

Speaker 1 ([00:00](#)):

Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. So I don't know about you, but every so often I find myself in the midst of a supper rut. Nothing sounds good. I don't feel super creative. It feels like we just ate pretty much all of the things and I don't know what to cook next. Whenever I'm feeling a little bit uninspired in the kitchen, I do have a few tricks up my sleeve that I use to jumpstart my creative juices and I want to share a few of those with you today. I'm your host Jill Winger, and this is the podcast for people who are disenchanted with conformity. If you like to swim upstream while the rest of society rides the herd of least resistance, and you're a trailblazer, a Maverick, a homesteader, a modern pioneer, or a backyard farmer, well, you have found your tribe.

Speaker 1 ([01:02](#)):

So I'm really excited about this episode. Not only because I've recently kind of come out of a meal planning rut, but I also know that based on what you've been telling me in emails and comments on Facebook that a lot of you are also struggling with this phenomenon. I think it's possibly happening cause right now at the time of this recording, it's February and it's just really hard to feel inspired really on anything. In February. The weather's dreary, there's not a lot of fresh vegetables, not a lot of fresh fruit and it's just a little bit blah. So I do have a couple previous podcast episodes about meal planning and how we kind of run our kitchen. Episode 65 is all about what I keep in my everyday pantry. Episode 53 is this story of how I made like, I don't know, a ridiculous amount of freezer meals, like 24 freezer meals in four hours.

Speaker 1 ([02:02](#)):

And episode 48 talks about my best meal planning tips from someone who doesn't really meal plan cause I just don't. So you want to go back and listen to those? Go for it. But today in particular, I want to talk about ruts, because it's a thing, my friend, it happens and it's that moment where you know, your family wants to eat tonight and there is like nothing that sounds good, nothing. Your stand by recipes don't sound good, the pantry feels a little bit barren and you start to panic because you're like, we might just eat peanut butter and jelly again. So, like I said, I've been there recently, in fact, and I don't have this amazing, perfectly foolproof trick for getting out of a meal planning rut, but I do have some strategies I use and maybe a few of these will be helpful for you.

Speaker 1 ([03:01](#)):

So I do need to say, and if you listen to the meal planning episode, you know this, I'm not a great meal planner and I only usually on a good day will plan out one to two days ahead of time. So I don't have weeks planned out at a time or months even. If you do, like major kudos to you, I can handle about a day or two because our, our life and our schedule changes so quickly. But I do like to know when I wake up in the morning what we're having for supper that night. So my first tip, and this is the one I use the most, I've been using it a ton the past couple of weeks is I use my freezer and pantry as a starting point. I know that feels a little bit vague or like a little bit like duh, but really like this is actually actionable.

Speaker 1 ([03:52](#)):

Like this actually works. So I'll give you some examples. I like to go into the pantry, into the freezer, into the refrigerator and figure out what is going to be going bad soon. Like produce that's getting wilted and a little bit sad looking or things in the pantry I have a lot of, or things in the freezer I have a lot of, and I can figure out, how I can turn those into part of the meal or the meal itself. An example that I'm dealing with in epic proportions lately would be eggs. It's February, but the chickens have decided to lay

ridiculous amounts of eggs. Like I can't keep up. And I think I need to do one whole a whole episode on egg excess. So watch for that coming hopefully soon. But I've been looking at the bowl of eggs and I'm like, okay, how can we use these eggs to make supper?

Speaker 1 ([04:46](#)):

So we've done breakfast burritos with like heavy on the eggs, a little bit of sausage, a little bit of potato, a lot of eggs. I've done Fried egg sandwiches, I'm working on, um, I'd like to do scotch eggs this week. I've made pudding for dessert cause it uses up eggs. We could do custard, you can do, a German pancake or like a puffy pancake. I have a recipe for that in my cookbook, but they're all over online as well. It uses like six eggs and it makes this beautiful little pancake in a cast iron skillet. So I, you know, I'm going to use eggs as a baseline. Another idea is for supper tonight I was feeling pretty much out of ideas. So I headed out to our freezer. We actually have a couple of freezers. We have a lot of beef, in our freezer because we raise our own beef and I always have usually a couple of different cuts that are the red headed step children cuts.

Speaker 1 ([05:47](#)):

Is that politically correct to say anymore? If it isn't, I'm sorry, probably is not, but I said it anyway. The cuts that are just not the favorite, right. The burger's easy to use up. The roasts are pretty easy to use that but there's like short ribs or flank steak or those ones that kind of get left in the bottom of the freezer and we just don't use up those cuts as quickly. So I went out to the freezer this morning I realized I had a lot of short ribs that are lingering. They're accumulating. And so we grabbed a couple packages of short ribs. I went into the fridge and I realized there was some leftover homemade barbecue sauce that was remaining from another meal we did earlier in the week. And so I decided, you know what, barbecue short ribs, that way I don't have to throw away the barbecue sauce.

Speaker 1 ([06:33](#)):

The short ribs are getting eaten. And that is what helped me determine our supper. Summertime's even easier if you have a garden because you can literally go out and say what needs to be eaten from this garden right now? Like whether it's the greens or it's green beans or it's tomatoes and you can build your whole meal around those things. Sometimes it gets a little eclectic. Sometimes, my family's like, why are we having this and this and this. They don't go together. And I'm like, doesn't matter because it's out of the refrigerator, so just eat it. Right? But that honestly is where a lot of my inspiration come from, comes from. And I also know that it gets me Googling more or looking at cookbooks like, okay, egg recipes, what are recipes for using eggs that I haven't tried before? And that's a great way to get me trying new things.

