



## Wheat

Local wheat, what a welcome addition to the local food pantry! Wheat grown in our area is the same crop that is turned into white flour, but it is the milling and processing that makes it different. Our local wheat growers do not have the same milling capabilities as an industrial scale operation, our farmers mill their own crop on-farm with simpler machinery.

Locally grown wheat is a whole grain. It contains all the parts of the wheat berry: the bran, the endosperm, and the germ. When baking, use recipes that specify whole-wheat, as opposed to all-purpose (or white flour). Local wheat is as fresh as it gets, so make sure you store your wheat in the freezer. Take out and let it come to room temperature before baking.

Local wheat will result in denser and heavier breads (a far cry from supermarket "whole wheat," which is often made with additives and conditioners). Your local flour is nutrient-dense and robust. You will be able to taste the flavor of wheat when you use this flour in breads, pancakes, and crusts. In recipes, replace regular whole wheat with local whole wheat, or replace a few tablespoons of white flour with local wheat for more flavor and nutrition.

**The Local Loaf:** This is an adaptation from *King Arthur's Baker's Companion*. The addition of a fat (butter) and a sweetener (maple or honey) balances whole wheat's somewhat bitter flavor. With our local wheat, this will be a dense bread.

1 1/2 cups water  
3 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled  
5 tablespoons of maple, honey, or a combination  
3 1/2 cups whole wheat flour  
1 1/2 teaspoons salt  
1 1/2 teaspoons instant yeast  
Optional: 1/2 cup nuts, seeds, or raisins.  
Optional 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon.

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl to form a dough with the ingredients evenly distributed. This can be done by hand, or in your stand mixer with the paddle attachment. Allow to rest for 20 minutes. Knead the dough for 10 minutes, this is easier done in your stand mixer or bread machine. Don't hesitate to do this by hand, but know that this dough is wet and sticky. After 10 minutes, the dough should be smoother and more elastic.

Let the dough rise for an hour in a covered, greased bowl. Gently form into a log and place in a loaf pan (or make a circle and put it on a sheet pan). Cover, and let rise again for another hour.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Bake for 45 minutes. If the top is becoming too brown, tent aluminum foil over the bread. When fully baked, the internal temperature of the bread will be 200 degrees (use an instant read thermometer). Cool on rack, and don't cut it when the loaf is hot (it will crumble!). Enjoy!