

# Munch ON THIS



## Staff of Life

By Marcia Rae  
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Man does not survive on bread alone, but almost could if the bread were made from fresh, whole grain wheat. Some 11,000 years ago humans first domesticated wheat. Make no bones about it – this was a big deal because it allowed, and led to, farming. And farming led to settling down and staying in one place. It meant settlements, then cities. A city means a critical mass of people. And that means culture, specialization of trade and some amount of leisure for pursuit of higher understanding of a complex world.

What kind of miracle was it such that humans were poised to move to the next level of development at the same time that a wild grass mutated, allowing the seed to stay on the plant just a bit longer, just long enough for women to harvest it. To harvest it and select the biggest and best heads to sow next year until the wheat could no longer sow itself and a symbiotic relationship developed between the wheat and the humans. Then another mutation and the beginning of wheat with the protein, gluten, which is necessary in creating the bubble in bread making allowing the bread to “rise.”

But bread making requires milling. Done initially by hand using two flat stones (hand-quern), one above the other, bread technology evolved. The Romans used animals or teams of slaves to drive the wheels to grind the wheat. Then in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, watermills and windmills came into being and people migrated and settled around the wheat mill since the wheat was a living organism and while it was portable and storable as the whole grain, it began to deteriorate as soon as it was milled. Wheat and settlers came to Brownsville together – in 1858 they built the millrace which powered the wheat mill and the community grew around it.

Today more of the world's surface is covered by wheat than any other crop. It is the highest vegetable source of protein. The fiber casing, the bran, is rich in niacin, pyridoxine, pantothenic acid, riboflavin, thiamine, and protein. The endosperm is mostly starch and contains most of the kernel's protein. The germ, the life-giving embryo, contains thiamine, riboflavin, pyridoxine, pantothenic acid, niacin, protein, and oils necessary to human health. Grown in fertile soil, whole grain wheat is a source calcium, iron, phosphorus, magnesium, potassium, manganese, copper, iodine, fluorine, chlorine, sodium, silicon, boron, barium, and silver.

Fast forward through 11,000 years of human history, evolving and revolving around this magnificent food to the 1950s. We were in the midst of the green revolution and grains were key to feeding the world. Convenience and ease became the game, and long-time storage. Alive, nutritious, flavorful flour, with all its parts intact, spoiled and deteriorated, and people no longer lived close to the mill. So the milling process changed and we discarded the rich wheat germ with its living oils and nutrients, and the heart and colon healthy fiber of the outside bran. The resulting product could last forever, a flavorless, empty powder, little more than a delivery systems for sugar and fats.

A grim story to be sure, but luckily for us, Brownsvillians now have access to the wonderful wheat of our forefathers. Grown locally and organically by Stalford Seed Farms, this hard red wheat (for bread) and soft white wheat (for pastries and pies) is stone ground once again in Brownsville, this time in a little shed behind Randy's Main Street Coffee.

Inspired by Stand Up Steve, I had been practicing my bread making skills over the past few months, and feeling pretty smug at that. Then I tried this flour. What can I say? How can I express in words the ahhhhh of what real food tastes like? And the shortcake to go with the super-food local berries? Out of this world. No kidding. We should have a bake-off in this town. With this flour, I would win. No contest.

Find this revolutionary flour at [WillametteLocalFoods.com](http://WillametteLocalFoods.com) or Randy's Main Street Coffee in Brownsville.

Munch on This – Think you are a pretty hot baker? I challenge you. Try this flour. Get hooked on the flavor of real food.

PS – See you at the Farmers Market this Saturday, 9 a.m. to noon, for real local whole foods. Music is Jazz Foolin.

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