to Cook With Semolina

When incorporating semolina flour into homemade pasta and baked goods recipes, it is used similarly to any other type of flour, combined with wet and sometimes other dry ingredients. It is also added to gravies, soups, and stews as a thickener, and can be used to prevent sticking when baking with dough. To create a filling breakfast porridge, boil semolina with milk until thickened. Semolina can also be replaced for some or all of the flour in baking recipes, including cookies, where it imparts a crisp, crumbly texture.

As with any flour, it should be scooped into the measuring cups rather than the cups being dipped into the flour bag. Dipping can add extra flour to the recipe, which makes the pasta dough drier and harder to work with.

What Does It Taste Like?

Semolina has a sweet, nutty flavor and earthy aroma. It also contributes that signature yellow color to the pasta.



The Spruce Eats / Brianna Gilmartin

Semolina Substitute

Although semolina is the ideal flour for making homemade pasta, other flours can be used instead. Replace the semolina flour called for in the recipe with an equal amount of all-purpose flour, bread flour, or whole-wheat flour. Bread flour or whole-wheat flour will work best; they have a higher gluten content than all-purpose flour. (Semolina, bread, and whole-wheat flours have 13 percent or more gluten, while all-purpose contains 8 to 11 percent.) If using all-purpose flour, the pasta won't be as firm but will still taste delicious. Homemade pasta made with all-purpose flour will not dry or freeze well, as the pasta won't retain its shape.

Cakes and cookies that call for semolina will work fine when other flours are used but won't have the same flavor, color, or texture. Cornmeal can be used in place of semolina for dusting surfaces or pans.

Semolina Recipes

Fresh pasta is preferably made with semolina flour, and many African, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern dessert and bread recipes call for semolina.

- Roman-Style Semolina Gnocchi
- [Basbousa: Semolina Cakes With Syrup](#)
- [Moroccan Beghrir \(Semolina Honeycomb Pancakes\)](#)

Where To Buy Semolina

Semolina flour is available at most major supermarkets in the baking supplies aisle, often next to the all-purpose flour. It can also be found at specialty Italian food markets and online. Be sure the packaging reads "semolina flour" and is made with durum wheat. Do not buy corn semolina or rice semolina, as they aren't semolina but are called semolina for their coarse texture.

Because of its high protein content, semolina has a relatively short storage life compared to other flours. Semolina lasts up to a year if stored in a cool, dark place. To prolong its shelf life, keep it in the refrigerator or freezer. Make sure the package is well sealed.

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