

Guidance

Bread and flour: labelling and composition

How to comply with food standards law when producing, importing or selling bread and flour.

From: **Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs**

([/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs](#)) and Food Standards Agency ([/government/organisations/food-standards-agency](#))

Published 23 April 2025

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This UK-wide guidance is for food businesses and enforcement authorities. It aims to help with compliance with composition and labelling requirements in:

- The Bread and Flour Regulations (as amended in England and Scotland)
- The Bread and Flour Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998 (as amended)
- The Bread and Flour (Wales) Regulations 2025

This legislation is collectively referred to as the ‘Bread and Flour Regulations’ or ‘the regulations’ throughout this guidance.

This guidance was developed with the Food Standards Agency and Food Standards Scotland under the Food Compositional Standards and Labelling Framework. It provides non-statutory advice and should be read alongside the regulations. Food businesses are responsible for complying with the relevant law.

Bread and flour must also comply with legal requirements for food safety and labelling covered in wider food legislation. References are made to other relevant regulations and guidance where they interact with requirements in the Bread and Flour Regulations.

About the Bread and Flour Regulations

The Bread and Flour Regulations contain specific rules for bread and flour for human consumption in the UK. These include rules:

- for producers and importers of flour about the mandatory addition of certain vitamins and minerals to non-wholemeal common wheat flour – including the specific quantities and their chemical specifications
- about naming bread – when the terms ‘wholemeal’ and ‘wheat germ’ can be used in labelling and advertising

Definition of flour

Flour is the product made from the milling or grinding of cleaned cereal. Cereal is not defined in the regulations but is commonly understood as edible grass grains (such as wheat, barley, oats, rye and corn).

‘Cornflour’ is the term commonly used for maize starch. Maize starch is not flour, so it’s outside the scope of the regulations. True maize flour is within the scope of the regulations.

Wholemeal flour is flour made from the whole grain after the milling or grinding of cleaned cereals. This is commonly understood to mean the entire edible grain after removal of inedible parts such as the hull and glume. This includes the germ, endosperm and bran.

Regulation 4 (regulation 3 in Wales) on the mandatory addition of certain vitamins and minerals to flour only applies to non-wholemeal flour milled from common wheat (*Triticum aestivum*).

Definition of bread

Bread is a food of any size, shape or form that is usually known as bread, consisting of a dough made from flour and water. It can include other ingredients. It must be fermented by yeast or otherwise leavened using another raising agent, before being baked or partly baked.

In the regulations, bread does not include:

- buns and bun loaves
- chapatis
- chollas
- pitta bread
- potato bread
- bread specifically prepared for people with coeliac disease

The flour used in these products is still subject to the compositional requirements of the regulations.

When the regulations do not apply

The Bread and Flour Regulations do not apply to:

- any bread or flour not intended for human consumption (except where the regulations relate to advertising)
- any bread or flour for export outside of the UK
- any flour used in food products for export outside of the UK
- bread and flour brought into Northern Ireland from countries in the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA)

Mandatory fortification of non-wholemeal common wheat flour

Regulation 4 (regulation 3 in Wales) covers the mandatory addition of nutrients to flour. It applies to non-wholemeal common wheat flour that’s milled in or imported into the UK.

The nutrients include calcium carbonate, iron, niacin and thiamin (and folic acid from 13 December 2026).

Imported products made up of multiple ingredients including flour are not covered by the requirements. This includes if they are to be sold as that finished product or prepared further.

Tables 1 and 2 set out the required amounts of these vitamins and minerals.

Table 1: Required nutrient levels up until 13 December 2026

Substance	Specified form	Requirement per 100 grams (g) of common wheat flour
Iron	Ferric ammonium citrate, ferrous sulphate, dried ferrous sulphate or iron powder	At least 1.65 milligrams (mg)
Niacin	Nicotinic acid or nicotinamide	At least 1.60mg
Thiamin	Thiamin hydrochloride	At least 0.24mg
Calcium carbonate	Calcium carbonate	Not less than 235mg and not more than 390mg

Table 2: Required nutrient levels from 13 December 2026

Substance	Specified form	Requirement per 100g of common wheat flour
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Iron	Ferric ammonium citrate, ferrous sulphate, dried ferrous sulphate or iron powder	At least 2.10mg
Niacin	Nicotinic acid or nicotinamide	At least 2.40mg
Thiamin	Thiamin hydrochloride	At least 0.24mg (no change)
Calcium carbonate	Calcium carbonate	Not less than 300mg and not more than 455mg
Folic acid	Pteroylmonoglutamic acid	0.250mg

All added vitamins and minerals must comply with the purity criteria referred to in Schedule 1 of the regulations.

The quantities set out in table 2 ensure that there is at least a 'significant amount' of the added vitamins and minerals per 100g of non-wholemeal common wheat flour.

A 'significant amount' is defined as being 15% of the Nutrient Reference Values (NRVs). NRVs are set out in Annex XIII of Regulation (EC) 1169/2011 on food information to consumers (assimilated in Great Britain).

