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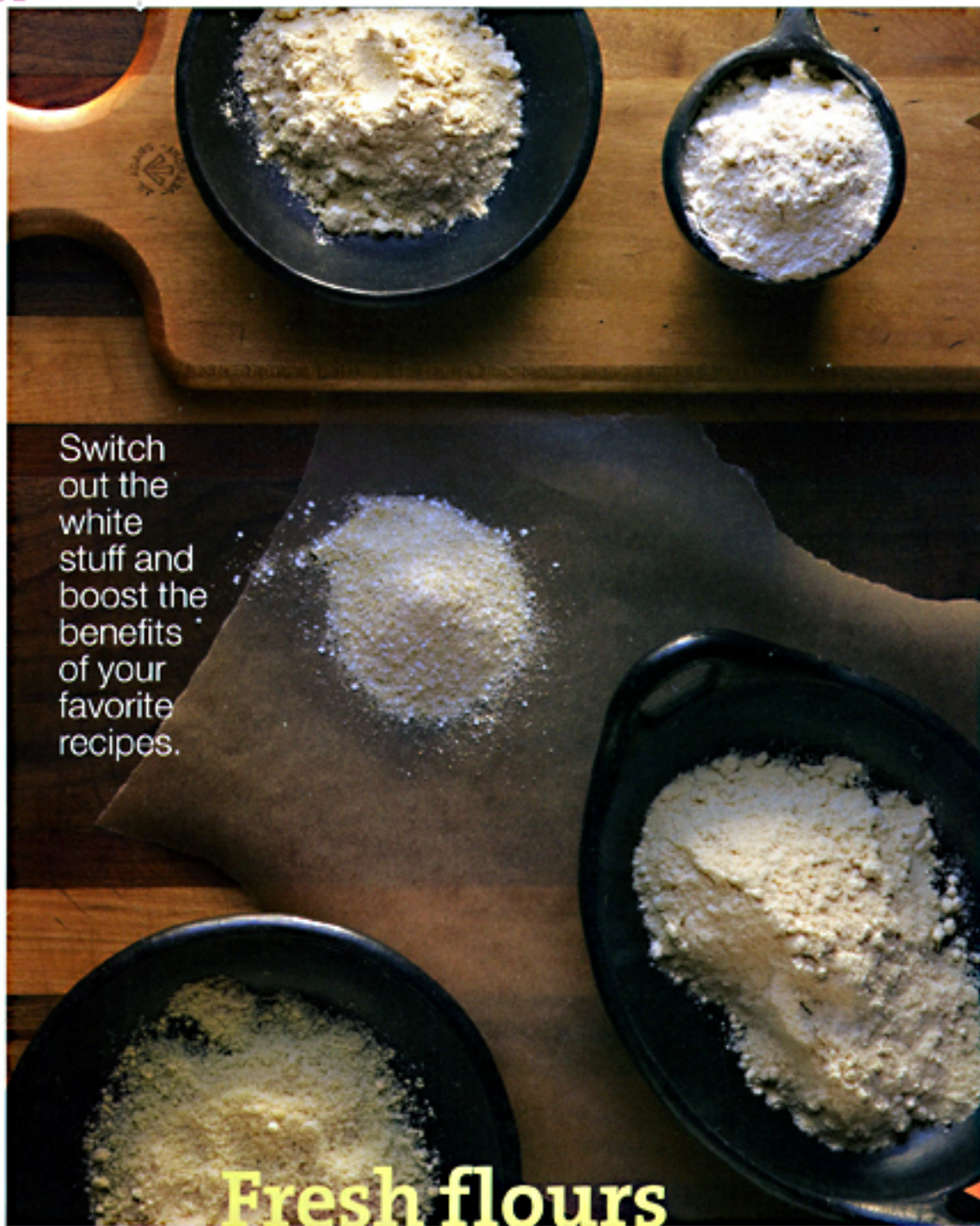
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Switch out the white stuff and boost the benefits of your favorite recipes.

