

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

Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. Way back at the beginning of our homestead journey, like I'm talking a decade ago, I got a grain mill for Christmas. Now back in those days, the internet was a different place and that was before the rise of the paleo diet, the keto diet, the gluten free craze, and back then all of the cool kid mom healthy blogger people were doing whole wheat, man. It was whole wheat, it was freshly ground, it was grain mills, the whole nine yards. So obviously I wanted to be one of the cool kids. So I asked for this grain mill for Christmas and proceeded to make dozens of loaves of brick like whole wheat bread, which my family absolutely hated. So fast forward to 2020, I kind of got out of the habit of whole wheat, partially because I never quite mastered the perfect edible 100% whole wheat loaf.

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

And I just started to do a lot of work with organic unbleached all purpose flours because that is what I found is easiest to teach new bread bakers to use. You know, I'm doing recipe testing. You know, I was doing the cookbook and the heritage of cooking crash course and all the other things I do. So I kind of just got used to using all purpose flour so much so that my grain mill got shoved to the back of my cabinets. And as I was cleaning the basement, I discovered all of my forgotten five gallon buckets of wheat berries and I had actually pulled them out of the corners last summer with the intent of feeding them to my chickens. Well I'm glad I didn't because as I record this podcast, the stores are out of flour and suddenly flour is a lot more important than it was six months ago.

Speaker 1 ([01:55](#)):

So in this episode, because I'm getting a ton of questions about this, I want to dive into the topics of whole wheat and grain mills and what you can do if you can't find flour in your area and all that good stuff. So here we go. This should be interesting. I'm your host Jill Winger and this is the podcast for the trailblazers, the Mavericks, the makers, the homesteaders, the modern pioneers. And the backyard farmers. If you are craving the idea of boosting your food security and increasing your self sufficiency, well this is the place for you.

Speaker 1 ([02:34](#)):

All right. So first things first, I have been racking my brain trying to figure out how I can teach a substitute for flour. And it's pretty difficult, AKA impossible obviously. If you can't get all purpose flour or even whole wheat flour in your area right now with the grocery stores being a little bit wonky, it's tricky because it's not like we can just go create some creative DIY from pantry ingredients, right? Either have flour or you don't. So as I've been seeing all of these people complain about not being able to find flour and you know, I'm in the same boat, I have a little bit in my pantry, but I've been rationing my all purpose flour because I don't have a lot of it. And for at least three weeks now we have not been able to get it in a store.

Speaker 1 ([03:25](#)):

And I'm not freaking out because I have a lot of whole wheat. But as we'll talk about today, I like to mix the two. But anyway, so I'm thinking how can I help people get through this flour shortage and I really don't have a great option for you at this exact point in time if you are 100% flourless in your local grocery stores. Now that being said, I do have a suggestion for you moving forward now when you can budget it in or save up for it. And if you're not gluten free, obviously I do recommend investing in a grain mill and keeping some whole wheat berries in storage. Because like I mentioned in the introduction, it's

not exactly, the exact same as using all purpose flour, but it's a really decent substitute. And the cool thing about whole wheat, whole wheat berries that have not been ground is that they have a really long shelf life, whereas flour does not.

Speaker 1 ([04:29](#)):

So if you're like me, you can stick them in five gallon buckets, forget about them for a number of years and then pull them out when the world is undergoing a flour shortage and be really glad you have them. So that's my suggestion. If you're kind of going, I don't like this whole flour shortage vibe, how do we fix this for next time? Save up for a grain mill and get some hard wheat berries. Now as I say that it can be a little bit of a learning curve using whole wheat flour. And so in this episode specifically, I wanted to give you some tips and suggestions, suggestions for substitutes and swaps, how I use my grain mill and all that good stuff. So, um, here we go. My grain mill is a Nutra mill. It's actually my second grain mill. The grain mill I initially got per Christmas all those years ago was a Nutra mill, but it was the tall white model.

Speaker 1 ([05:25](#)):

And I should've looked up the model number, but I didn't, I don't know if they still sell that exact model, I'm guessing. Probably not. Cause it was a number of years ago, but it was pretty tall. It wouldn't fit in a lot of my cupboards. And it held a nice amount of wheat at the top. I realized it's not very descriptive, but I could probably put, I don't know, eight to 10 cups of hard wheat berries in the top and then turn it on. It would grind it into flour in this bowl at the bottom. It was pretty loud and was white plastic, so it wasn't like something I really wanted out on my countertops for display. It was kind of more industrial looking, but it worked great. No complaints. And I used it for a very, very long time. I think it was last year or the year before, I upgraded to a different model.

Speaker 1 ([06:16](#)):

And mine is still a Nutra mill, but it's just a lot shorter. So it's lower profile and it's made out of wood. So it's a little more natural, organic looking, which just kind of fits my vibe better. It is considerably smaller. So it, it works well for us since I don't grind loads of whole wheat flour. However, if you have a really big family and you're going to be cranking out some serious bread production, you probably want to get a bigger model. But I love the new nutra mill. This small one I have is quiet. It's compact, does a really good job. I can set it to coarse flour or fine flour and I'm really happy with it. So there's a number of different types of mills out there. There's mock mills and Neutra mills and wonder mills and I think all of those are probably going to be really good.

