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forms


There are three partitive articles in French.

 Masculine: du	du pain	(some) bread
Feminine: de la	de la viande	(some) meat
Masculine or feminine before a vowel: de l'	de l' ail (m.)	(some) garlic
	de l' eau (f.)	(some) water




uses

Partitive articles are used both in English and in French to express quantities that cannot be counted. While the indefinite article (**un, une, des**) is used with countable quantities (un oeuf, deux oeufs ...), the partitive article is used before mass nouns, nouns that are indivisible or uncountable. In English the article 'some' is often omitted.

 Edouard: Comme dessert, nous avons de la mousse au chocolat, de la glace parfumée à la vanille et du sorbet à l'ananas.	Edouard: For dessert, we have (some) chocolate mousse, vanilla ice cream, and pineapple sorbet.
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While the definite article designates something in its totality, or as a whole, the partitive article designates a part of the whole. Note that depending on what you want to say, the same noun may be introduced by a **definite**, **indefinite**, or a **partitive** article. Compare these examples:

 Edouard: Vous prenez du vin, n'est-ce pas?	partitive article	Edouard: You are having (some) wine, aren't you? (a quantity that is not specified)
Le vin rouge est bon pour la santé!	definite article	Red wine is healthy! ('wine' in general)
En fait, nous avons un Beaujolais nouveau ou un Chambertin, un Châteauneuf-du-Pape, ou j'ai un excellent Médoc pour vous, ou un tout petit vin gris de Savoie.	indefinite article	In fact, we have a Beaujolais nouveau, or a Chambertin, a Châteauneuf-du-Pape, or I have an excellent Médoc for you, or a little grey wine from Savoy. (These are items on the wine list, a countable quantity)

after the negative

In negative sentences, **du, de la, des, de l'** change to **de**:

 Joe-Bob mange de la viande.	Tammy ne mange pas de viande.	Joe-Bob eats meat. Tammy does not eat meat.
Tex boit du café.	Tammy ne boit jamais de café.	Tex drinks coffee. Tammy never drinks coffee.
Il y a encore du vin.	Il n'y a plus de vin.	There is some wine left.

There is not any wine left.



The partitive and indefinite articles may be used in negative sentences, however, to emphasize the contrasting positive noun. For example:

Entre Tex et Tammy, ce n'est pas **de** l'amitié, c'est **de** l'amour!

Between Tex and Tammy, it is not friendship, it is love!

Edouard sert **du** poulet, pas **des** escargots!

Edouard serves chicken, not snails!

Notice the use of the partitive articles in the following dialogue.

Tammy est au téléphone: Allô, Edouard? Je reçois **des** amis ce soir. Je voudrais faire **des** crêpes, mais j'ai oublié la recette. Tu peux m'aider?

Tammy is on the phone: Hello, Edouard? I'm having some friends over tonight. I would like to make some crêpes, but I've forgotten the recipe. Can you help me?

Edouard: Rien de plus facile! Tu mélanges **de la** farine et **des** oeufs. Tu ajoutes ensuite **du** lait, **du** sel et **de l'**huile. Tu verses cette pâte dans une poêle. Quand la pâte est cuite, tu garnis la crêpe avec **du** fromage râpé, **du** jambon, ou **des** cèpes. Mais n'oublie pas Tammy, avec des crêpes, on ne boit pas **de** vin. Il faut boire **du** cidre et porter une coiffe bretonne!

Edouard: No problem! Mix some flour and eggs. Add some milk, some salt and some oil. Pour this batter in a pan. When the batter is cooked, fill the crêpe with some grated cheese, some ham, or cèpes (mushrooms). But don't forget Tammy, with crêpes, you don't drink wine. You have to drink cider and wear a Breton hat!



exercices

fill in the blanks

Fill in the blank with the correct partitive article: du, de la, or de l'

1. Tex : Je voudrais _____ vin rouge.
2. Tammy : Je vais prendre _____ soupe aux oignons.
3. Tex : Tammy, est-ce qu'il reste _____ omelette?
4. Tammy : Je vais acheter _____ pain.
5. Tammy : Tex, je vais boire _____ eau.
6. Tammy : Je vais faire _____ crème brûlée (fem.).
7. Joe-Bob boit _____ bière.
8. Corey : Tex, tu as _____ pesticide (masc.)?
9. Tammy : Tex, tu fais _____ sport aujourd'hui?
10. Tex : Tammy, tu fais _____ aérobic aujourd'hui?
11. Bette prend _____ thon le matin.
12. Fiona a _____ chance ('luck', fem.).