Fresh flours

W

hite flour is a lot like Paris Hilton. It's bleached, it's boring and, no matter how hard you try, you can't seem to escape it. Unfortunately, we can't do much about the hotel heiress, but we do have good news on the flour front: You can have your cake without the empty calories thanks to a new crop of flours on the scene. Made from such sources as almonds, quinoa and garbanzo beans, these out-of-the-bag alternatives boast more nutrients, protein and fiber to fend off the bad stuff (think diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity) and keep you feeling full and focused. Best of all, these alternative flours can add flavor and texture to all your favorite foods. Here, six good-for-you flours—plus five good-to-eat recipes. »

Almond flour

This nutrient-dense nut flour packs in potassium, vitamin E, iron, magnesium, calcium and 6 grams of protein per $\frac{1}{4}$ cup. Loaded with monounsaturated fat and with three times the fiber of regular white flour, cholesterol-free almond flour is good for your heart and waistline. "Almond flour contributes to longer satiety, preventing those peaks and valleys of blood sugar levels that keep so many of us snacking throughout the day," says Tamara Freuman, M.S., R.D., C.D.N., a New York-based nutritionist.

The inside scoop: For cookies, cakes, quick breads and crusts, substitute up to 50 percent of the white flour in recipes. "Almond flour is heavier, with a rich buttery flavor and a much smoother texture than many other gluten-free flours," says Elana Amsterdam, author of *The Gluten Free Almond Flour Cookbook* (Celestial Arts). Rich and dense, its only downside is the high calorie count: 160 calories per $\frac{1}{4}$ cup compared with white flour's 100 calories. Plus, you can't use it in recipes that require dough formation (it won't rise). Store almond flour sealed in the fridge or freezer for up to 18 months; use at room temperature to avoid clumps.

Coconut flour

A fiber force to be reckoned with, silky smooth coconut flour has 10 times more disease-fighting fiber than white flour (50 grams per $\frac{1}{4}$ cup). And good news for diabetics and sweet tooths: A study published in the *Journal of Nutrition* found that adding coconut flour to sweet treats lowers their glycemic index to help keep blood sugar levels under control.

The inside scoop: It's best for cakes, muffins, breads and bars; just swap 10 to 20 percent of the white flour for coconut flour. Don't panic if the batter seems too runny. "Let it sit for a few minutes to better judge consistency, as coconut flour will absorb a lot of moisture," says Meredith Cella, general manager of Mani's on Maple, a healthy bakery in Beverly Hills, Calif. You may need to increase the wet ingredients to make up for the flour's absorbency. Grain- and gluten-free, coconut flour has 120 calories per $\frac{1}{4}$ cup and a surprisingly neutral flavor. Store coconut flour sealed in the fridge or freezer for up to 18 months; use at room temperature.



Sour Cream
Coffee Cake.
Recipe on pg. 51.

Garbanzo bean flour

This flour is similar to white flour when it comes to calories (110 calories per $\frac{1}{4}$ cup), but it has 50 percent more protein, five times more fiber and provides 10 percent of the daily value of iron per serving. Plus, it has resistant starch, an indigestible carb that doesn't throw blood sugar levels into a tizzy. "Garbanzo bean flour has a significantly lower glycemic index than wheat flour, making it an excellent choice for people with diabetes or anyone trying to manage their weight and hunger levels," says Freuman.

The inside scoop: Gluten- and grain-free, it adds a rich, dense texture and cuts fat and calories when used in place of cream in soups. You can substitute up to 100 percent as a binding agent or thickener, but don't substitute more

than 25 percent when baking. "Too much of it will give you a beany flavor," says Sarah Gill, chef and founder of The Inspired Cookie, a vegan and gluten-free cookie company in San Mateo, Calif. It's best for hummus, falafels, flatbreads, or a sauce/soup thickener or coating for fish and chicken. Store in the fridge or freezer for up to 24 months; use at room temperature.

Spelt flour

Spelt flour gets points for its versatility (you can substitute it pound for pound for white flour without tasting a difference), nutty flavor, light texture and nutrition profile. A cousin of wheat, spelt flour has slightly more calories than the white stuff (120 calories per $\frac{1}{4}$ cup), but four times the stomach-satiating fiber and twice the