Speaker 1 ([07:02](#)):

I don't think there's one necessarily that's just a slam dunk winner. I think they're all pretty decent brands and it's just kind of up to you to figure out what style and size that you need. If I recall, it's been awhile since I purchased one. A good grain mill is going to set you back a couple of hundred bucks, but it's an investment that I think is worthwhile because it is boosting your everyday pantry preparedness, your self sufficiency, your food security, all those things and it's just a little extra peace of mind. So I recommend it unless you're gluten-free obviously. And side note, if you just can't swing a grain mill into the budget at this point in time, I do believe that KitchenAid, the mixers have an attachment that will grind grain. So if you have a KitchenAid, you could maybe just give an attachment that would be a little bit cheaper.

Speaker 1 ([07:56](#)):

Or if you have a high powered blender, like a Vitamix or a Blendtec, those can actually grind small quantities of wheat. It's not as handy as an actual grain mill, but man in a pinch, there is nothing wrong with that. In fact, I am always out of cornmeal. I just don't really buy it. I guess. Here's how I should phrase that. I never buy corn meal yet. I still like to make corn bread. So what I will do is take popcorn and I put it in my Blendtec blender and give it a whirl and it turns it into cornmeal. And that's what I use for all of my corn bread, corn muffin, all that stuff. So, uh, use what you have. If you have other appliances, put those to work as your, if you want to save up for the grain mill later, you just have some options in the meantime.

Speaker 1 ([08:45](#)):

So those are my best recommendations as far as grain mills go. Now when it comes to the wheat itself, there are a number of places online that sell wheat berries in bulk. You're probably going to have a hard time finding them just at your typical run of the mill grocery store. Just not a lot of normal people buy them. But obviously folks like you and me, we're not normal and we're proud of it. So you kind of have to go online. Another option, if you live in farming country, you may have wheat farmers in your area. I know that we have, even in dry old Wyoming, we have some organic wheat farmers to the North of us that will sell cleaned, ready to roll wheat. So I love knowing that I can get wheat locally. You may or may not have that option, but I would look around first and see who you have in your area.

Speaker 1 ([09:39](#)):

We have gotten, before I knew about these folks, we have gotten wheat berries from places like Azure standard in the past. They're kind of a bulk food co-op that delivers around the country. Most of the country anyway. There's also, I think breadbeckers.com has a lot of wheat and grain mill supplies. And then Amazon, you know, worst comes to worst check out Amazon. You can probably find some there. But the cool thing like I said about wheat berries is that you can store them very long period of time. Any whole nut or whole grain or I should rather say whole grain or whole seed before they are ground, they have the capacity to just hibernate and not go bad, not go rancid, not go stale because they're in their whole form. It's only after we grind them that they start to oxidize and the quality decreases rapidly.

Speaker 1 ([10:30](#)):

So a lot of folks don't realize that if you're buying pre-ground whole wheat flour at the store, there's a good chance it's not at its peak quality because it degrades so quickly. And we don't know how long it's been sitting on grocery store shelves. So you do want to keep your whole wheat flours in the refrigerator or in the freezers. It's not as important for your all purpose flours because the bran and the wheat germ, everything has been sifted out right, processed out. So that's why we have that difference. But especially if you're grinding your own flour, I would recommend grinding it as you need it. Within reason. You know, if you can grind a little bit ahead but don't go crazy and grind 10 pounds of flour, to last you six months because it's going to go rancid before then or just be sure to keep it in the freezer for longterm storage or the refrigerator for more short term storage like a week or two at a time.

Speaker 1 ([11:23](#)):

But that's the big difference. And that's sometimes why if you buy whole wheat flour at the grocery store, it's a little bit of a gamble as to what kind of quality you're going to get. Now. Whole wheat and if you've tried it before, you know, it's tricky. It can be just trickier to use. And if you take your standard white sandwich bread recipe that you might find floating around the internet or cookbook, and you just try to get rid of all the all purpose flour and use a hundred percent whole wheat instead, you will quickly

discover it is less than palatable. It's just heavier, it's denser, it doesn't rise quite as nicely. And it, there's a few things you need to do to make sure that it can do its thing properly. Sometimes we need to add softeners or extra gluten or things like eggs or milk into the recipe to just kind of make it a little bit easier to work with and a little more tasty.

Speaker 1 ([12:20](#)):

So what I like to recommend is if you're brand new to cooking with whole wheat to start off half and half in most bread recipes, you can easily swap out half of the all purpose flour for whole wheat flour without having to make any other changes. So an example of this would be, I posted a very simple bread recipe on my blog and on my YouTube channel it kind of went viral. It shocked me. It's just basic bread and people loved it, but that recipe is a great candidate for swapping out half of that all purpose flour for whole wheat. Instead, you don't have to change the liquids, you don't have to do anything else. Just do the swap. It'll be a little bit darker, maybe not rise quite as much, but other than that, you won't know the difference. Now let's say you are going whole hog.