Speaker 1 ([07:27](#)):

So speaking of new things, number two, another strategy is commit to making at least one new recipe a week. So I noticed a lot of the times when I'm in the biggest ruts, it's because I've kind of burned through our repertoire, which are things like the tacos and the spaghetti and the roasts and the roast chicken and the pork chops and the steaks. Like we've, we've done those all recently and I just don't feel like eating them again. So adding in new techniques or new recipes for me at least keeps me inspired. So some things that I've been trying over the last couple of weeks, I made some gnocchi, which is, I've made it before but not a lot. So I'm kind of trying to figure out how I can streamline the process and make it a recipe that is something I can whip out quickly and not one that is like cumbersome or feels like it takes a lot of time for me to feel comfortable with.

Speaker 1 ([08:24](#)):

So I made some gnocchi with acorn squash, I think has an acorn squash in the pantry. And I'm like, how can I put this in the gnocchi? And it worked good. Last night, I am experimenting with a new meatball recipe and I'm figuring out how to bake them, which this is so silly. Some of you will probably think this is ridiculous. Every meatball recipe I've tried in the past was you cook them in the frying pan on the stove top and it takes forever and it's messy. And I just never wanted to make meatballs. And then I realized you can bake them, like duh. But it took me a little while to figure that out. But anyway, I'm experimenting with baked meatballs. When I get that recipe figured out, I will absolutely post it on the blog for you. Another recipe I tried last night for the first time, was sweet potato tater tots, like from scratch.

Speaker 1 ([09:14](#)):

I got that idea from a restaurant and what I do when I'm like out and about and I have recipe inspiration. I just have a note on my phone and I just collect all my ideas. And we were at this restaurant. They had amazing sweet potato tater tots. And I decided I'd try myself. The ones last night were not awesome. We need to do some tweaking on that. But they were a start like, you know, there were maybe halfway there. I gotta get them the rest of the way there. In terms of spices and salt, it was a little bit off. I just found a recipe on Google and was not a win. But anyway, it could just made me feel more inspired. Yesterday when I knew I had meatballs to try and sweet potato tots to try. It just made me feel more excited, which is probably because I'm a kitchen nerd, but I know some of you will relate to that and maybe that'll get your creative juices flowing.

Speaker 1 ([10:03](#)):

Hey friend, I'm interrupting this episode for just a sec so we can talk about seeds. I'm getting a ton of emails and messages right now from folks who are on the hunt for a reliable source of organic heirloom seeds. And I just have to say I have fallen head over heels for true leaf market lately in the past I've gotten really frustrated when I try to find certain seeds locally because they're either sold out or they just don't have the varieties I want. But true leaf market is like having a virtual seed rack in your home at your fingertips, they have a ton of varieties including all the vegetables, the herbs, the flowers, the microgreens and their seeds have a very high germination rate and bonus. They ship crazy fast. Head on over to theprairiehomestead.com/seeds to have a look at their very user friendly website and add a packet or 12 maybe to your seed stash for this year.

Speaker 1 ([11:04](#)):

And now back to our episode. Another strategy would be to kind of force yourself into trying new things by buying some new herbs or spices, something you usually don't use, or trying a new type of food. Maybe you want to add in some Asian style cooking or some different Mexican style dishes. I know that I tend to, I think we all do this, just use the same things over and over. That's not oregano or thyme or Rosemary, then I'm not making it. Right. And so go to your favorite store, buy a few new spices and then start Googling or Pinteresting or looking at your cookbooks for way to put them to use. Kind of the reverse psychology thing that can get, get you inspired. And then lastly, this is a little bit of an obvious one, but I'm going to include it anyway.

Speaker 1 ([12:04](#)):

I like to go through my favorite cookbooks, the cookbooks I already own and just see if I can have some fresh eyes for things I haven't tried before because when I usually buy a cookbook, I go through and I

Mark the things that I know my family or myself will like right away. Right? Like the easy things to make, the things that'll be an easy win. But sometimes it ignores the recipes that have potential, but maybe just didn't catch my eye at first glance. So I like to go through with fresh eyes, get out my notebook, get out my sticky notes, and just make a list of things to try. Things that are maybe a little bit on the edge of things my family generally likes. I'll push them a little bit. We'll try, we'll experiment a little bit. Sometimes it's a win, sometimes it's a miss, but it can really help bring some fresh blood into your menu planning.

Speaker 1 ([13:00](#)):

And another idea, if you don't have a lot of cookbooks in your collection would be to go to the library. Our library has a ton of cookbooks and I have brought home stacks and stacks before. Not only does it help you save money, obviously you're not investing in cookbooks that you won't use, but it's actually helped me find some of my favorites. I borrowed them, I liked them so much. I went out and bought them. So that's another great way to get some new ideas. But just know you're not alone. If you've been feeling in the rut lately, I feel, yeah, we all go there sometimes. But here's hoping that some fresh cooking inspiration comes your way soon.

New Speaker ([13:43](#)):

So if you're falling in love with the idea of an old fashioned intentional kitchen full of nourishing food and rich memories, you will love my heritage kitchen handbook. It's a free little ebook. I've packed full of my best tricks for cooking and eating like a farmer, even if you live in this city and you can grab it for free over www.heritagekitchenhandbook.com and that's it. Don't forget to hit subscribe so all the new episodes will show up automatically in your podcast player. Just makes it a little bit easier for you. And thanks so much for listening. We'll catch up next time on the next episode of the old fashioned on purpose podcast.