

2.7: Whole Grain and Artisan Milling

Whole grain and artisan milling is the type of milling that was practiced before the consumer market demanded smooth white flours that are refined and have chemical additives to expedite aging of flours. Artisan milling produces flours that are less refined and better suited to traditional breads, but also contain little to no additives and have higher nutritional content. For that reason, demand for these types of flour is on the rise.

Artisan millers (also known as micro millers) process many non-stream grains, including spelt, kamut, buckwheat, and other non-gluten grains and pulses. This offers bakers opportunities to work with different grains and expand their businesses. Artisan flours are readily available directly from millers or through a distributor. Knowing the origin of the grains and the quality of the ingredients in baking is important for artisan bakers.

Whole grain flours are on the increase as consumers become more aware of their benefits. Whole grain flour, as the name suggests, is made from whole grains.

Many artisan millers purchase their grains directly from growers. This method of purchasing establishes trustworthy working relationships with the grain growers and promotes transparency in grain growing and food safety practices. Grain growers that sell their grains to artisan millers apply conventional or organic growing practices. Grain growers and millers have to go through vigorous processes to obtain the **certified organic** certification for their grains or products, which guarantees that no chemical additives have been used.

How organic grain is processed varies. Stone milling and impact hammer milling methods are typical when minimal refined whole grain flour is preferred. Information on several American artisan millers that produce various whole grain flours can be found at Fairbairn Mills; Hayden Flour Mills; and Baker Miller Chicago. Organic flours have gained popularity in the baking industry. As consumers become more aware of them, we see the demand swinging back toward whole grain and artisan milling as a preference.

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