Exceptions to this requirement

This requirement does not apply to:

- wholemeal flour
- flour produced by small mills (in the UK or any other country)
- flour produced to make communion wafers, matzos, gluten or starch

A small mill is a production site that both:

- has a maximum annual production capacity of 500 metric tonnes of flour
- has produced less than 500 metric tonnes of flour for each of the last 3 calendar years

Small mills should keep production records so they can prove the exemption is applicable to their business.

Calcium carbonate does not need to be added to:

- self-raising flour – which has a calcium content of 0.2% or higher
- wheat malt flour – this is not defined in law but is commonly understood to mean flour milled from wheat that has been through the malting process (steeping, germinating and kilning)

Transitional arrangements

Flour that meets the requirements as they stood before the 13 December 2026 can remain on the market beyond this date if it has either been:

- labelled before this date
- placed on the market before this date

Measuring and increasing the nutrient levels

Iron, niacin and thiamin

Flour naturally contains some iron, niacin and thiamin. If the natural levels of these nutrients are below the required amount, more must be added to meet or exceed the required minimum.

Calcium carbonate

Calcium carbonate must be added within the required range, regardless of the natural level of calcium in the flour.

Folic acid (from 13 December 2026)

Folic acid is the synthetic form of folate used to fortify foods. Folic acid must be added at 0.25mg, regardless of the natural level of folate in the flour.

Selling unfortified flour: taking reasonable precautions

Unfortified non-wholemeal common wheat flour produced in the UK can be sold if it is any of the following:

- directly exported outside of the UK
- used in a product that is to be exported outside the UK
- not for human consumption
- produced by a small mill

Unfortified non-wholemeal common wheat flour can be imported into Great Britain (England, Scotland or Wales) if it is either:

- directly exported outside of the UK
- used only in products which are to be exported outside the UK

Unfortified non-wholemeal common wheat flour can be brought into Northern Ireland from EU or EEA countries.

When importing or selling unfortified flour in the UK, the manufacturer or importer of the flour must take all reasonable precautions to ensure this does not lead to a breach of the regulations.

A precaution could be a contract to agree the flour's terms of use with the commercial buyer. For example, this might state that the unfortified non-wholemeal wheat flour must only be used for either:

- products that are exported outside the UK
- uses other than for human consumption

If the manufacturer or importer has not taken all reasonable precautions and the unfortified flour ends up on the UK market, this would breach the regulations. This may result in enforcement action being taken.

If the manufacturer or importer of flour has taken all reasonable precautions and the commercial buyer's actions caused a breach of the regulations, they may be subject to enforcement action instead.

Labelling ingredients

Food labelling must meet the requirements of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers (assimilated in Great Britain).

Labelling added nutrients

Added vitamins and minerals must be labelled in the flour's ingredients list. This must also be declared when fortified flour is used as an ingredient.

Ingredients must be listed in weight order from the largest to the smallest. This is based on the ingredients' weights at the mixing bowl stage of production.

Ingredients that make up less than 2% of the finished product (such as added nutrients) can be listed in any order at the end of the ingredients list. For example, in alphabetical order – '**Wheat** Flour (**Wheat** Flour, Calcium Carbonate, Folic Acid, Iron, Niacin, Thiamin)'.

Fortified flour is a compound ingredient, so its ingredients can be listed:

- in the overall list in descending order by weight – for example, '**Wheat** Flour, Calcium Carbonate, Niacin, Iron, Folic Acid, Thiamin'
- immediately following the compound name – for example, in brackets, '**Wheat** Flour (**Wheat** Flour, Calcium Carbonate, Niacin, Iron, Folic Acid, Thiamin)'

Calcium may be used in the ingredients list when referring to calcium carbonate.

Other ways of labelling ingredients are acceptable and businesses can decide how to label their product within the requirements of the law. Businesses can seek advice from local or primary authorities.

Vitamins and minerals must be declared by using their name in word form. Numbers or letters can be added (such as B1 for thiamin) but not used as a substitute to the name in word form.

Other rules on adding vitamins and minerals to food

There are additional regulations about adding vitamins and minerals to food. Read Regulation (EC) No 1925/2006 on the addition of vitamins and minerals and of certain other substances to foods (assimilated in GB).

Allergenic ingredients

Allergenic ingredients must be emphasised every time they appear in the ingredients list. Read the [guidance on allergen labelling](https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/food-allergen-labelling-and-information-requirements-technical-guidance-introduction) (<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/food-allergen-labelling-and-information-requirements-technical-guidance-introduction>) for further information. For Scotland read [Food allergen labelling and information technical guidance](https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/Food_Allergen_Labelling_and_Information_Technical_Guidance_-_04_May_2023.pdf) (https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/Food_Allergen_Labelling_and_Information_Technical_Guidance_-_04_May_2023.pdf).

