

# properly prepared grains

a reader question & answer  
from Nourished Kitchen



## Before You Read this Transcript

This is a transcript of a conversation of Jenny McGruther of Nourished Kitchen and Ann Marie Michaels of Cheeseslave. Nourished Kitchen readers were invited to email their questions on the proper preparation of whole grains for inclusion in this question and answer session.

You can find the original video, show notes, links and referenced books here: <http://nourishedkitchen.com/reader-questions-grains/>

## Here's What You'll Learn

- When to start giving your babies grains.
- What the best way to rid grains of anti-nutrients is.
- *Whether or not you lose good nutrients along with antinutrients when you soak grains.*
- Whether fiber and gluten are a problem for everybody.
- Why you need to heal your gut first if you have food intolerances or sensitivities.
- Whether grains are a necessary part of the human diet or not.
- How to use sprouted grains and pseudocereals.
- How to adapt recipes to use more traditional methods.
- Why using freshly ground flour is important.
- The best way to prepare oats.
- Great gluten-free grains to use.
- Whether all-purpose flour has a purpose in the diet.
- Why not everyone is better-suited to a paleo diet.
- How to make food your family will actually eat.

## Jenny McGruther interviews Ann Marie Michaels on the Proper Preparation of Grains

**Jenny:** Hi guys, this is Jenny from nourishkitchen.com. I am here with Ann Marie Michaels of Cheeseslave, and we are going to be answering your questions about grains - all about grains from sprouting and soaking and souring. What to do if you avoid them, what to do if you love them - all about grains.

So, we're going to get started here really quick. So ... the reason why I am asking Ann Marie to do this is that she is actually kind of grains expert - more so than I am. She does this beautiful no-knead sourdough bread, beautiful sprouted cookies and other amazing work with whole

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grains. She is actually teaching online cooking class all about the proper preparation of grains. When I was thinking about doing a grains Q&A, I couldn't think anybody to do this better than Ann Marie.

## On Feeding Grains to Infants and Small Children

**Jenny:** So, if you don't mind Ann Marie, we're going to go ahead and get started. I'm going to quiz you from the readers here.

Allison writes, "I am confused about grains for my baby. He is eleven months old and I have read it is best to try and hold off on feeding grains to kids until two years, if possible. Can you shed some light or advise on giving to kids?"

I personally would agree that it is probably wise to wait but I am interested in your thoughts.

**Ann Marie:** Absolutely, I did the same thing when my daughter was a baby according to the Weston A. Price Foundation. They said wait at least a year to two years, so that's what I did when Kate was a baby. I didn't give her any grains until she was about 18 months old, and they were sprouted and soaked grains, and the reason for that is that children don't produce the enzymes needed to digest grains prior to that time. When their molars come in is when they say you can start feeding them grains, although I have met people from traditional cultures who fed their babies grains at about a year old - people Honduras and Guatemala. So you have to just go with your gut, but I waited 18 months.

**Jenny:** I think that's intelligent as well - to really wait. Of course, nobody knows your baby like you do. I do think it's kind of foolish that our culture puts so much emphasis on brown rice or rice cereal at six months. Rice cereal doesn't really have a lot of nutrients in there. The liver and the egg yolks or things like really do. So that I would definitely not do, I didn't do with my son, but properly prepared grains after the molars come in makes a lot of sense.

**Ann Marie:** Right. We did liver and egg yolks, too.

**Jenny:** It's so good for them, and they love it.

**Ann Marie:** I know. That's when they'll eat it, so get them to eat while they will.

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## What's the best way to rid grains of anti-nutrients?

**Jenny:** Exactly. Tina asks what the best way to rid grains from anti-nutrients is. She wants to know what is the best way to rid grains of anti-nutrients like phytic acid, and she follows that up with, "Do the good nutrients go away with the anti-nutrients." So, she is concerned that by doing all the soaking that you are going to soak out the goodies along with things like phytic acid. What are your thoughts on that?

