



King Lion

Specialty Cassava Flour

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Cassava? Where does the AKFP's King Lion Specialty Cassava Flour come from?

King Lion Specialty Cassava Flour is derived from cassava roots. Cassava, also known as manioc, is a plant that grows in tropical climates close to the equator. Cassava roots are also the source of tapioca starch and similar products labeled as tapioca flour.

The current conventional name for products, other than flour, derived from cassava is "tapioca." Thus, you may already be aware of tapioca flour, tapioca starch and tapioca pearls. These are all processed from cassava roots.

2. How does it differ from existing products which are also called cassava flour? What makes your flour "Specialty"?

King Lion Specialty Cassava Flour is different from other cassava flours in the market. Most of what are currently labeled and sold as cassava flour is, strictly speaking, cassava meal. The particulates of the available cassava "flours" are larger and coarser than the regular flours which we are all familiar with. Oftentimes, too, these have a toasted finish. They are a good match and very well suited for cassava dishes that are indigenous to countries where cassava is grown as a staple crop. However, they are not ideal for regular baked items for which wheat is the perfect flour to use but are replaced in gluten-free foods. King Lion Specialty Cassava Flour is specially processed to have a particle size distribution that approximates that of the regular flours.

3. Is your cassava flour different from tapioca flour? After all, both are derived from cassava roots.

Because of market practices in the past few decades, tapioca starch has also been sold as "tapioca flour." For a number of food applications, tapioca starch is useful even where the flour should be the better choice. However, tapioca starch is different from cassava or "tapioca" flour. The starch is manufactured through a starch extraction process, which is quite distinct from how flour is manufactured. In simple terms, tapioca starch is almost pure starch, while the flour does include starch, protein and a significant amount of fiber. Because tapioca starch is what it is, it cannot be effective as a sole or primary ingredient where flour is supposed to be the main ingredient for, say, the dough or batter base. The characteristics of native starch will not permit it to behave in a baked product in the desired way, and thus will lead to inferior quality of the finished product.

4. Does King Lion Specialty Cassava Flour have any advantages over potato starch?

Native potato starch is an excellent starch and performs in ways superior to other starches in many applications where starch is the appropriate ingredient. However, with most baking applications, flours are a better fit than are starches. For gluten-free baking applications, our Specialty Cassava Flour performs nearly as well as wheat flour in many applications. Complementing the flour with potato starch in some of the more challenging applications (such as breads) is recommended and advantageous to enhance further the quality of the baked product.

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AMERICAN KEY FOOD PRODUCTS

5. A lot of gluten-free products today have rice flour. Will the use of cassava flour eliminate the use of rice flour? Is it better than rice flour?

Rice flour has desirable characteristics for use in many applications. It provides a lighter structure, crispiness, and is easily digestible and neutral in taste. More often than not, it is used in combination with other flours or starches, whether in gluten-free or wheat-based food products. When used alone, without other flours or starches, the quality of baked goods is quite inferior.

In terms of flexibility to be used in the absence of other flours or starches, our cassava flour will outperform rice flour. For gluten-free foods, the use of our cassava flour alone for the dough base in many baking applications is sufficient to yield excellent baked goods that approximate the quality of a wheat-based product except in traditional ethnic recipes based on the use of rice flour.

6. What is the difference between your cassava flour and tapioca starch? Is the flour better?

The difference between our cassava flour and tapioca starch is essentially the same basic difference between other flours and their corresponding starches, such as potato flour and potato starch. All starches are manufactured using the optimum technologies to extract the most starch from the source, whether it is a grain or a tuber which is the starch source. Flour manufacture does not use such processes.

There are applications when a starch is the required ingredient, just as there are others where flour is the choice raw material. Where a dough base is critical in the food manufacturing process or cooking/baking application, flours are the logical choice.

7. There are so many types of gluten-free flours in the market. What makes your flour unique and why should the baking industry favor it?

First of all, it differs from other gluten-free flours that are not derived from cassava because of the inherent characteristics of the flour source. Also, based on multiple tests we have conducted, our flour has proven to be effective as a singular substitute while maintaining high quality (e.g., texture, crusting). This is unlike the case with all other flours, which have to be combined or blended with other flours and/or starches to produce good quality gluten-free foods.

Compared to other cassava-based flours or starches currently in the market, our flour is also uniquely designed to have a particle size distribution which is necessary to achieve most of the functionality of wheat flour in gluten-free applications.

8. Will users of this cassava flour still need to use any leavening agents with it?

For baking items where leavening agents are part of the recipe or product formulation, the use of our cassava flour will not eliminate the need for these. They will still be required in the same or adjusted dosage to attain the desired structure. This flour functions almost like a pastry flour and, in most baking applications, will need to be supplemented by other ingredients that will have otherwise been used with wheat-based flour. Aside from leavening agents, for example, xanthan gum may also be needed to provide for longer shelf life.

9. Is this product truly Gluten-Free?

Products derived from cassava roots are gluten-free. Our flours are manufactured and handled in facilities which do not process or handle wheat, barley, rye or oat products.

10. In what other applications is King Lion Specialty Cassava Flour used?

Our initial research and development efforts focused on gluten-free baking applications. The cassava flour has proven to be a robust product. We are excited that its potential goes beyond these. Our next area of development work is in extruded snack applications. Tapioca starch is widely adapted in snack products in countries that grow cassava. We believe that cassava flour will be a good fit as a supplementary ingredient in the manufacture of mainstream extruded snacks in the developed countries as well.

Since 1999, American Key Food Products has been a resource for smart plant-based solutions. Today, the company offers a range of gluten-free, grain-free, clean-label, allergen-free, and non-GMO flours and starches.