Nutrition and health claims

If a nutrition or health claim is made it must comply with Regulation (EC) No 1924/2006 on nutrition and health claims made on food (assimilated in GB). This regulation controls the use of nutrition and health claims in the advertising, labelling and presentation of all foods. Read [guidance on nutrition and health claims on foods](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nutrition-and-health-claims-guidance-to-compliance-with-regulation-ec-1924-2006-on-nutrition-and-health-claims-made-on-foods) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nutrition-and-health-claims-guidance-to-compliance-with-regulation-ec-1924-2006-on-nutrition-and-health-claims-made-on-foods>).

Flour bleaching agents

Regulation 5 (regulation 4 in Wales) covers flour bleaching agents.

Flour bleaching agents are not allowed as an ingredient in the preparation of flour or bread. A flour bleaching agent is any food additive used primarily to remove colour from flour. For example, chlorine or carbon dioxide.

The term ‘unbleached flour’ must not be used in labelling. As all flour is ‘unbleached’, this may misleadingly suggest the product has special characteristics compared with other similar products on the market.

Flour treatment agents

Flour treatment agents are subject to the requirements of Regulation (EC) 1333/2008 on food additives (assimilated in Great Britain).

Labelling and marketing terms

Regulation 6 (regulation 5 in Wales) covers restrictions on using the terms 'wholemeal' and 'wheat germ' in labelling and marketing.

Wholemeal

When labelling or advertising bread, the word 'wholemeal' is only allowed in the name of the bread when all of the flour used as an ingredient is wholemeal.

A combination of wholemeal flour and white flour can be used to make bread, but this must not be named 'wholemeal bread' in the labelling or advertising.

The word wholemeal may be used in a wider description of the product if it's clear this is in relation to the flour used as an ingredient rather than part of the name for the bread. For example, "Sliced bread made with an equal blend of white and wholemeal flour".

Businesses can decide how to label their product within the requirements of the law. They can seek advice from local or primary authorities.

Wheat germ

Bread can only be named 'wheat germ' in labelling and advertising if it has an added processed wheat germ content of 10% or more. This percentage is calculated on the dry matter of the bread. It is commonly considered that the dry matter consists of all its constituents excluding water.

Soya flour

Soya flour is not defined as flour in this regulation as it is not made from cereal, but may be used as an ingredient in bread. Wholemeal bread may contain small amounts of soya flour if it is not being used as a substitute for wholemeal flour, as this would be misleading.

Other descriptions

Other descriptions of bread such as 'white', 'brown' and 'stone-ground' are not specifically prescribed by law. Where there is no name prescribed by law for a food, either a customary name (where applicable) or a

descriptive name must be used. A customary name is a name that has become commonly understood by consumers and established over time. For example, 'Yorkshire pudding'.

If there is no customary name or it is not used, a descriptive name must be used. This must be precise enough to inform the purchaser of the true nature of the food and must not mislead.

Read article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers (assimilated in Great Britain) for more information.

Enforcement of the regulations

Local authorities are responsible for the enforcement of the regulations. Businesses with specific queries may wish to seek the advice of their local enforcement authority, home authority, or primary authority where appropriate.

Local authority food officers operate having regard to the Food Law Code of Practice and their enforcement policies, taking a risk-based, reasonable and proportionate approach.

In deciding upon appropriate action, enforcement authorities may consider:

- the nature of any non-compliance and its duration
- any corrective actions or mitigation in place
- the food business's past record

Improvement notices – England, Wales and Northern Ireland

Improvement notices have replaced criminal sanctions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Authorised officers from an enforcement authority can issue notices if they have reasonable grounds to believe a food business has not complied with the regulations.

It is a criminal offence to not comply with an improvement notice.

Appealing an improvement notice

Food businesses can appeal against an improvement notice.

In England, an appeal can be made to the First-tier Tribunal. Read the [tribunal procedure rules \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-regulatory-chamber-tribunal-procedure-rules?msclid=6d74ff4fce5411ec9df5479d1b416b9d\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/general-regulatory-chamber-tribunal-procedure-rules?msclid=6d74ff4fce5411ec9df5479d1b416b9d) for further guidance.

In Wales and Northern Ireland, an appeal can be made to a local magistrates' court.

Compliance notices – Scotland

In Scotland, a person who contravenes or fails to comply with certain provisions of the regulations is guilty of an offence. Authorised enforcement officers in Scotland may issue a compliance notice to address non-compliance.

Authorised officers can also submit reports to the procurator fiscal if they consider the breach is serious or fraudulent.

Appealing a compliance notice in Scotland

Food businesses can appeal against the:

- notice itself
- specified timescale to make changes

All notices must include details of the appeal rights and appeals should be made to the relevant local Sheriff Court.

Read [guidance on the use of compliance notices \(Food Standards Scotland\)](https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/Compliance_Note_Guidance_January_2024.pdf) (https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/downloads/Compliance_Note_Guidance_January_2024.pdf).



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