**Ann Marie:** It depends on the grain, and it depends on what your recipe is. So, I am going to give a webinar next Thursday. You'll have it in the notes, but the webinar's going to be about when to soak, when to sprout and when to use sourdough, because there's different recipes that you can use different things for. You know - cookies ... not so much with the soaking; it's better to use sprouted flour, whereas if you're going to do something leavened sourdough is really the way to go, although you can use sprouted flour and yeast to make bread. I don't generally use that. I generally go ahead with sourdough, because I find it to be very easy, but it depends on the type of grains. Sourdough is the best in terms of if you are soaking wheat. Sourdough is really the best; it's the most effective, but that doesn't mean that you are not going to see benefits from soaking or using sprouted flour, you absolutely will.

**Jenny:** Absolutely. What's really interesting to me is that I was looking at some of my historic cookbooks, and I find that some of the cakes are actually leavened through sourdough fermentation like election cake, or that there's a very traditional porridge that you begin by sprouting wheat. So, I think that's really interesting that you really do see these different methods - also soaking your flour in buttermilk for buttermilk biscuits. You really see these different methods, and, if you look back at these old and traditional cookbooks, it is fascinating.

## Do you lose good nutrients along with anti-nutrients?

**Ann Marie:** On the question about whether you lose the good nutrients: you don't. It's not like you are going to kill off some thing bad and it's still going to be there - it's not like that. It's more like you're going to activate what's good and you are going to neutralize what's bad. So like the phytic acid and the anti-nutrients and grains just like in nuts seeds or other foods leafy greens that have anti-nutrients, you are going to neutralize them and that's all.

**Jenny:** It's really interesting how that happens. That process kind of opens up the nutrients that really makes for this beautiful and easy-to-digest food. I think that's remarkable, this traditional wisdom.

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## What about fiber and gluten?

**Jenny:** Tina also has a follow up question. We hear a lot about how awesome and great fiber is for us, and then if you pay attention to different dietary dogmas, you hear that fiber is the enemy of the digestive tract. So what are your thoughts on that, and the gluten that is found in certain grains?

**Ann Marie:** So, there's two parts here: the fiber and the gluten.

Fiber. There was a book that came out recently a few years go called *Fiber Menace*, and I read that book and it was a great book. It really was really pointing out that you shouldn't need fiber to go to the bathroom, you really shouldn't. If you need fiber to go to the bathroom, there's another problem, and that's your gut flora and maybe your hormones.

If your thyroid isn't working properly, you'll have trouble with constipation or other digestive problems. You're not going to digest your food as well. There are a lot of issues, but you shouldn't need the fiber. His point was that if you need fiber from whole grains or vegetables, it's okay. You don't need to go crazy and peel every apple. It's okay to eat an apple, and it's okay to eat a whole grains. And people have been eating corn tortillas for millennia. And it's fine, but stay away from fiber supplements, and don't eat a bran muffin that's just all bran. That's where people kind of go crazy in the United States and think, "Oh, if it's good then I'll do even more!" and that's just not the point.

Now, gluten has become the whipping boy lately. It's kind of like how butter was for long time. Butter was the whipping boy, and now it's gluten. "Oh, gluten is bad. Gluten is bad. Stay away from all gluten." And I just feel like people are throwing baby out with the bath water. You know, gluten is simply a protein in wheat and in other gluten-containing grains. I think that it's like casein which is in milk. There's nothing wrong with casein, and there's nothing wrong with milk. Its not casein in milk, so suddenly you can't drink milk anymore. There's nothing wrong with it. It's just that we, as a population, now have digestive issues partly because as I said the abnormal guts flora mainly because of all the drugs that we take. There's nothing you can do to damage your gut more than taking antibiotics. That would just decimate any good bacteria you have, and it really takes a long time to build up again.

Say you went to South America or Mexico where they eat corn tortillas and tamales every single day- if those people started taking tons of antibiotics and birth control pills and drinking chlorinated water, I guarantee you start seeing corn-free products everywhere, because it's what we eat that we become allergic. So that's what my feeling on gluten is.

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I just I think if you have trouble with gluten you should definitely work on healing your gut. You should definitely avoid gluten, but for the average person there's no reason to avoid gluten or wheat.

## On the importance of healing the gut first.

**Jenny:** I tend to agree with that. I think that if you have issues with digesting anything, a healing protocol is probably called for first. Really focus on the healing aspect, rather than giving up certain foods, and then slowly finding as you give up gluten you begin eating corn and rice all the time, and find you are now allergic to corn and rice, too.

