The partitive articles in French correspond to "some" or "any" in English. There are four forms of the French partitive article:

1. **du**      masculine singular
2. **de la**   feminine singular
3. **de l'**    m or f in front of a vowel or [h muet](http://french.about.com/od/pronunciation/a/h_2.htm)
4. **des**     m or f plural

The form of the partitive article to use depends on three things: the noun's number, gender, and first letter:

* If the noun is plural, use **des**
* If it's singular starting with a vowel or *h muet*, use **de l'**
* If it's a singular noun and starts with a consonant or [h aspiré](http://french.about.com/od/pronunciation/a/h_3.htm), use **du** for a masculine noun and **de la** for a feminine noun

**Meaning and usage of the French partitive article**   
  
The partitive article indicates an unknown quantity of something, usually food or drink. It is often omitted in English.   
  
*Avez-vous bu du thé ?*   
   Did you drink some tea?   
  
*J'ai mangé de la salade hier.*   
   I ate salad yesterday.   
  
*Nous allons prendre de la glace.*   
   We're going to have some ice cream.   
  
After [adverbs of quantity](http://french.about.com/library/weekly/aa060300q.htm) (beaucoup, peu, assez, trop), use **de** instead of the partitive article.   
  
*Il y a beaucoup de thé.*   
   There is a lot of tea.   
  
*J'ai moins de glace que Thierry.*   
   I have less ice cream than Thierry.   
  
In a [negative construction](http://french.about.com/od/grammar/a/adverb_negative.htm) , the partitive article changes to **de** , meaning "(not) any":   
  
*J'ai mangé de la soupe. > Je n'ai pas mangé de soupe.*   
   I ate some soup. > I didn't eat any soup.