

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. It's no secret. I love living in a tiny town out in the middle of nowhere. However, it can be incredibly frustrating when it comes to grocery shopping. Sometimes. Now, even when I drive into the closest larger town, I can get access to things like Walmart or your typical grocery stores. But if I want anything that's a little healthier or more organic, well things get complicated. Now I know I'm not the only one who has this issue cause I've heard your comments and your pleas and your emails and I know you guys struggle with this as well, those of you who live in these little bitty country towns. So over the years I've kind of worked out a system that works for me. It's a hodgepodge of different stores and places I visit or order from. It gives me a decent selection of good quality, organic, or whole foods, and I'm going to share some of my best strategies for you in today's episode. Even if you're like me and there isn't a trader Joe's or a whole foods for many, many miles around you. I'm your host Jill winger and for the last 10 years I've been helping people just like you who feel uninspired by modern life, I'll help you create the life you really want by learning how to grow your own food and master old fashioned skills.

Speaker 1: [01:39](#) All right, so the biggest tool in my arsenal, living rurally and not having a lot of good grocery options, it's obviously growing a lot of our ingredients ourself and that really inspired me. Back in the day when I started to learn more about eating more healthy and eating more whole and I started to understand the benefit of things like raw milk or grass fed meats. I'm like, well, this is great motivation to grow at ourselves because I'm sure not going to be able to buy it locally, and that kinda gave me that kick in the pants. I needed to start getting more creative with what we were growing and producing here on our homestead. Now, I know that not all of you have capability to grow all of these things where you live, but I bet you can grow something even if it's just some herbs or a tomato plant in a bucket on your porch.

Speaker 1: [02:33](#) So here's what we grow. So maybe that'll give you some ideas and then I'll go into, in just a minute into more of the stores and vendors that I use to fill in the gaps. Because let's face it, we live in Wyoming. Our growing season is short, our weather is brutal, and it's not exactly like we're living in a tropical food Mecca. So we're doing what we can. And I'm pretty sure that most of you live in climates that are a little bit nicer than we do. So I'm guessing you can take a lot of these ideas and do they even better with your nicer weather? Okay, so we do grow all of our own beef, beef, beef. How about beef? We grow our beef and

we do about one steer every 12 to 18 months and that fills our freezer. A whole steer is a lot of meat.

Speaker 1: [03:23](#) We also do most of our own pork. We usually do one to two hogs every other year. We haven't done that the last couple of years. We ended up buying a friend's 4-H pig at the fair to support our local community. So we got the pork from that instead. But we do like to raise almost all of our own chicken and we do a batch of about 30 meat birds one to two times a year. And that depends on how much room I have in the freezers. Lots of freezers. Uh, but we try to, you know, fill in the gaps around the beef with whole chickens that we raise ourselves. We also do a lot of our own dairy. I'm not going to say that we do all of it because it does depend on the cow's lactation cycle if she's currently milking or if she's dried up.

Speaker 1: [04:14](#) And also my sanity. And if I get in a really crazy season, I usually just let the calf milk the cow for me and we don't get milk for the house, which I realize is anathema to some homesteaders. But you know what, it's doing, what works for us. And sometimes that's how you got a roll when you're living a modern life with a homesteading one. So we do a lot of our own dairy, but I'm not a purist and it's not 100%. Now we do do almost all of our own legs. Oh my gosh, I can't talk legs. Uh, I met eggs as in the things the chickens give you, um, need to reset my brain to mouth connection apparently. So we do almost all of our own eggs. The exceptions being when the chickens stop laying sometimes for periods when they're molting or the weather is bad or the daylight is slim.

Speaker 1: [05:07](#) But I try to not have to supplement eggs from the store cause I just don't like store eggs. They're not as good. And we had a lot of chickens. So usually we're pretty good. And lastly, we do grow as many vegetables, potatoes, garlic, onions, that whole category in our garden. It doesn't last us a full 12 months. We are somewhat limited on what we can grow just because we have a short growing season. And I don't have a ginormous garden cause I just can't keep up with like acres and acres of vegetables. So we do what we can and we usually get enough potatoes and garlic and things to last us a good couple of months into the winter after we harvest. And then we supplement with other options. So I get that growing a ton of food at home isn't in the cards for everyone, but like I said, everyone can grow something even if it's just some basil in the window.