**Ann Marie:** Exactly. That's what happens. So you've got heal the gut, and it's important: fermented foods, probiotics, bone broth. That's what going to do it.

I just had someone the other day who signed up for the class that I am teaching and she said, "I just wanted tell you that it is your blog that I found three years ago and I learned about the GAPS diet. I did the GAPS diet." (which is a gut-healing protocol), and she said, "Now I can digest food with no problem, and now I am taking your class."

**Jenny:** That's wonderful. It really does work.

**Ann Marie:** It really does work, so I just wish that people would get that one message: You don't have to throw out whole food good.

## Are grains a necessary part of the human diet?

**Jenny:** Anyway, let's move on, because we've a lot of reader questions. Erin asks this, and it's a common question I get a lot at Nourished Kitchen. She asks, "Are grains a necessary part of human diet?"

That's an interesting thing to talk about: are grains necessary?

**Ann Marie:** So my feeling on this is that we don't know - if you go all the way back to stone age and wonder what did Grok eat, we don't really know for sure. I mean we don't know what a cave man ate. We can guess what they ate. We can guess and piece things together, but we

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don't really know. But what we do know what people ate when doctor Weston A. Price was alive and studying people remote villages, and these people had almost no cavities, had absolute perfect bone structure, facial structure and had zero physical degeneration and disease. That's good enough for me.

I have seen, talked with and met so many people who grew up eating grains. And every time someone from different country - especially if they came from small village and they didn't have industrial foods, I always ask them, "What did you eat, how did you grow up, did you have cavities, did you ever get sick?" And they all ate grains.

I haven't hung out with a lot Inuit people and they probably didn't eat grains, but people I know who came from Russia or Honduras or Slovakia, they grew up eating grains. And some even grew up eating white flour, but they ate enough other things and, if they ate whole grains, they were properly prepared. And white flour was not a mainstay of their diet; it was a small part, if any. (And they were the people that were more exposed and had more close access to industrial foods.)

They ate tons of organ meats; they ate tons of fermented foods. We can get real black and white about this, but I have seen so many different people who grew up eating grains and are incredibly healthy.

So, is it necessary for your diet? Probably not.

That said, I think it is dangerous if we take a diet and take out one more part of it, because there's a lot of wisdom we're missing. For example Swiss people that Weston Price studied would rye bread with cheese. There actually was a lot of nutritional benefits with eating cheese and bread - just one I can think of is that there's a lot of calcium in cheese and there's a lot of magnesium in bread, and you want to have a the right ratio of calcium and magnesium diet. Just cutting out the bread you're not getting lot of the benefits.

Sourdough bread is also a fermented food. I just think it's dangerous to say, "Oh, I am just going to take this whole food group and start restricting my diet." You just don't know where that leads. I say stick with traditional food as it was eaten by our ancestors.

**Jenny:** Exactly, and when I speak with a friend who grow up in Switzerland, she ate whole grain sourdough bread and cheese. That's what she ate – that and raw milk. They did a lot of raw milk.

You could make the argument that there's no food that is necessary for the diet. For example, you don't have to eat kale. Kale is not necessary to the diet. If you enjoy it, more power to you.

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You don't have to eat beef, if you enjoy more power to you. I mean huge amount of food that we could consume, and the key is to choose the ones that are ancestors would have chosen, and, for many, that does include grains.

**Ann Marie:** And not to be restrictive about how you do it. And also pay attention to your own ancestry. Dr. Gonzalez, who is curing cancer in New York, he says some people have heritage where they do better on a high meat, high fat diet. Other people really don't. He sees them getting cancer if they really are not meant for that high meat, high fat diet. So I think it's really such a personal thing. If you do well on grains, absolutely keep eating them. They are very nutritious, but they do need to be prepared correctly.

## Does soaking grains and making sourdough actually break down the anti-nutrients?

**Jenny:** Diane asks, "Does oaking grains and fermenting wheat for sourdough bread actually break down the gluten and anti-nutrients and make grain more digestible, or should we just give up grains completely? Is it doing more harm than good?" So that kind of addresses what we've already discussed.