Speaker 1 ([13:11](#)):

You're fully committed and you want to get rid of all of the all purpose flour and use 100% whole wheat. Now this is where it can get a little bit tricky. If you're making bread, you need to make some changes. Okay, so first off, for every one cup of all purpose flour that is called for in the recipe, use 7/8 of a cup of whole wheat flour instead. So we're going to use slightly less whole wheat flour. Then the all purpose flour it because it's coarser, it has a different texture. It absorbs the liquids differently. So what often happens if you just go one to one ratio all the way through your recipe, that whole wheat flour soaks up more liquid and you get those super dry crumbly loaves. So I grew up on 100% whole wheat bread. That was the thing my mom was into for a while.

Speaker 1 ([14:06](#)):

And she did a good job, but I still remember like if you've ever tried to have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on two slabs of pure whole wheat bread, like man, it's rough. It is a rough experience. And so, that's just because it soaks up water. So we want to have our whole wheat doughs a little bit wetter, so use less flour and then add an extra two teaspoons of liquid, whether using water or milk, whatever, two teaspoons of liquid extra for every one cup of whole wheat flour you use. Okay? So that's just going to help adjust things a tad. Now that's for bread. If you're making things like pancakes, muffins, quick breads, you know, banana bread, zucchini bread, those guys, you can usually substitute whole wheat flour for all purpose flour one to one, and the reason being in those type of baked goods are a little bit more forgiving because they're not relying on the yeast development to help the baked good rise.

Speaker 1 ([15:10](#)):

You know what I'm saying? Like pancakes have baking soda and muffins have baking powder and quick breads have either one, so they have another leavening agent and it just does enough to help the the thing rise, whatever it is, muffin, bread, whatever, without having to work with the yeast because the yeast and the whole wheat, that's where things can just get a little bit trickier during that rise period. Another little tip is if you're using a lot of whole wheat flour in your recipe before you begin to knead, so you mix everything together. You get the flour in there before you need it. Allow the dough to sit for 15 or 20 minutes just to give that flour enough time to absorb the liquid. Right? It's a little bit slower. Give it time to absorb. And then when you go to knead it, you'll know you'll have a more accurate picture of what the dough actually is.

Speaker 1 ([16:05](#)):

Because what can happen sometimes as if we need it right away, then we're like, man, this dough is sticky, I'm going to add more flour so it doesn't stick to my hands and my countertop. And then we end up as we go, it gets too dry. So give it a little bit of a rest time and then get to the kneading process. And then another thing you can do is add a little bit of extra sweetener, maybe one to two tablespoons of honey or even molasses in your whole wheat breads can just help, help improve the taste and the texture. And maybe your recipe already calls for sweetener. But if it doesn't, consider adding a little bit, it's not going to hurt anything. And it just just helps it be a little bit more palatable. You can definitely also use sourdough and your whole wheat flour.

Speaker 1 ([16:51](#)):

I'll have a lot of folks asking me, can I feed my sourdough starter whole wheat? Absolutely you can. That's what I'm doing right now. Generally I feed my starter all purpose flour, but I'm rationing it. So I have bucket loads literally of whole wheat. So I'm feeding my sourdough starter whole wheat instead. It took a day or two for it to adjust, but it's going gangbusters now. It's happy. It's bubbling. It's rising. So absolutely you can use it with sourdough again. When you go to make a loaf of sourdough bread with whole wheat flour, it's going to be a little different. I did a loaf of sourdough whole wheat sandwich bread this week and I use 50% all purpose flour, 50% whole wheat flour. And it was pretty dense even though I was using some all purpose flour in there, the loaf was, was heavy.

Speaker 1 ([17:42](#)):

We toasted it with and then put butter and honey on it and that was good. The kids liked it, but you know, just sitting down and trying to slice that for sandwiches, it would, I think it would have choked you slightly, just a little bit was you know, not my best work, but I even used a recipe that was written for whole wheat flour and it still was a little bit tricky. So it's just a learning curve. But I'm not saying any of this to discourage you because like I said earlier, I think one of the best things you can do as far as your food security when it comes to baked goods and grains and flours is to get a little grain mill, get some buckets, put some wheat berries in there and just have that. Whether you're using it, you know, every once in a while just in your food rotation or you save that for more of an emergency scenario.

Speaker 1 ([18:34](#)):

I think it's a really good thing to have. So that's my spiel on grain mills and whole wheats and hopefully that was helpful. I hope it didn't discourage. You know that anytime you're learning a new skill in the kitchen, there's just a little bit of that learning curve and I think it really, whole wheat has a considerable learning curve but it's definitely worthwhile. 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 little ebook I have packed full of my very best tricks for cooking and eating like a farmer. Even if you live in the city and you can grab it for free over www.heritagekitchenhandbook.com and that's it my friend. Don't forget to hit subscribe in your favorite podcast player so all the new episodes show up automatically. Just makes it easier for you and if you enjoy today's episode, I would be so grateful if you could pop over and leave a quick review and rating just because it helps other people find the podcast more easily. Thanks so much for listening. I always enjoy hanging out with you. We'll catch up next time on the next episode of the old fashioned on purpose podcast.