Speaker 1: [06:07](#) And if you can't grow your own meat, eggs, or dairy, I would recommend doing some hunting to see what you can find in

your area locally from little farmers or local producers because not only will you be supporting your local economy, but the quality of those products are likely to be far better than what you're going to get at a big box grocery store. Okay. So that's what we grow. Then my next option of where we buy things is just the conventional grocery store. So like I mentioned, we have grocery stores like Walmart and we have one called King Soopers. It's like a Kroger that's about 35, 40 miles away. They're, they're decent sized. They're not ginormous. They have a few little organic options, but I do supplement with stuff there. We still go there about once every two weeks and just fill in some gaps.

Speaker 1: [07:07](#) There is a tiny natural food store in our town and that's where I like to get this special low temperature VAT pasteurized milk. It's called Kalana natural and that's what we buy if our cow is dry. I can also get pastured eggs. They're, they're still not as good as my eggs, but they're better than nothing and occasional organic pantry items like different bulk herbs and spices. There's so much more affordable and better quality at the health food store than they are at like your typical grocery store baking aisle. So I like to capitalize on that. The produce at our little natural food store. It's organic, but I don't know the, the selection is slim, the quality is meh, it's okay. So I kind of try to avoid buying a lot of fruits and vegetables there cause they're just not awesome. Now, all that being said, I still do get some things at the regular old grocery store.

Speaker 1: [08:06](#) We follow the 80 20 rule, which means we do really, really good on our food. A lot of whole foods, almost all from scratch, but there are occasions where I supplement with some compromise foods and you've likely heard me talk about this before. I'm very much in an anti shame mindset that there is this idea of perfection in diets that floats around the internet, on different health food websites, and I love eating healthy and whole and homegrown, but sometimes you got to compromise and by compromise, some of the things that I will cheat on sometimes. Um, I'll buy chips, we're having a bunch of people over for a lunch or a hamburgers on the barbecue. Sometimes I do potato salad, sometimes I buy chips, right? It's just, it's just a compromise that I'm okay with. Sometimes I buy tortillas. I actually love, there's some tortillas in Costco that you, they're raw, so they're, they're made up, but you just have to cook them before you serve them and they're really good.

New Speaker: [09:08](#) The ingredients aren't perfect, but they're much, much better than alternatives. So sometimes I buy those. Sometimes I buy a sandwich bread if I had a lot of people, I'm feeding lunches too.

If they're over here working or I have kids here, I'll buy a sandwich bread so I know how to make all those things from scratch and I usually do, but sometimes it doesn't work with my schedule and sometimes you just got to prioritize your sanity. So no shame my friends. No shame. Okay. So in addition to the little grocery store options we have, there is a farmer's market that it is in our area from about August to October. It's not quite as robust as farmer's markets and other areas. Because Wyoming is not a hub of local produce, we just don't have the climate for it. So you do get produce here, but it's usually trucked in from Colorado or Utah, like if you want the peaches or the apples or things like that they have there, they're still coming in from a ways away, which is a little bit disappointing.

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But literally when you live in a place like we do, where you can't physically grow a lot of fruits and vegetables, it's just how it goes. I do try to hit the farmer's market on occasion. I don't go every week. Sometimes I don't even go every year because driving all the way into town on a Saturday morning doesn't always mesh with our calendar. We have a lot going on on weekends. So it's a little bit tricky. But if you have access to a good farmer's market in your area, like go for it. I'm all for farmer's markets if you can make them work and they have the type of selection that you're needing. Okay. So one option I do use quite a bit is Costco and I know that Costco is not necessarily considered the ultimate in local organic foods, but they do have some options and I do like buying things in bulk there.

Speaker 1: [11:03](#)

I like them far, far better than Sam's club. Our closest Costco is about an hour and a half away. So I don't go there all the time, usually about once every one to two months. But it's really nice to go to stock up. I like getting good quality cheese or organic lunch meat there if we have a lot of people who were trying to feed. There's also organic pasta, organic tortilla chips, organic produce, those tortillas I told you about, coffee beans, toilet paper. There's also some frozen berries. We, Christian does a lot of smoothies so he'll get the frozen berries and put those in his smoothies. So those are the kinds of things I buy at Costco. I'm not buying, you know, the frozen dinners or the premade foods, but they have some bulk whole food options. Maybe not always a hundred percent organic, but pretty decent. And it's nice to be able to go stock up. And when I say stock up, the car is full when we come home, but it makes it worth our trip.

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another store that I use is actually an online store that I find myself ordering from about once a month is Thrive Market now. They're kind of like a cross when I, when I describe them to

people, they're a cross between Amazon and whole foods, but they're completely online. So you can't actually go into a store and buy from them and you get a membership with them like Costco and then you just order whatever you want, whenever you want. You don't have to order on a regular basis. They do have free shipping for orders over \$50. So I usually only order when I have built up enough items that will be over that \$50 threshold. So thrive market does not have the fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy, things like that. But they do have some great pantry items and they definitely fill in the gaps for me. You know, living in a town that's kind of a whole food desert and if I can't find it into my local health food store or it's super expensive there, I'll usually check the thrive market. So here's some examples of what I get from them. Sea salt, they have different varieties of really good sea salt, maple syrup, Sucanat, which is my preferred whole, granulated sweetener, coconut sugar, coconut milk, popcorn, spices and herbs, dry beans, rolled oats, different nuts. And then organic condiments like ketchup or mustard or Apple cider vinegar, things like that.

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And then lastly, I did want to mention Azure Standard. Azure standard is a bulk buying co op and it's not available everywhere. It's kind of in the West, Midwest. And if you go on their website, I think it's Azure standard.com you can see a map of where they deliver. But you have to get into a group, you can't just order and have it shipped to you. You have to be a part of a drop is what they call it. And then a big semi truck comes once a month and you all meet at the drop point and he drops off the food and you take it home. So they have a lot of produce usually from the Pacific Northwest that I like to capitalize on that apples, peaches, things like that. And cause I can't always get those locally or at the farmer's market. And they also have a good selection of greens and things you buy in bulk.

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And I'm talking bulk. Like they have options to buy things in 50 pound bags. So it's very, very much bulk and you don't have to buy everything in that quantity, but they have that option. So if you're going through a lot of a certain item, you're probably going to save a lot of money getting it in a big bag versus a little bag. So some things I've purchased from Azure standard in the past I have purchased 50 bags of whole cane sugar, which was a couple of hundred bucks, but it lasted me well over a year. It didn't go bad. Whole wheat and lentils and beans, actually hindsight, don't buy 50 pounds of beans unless you're going to use them quickly because beans do go bad after a while. They just kind of get dry and tough. So probably don't do that again,

at least not for me. You can also get big pails of organic peanut butter and raw honey.

Speaker 1: [15:19](#) Uh, you can get 50 pound bags of kelp, which is like a seaweed and diatomaceous earth that I use to feed my animals sometimes, which is really hard to get that elsewhere. So that's a great source for that. And then organic apples, peaches, things for canning and they also do onions and potatoes and those are available seasonally. So you're not going to be able to buy them year round. But if you're wanting apples in season, which is something I just did, I could not get apples in bulk locally. I looked for you pick farms, I look for friends doing bulk orders. I couldn't find them anywhere. So I had to go to Azure and I got like 40 pounds of organic gala apples and we can them. And that was a great option cause I just didn't have any other, any other option.

Speaker 1: [16:05](#) And if I could have done a, you pick farmer, a local friend with an Apple tree, I would have much preferred that. But that just doesn't exist here. So I don't do Azure a lot. It's a little tricky for me to coordinate the drop times, like having to be in town, like their drop times right now or 8:00 AM on a Sunday morning, just awkward times for me to be in town. And then sometimes the truck is late, so I'll drive in and then I ended up sitting around for an hour or two and it just is really a lot for my schedule. So I don't order a lot. But when I do, it's nice to have that as an option. And if you do live kind of West of the Mississippi, there's a good chance that you can get a drop in your area. And I know, you know, if you live in closer to the town or closer to the drop, people love it cause they can just run over and get it, just a little more challenging when you live further out. But anyway, there you have it. That was my long rambly description of how I piece together my local slash organic slash mostly decent whole food pantry. Obviously my grocery shopping method isn't perfect, but it works for us. And now that I'm in the routine of it, and I'm kind of used to knowing what I get where, it doesn't take that long. But I firmly believe that you do not have to live in a Mecca of organic foods or Trader Joe's stores to have a more whole foods lifestyle that's much, much healthier for you.

Speaker 1: [17:35](#) So if you're falling in love with the idea of an old fashioned intentional kitchen full of nourishing food and rich memories, you're going to love my heritage kitchen handbook. It's a little ebook I've packed full of my best tricks for cooking and eating like a farmer no matter where you live. And you can grab it for free over at heritagekitchenhandbook.com and that's all for today, my friends, thanks so much to everyone who's left a

review over on iTunes. It helps the podcast gain more traction and reach more homesteaders. So I greatly appreciate it. Thanks so much for listening and we'll catch up next time on the old fashioned on purpose podcast.