**Ann Marie:** Right. It does break it down. You should do it. Gluten is not bad. It's not bad to have gluten in the bread. For the anti-nutrients like phytic acid - soaking, sprouting and souring will absolutely break those down to different degrees depending on what it is.

## What about sprouting and pseudo-cereals?

**Jenny:** Very good. Lidia writes, "What can you do with sprouted grains aside from making flour and are grains or pseudo-cereals that are best for sprouting or that should not be sprouted?" So she just wants to know what we do with sprouted grains and pseudo-cereals and are there grains that are more suited to sprouting than others. What are your thoughts?

**Ann Marie:** I think it depends on your own family and what your family likes and what you enjoy eating. My family loves bread. They love pancakes. They love waffles, crackers, tortillas, tortilla chips, rice. We eat a lot of brown rice. These are all things that we eat on a regular basis. That's another interesting thing. You see these traditional cultures that really ate only one or may be two grains, because that's what they had. But we have so many grains that we can choose

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As far as what to do other than making flour: Obviously you can sprout rice. You can have germinated rice, or you can soak it or both. Same thing with quinoa, you can soak it. I am teaching in the class that there are all these whole grains that you can serve with a steak or with chicken or whatever you are eating for your meal.

Barley. I love beef and barley soup. It is one of my favorites. So there's lots of different grains, and I and teach a number of these.

You can take whole wheat, I sprout it and I cook it and for like 25 minutes and then make different salads. I teach them very first class: an Italian salad with sprouted wheat berries and basil, tomatoes. It's really delicious. It's something different sandwich.

## How has the chemical make up grains changed over the years?

**Jenny:** We like sprouted grain salads and things like that, that dish sounds exceptional. I haven't tried that. Here is a interesting question. Mark writes, "How has the chemical makeup of grains changed the most over the thousand of years since they were first introduced into the human diet to the present day?" What's your perspective on that?

**Ann Marie:** I haven't read the *Wheat Belly* book yet. It's on my reading list for this year. So I am curious to learn about that, but my feeling is that people are making a lot out of that, and I am not really sure how important it is.

There are so many different kinds of foods that have been hybridized and changed over the years. The pluot didn't exist before. The Yukon Gold is a new potato that never existed before. Do we want GMO foods or that have pesticides? No. Of course we don't want that, but I can think plenty of ways that foods can change over time. I also think that we as humans (there that whole epigenetic thing right now), we change, and we adapt to the food that we are eating.

I am not scientist, and I am not going claim to be a grains historian. That's not what I'm doing here. I am teaching a class on how to cook grains. I think it's interesting, but I don't know if there's enough evidence there.

**Jenny:** But it somebody were interested these more ancient grains, they would still be able to use these techniques to you are talking about – sprouting, souring, fermentation and soaking. They might just use Einkorn – that old wheat.

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**Ann Marie:** Or kamut, or spelt. I use spelt all the time. Kamut is just a wonderful, nutty grain that we're going to be making crackers from. You don't have to use modern wheat.

## Are all of us better suited to a paleo diet?

**Jenny:** Tina writes, "I always feel best when I avoid all grains. Are we truly more suited for paleo type diet?"

I think it's an interesting perspective. I, for one, don't think there's this one-size-fits-all diet. I don't think everybody needs be vegetarian. I don't think everyone should be adhering to the paleo diet. I do think we should honor the foods of our ancestral traditions. What are your thoughts on that?

**Ann Marie:** If your ancestors are Inuit, you're probably going to do much better on a high meat, high fat diet. Whereas, I am Polish, German and French and western European. What do you think my ancestors ate? I don't think they were eating whale blubber. I don't do well on that diet. In fact, I tried low-carb over the last couple of years and I didn't do well on it. I had more trouble hormonally and I am just unraveling this now and learning what works for me.

Everybody does things differently. Some people need more carbs, some people need less. I think you're right. I think it's not one-size-fits-all.

**Jenny:** And, for a lot of families, we have to respect the transition period. It's really hard for a family to go from a basic omnivorous diet or a Standard American Diet to nothing but greens and meat. That's not very satisfying.

**Ann Marie:** Well, honestly, that's another concern that I have. When I first found the Weston Price Foundation and Sally Fallon Morell's book *Nourishing Traditions*, all the grain stuff felt really hard for me – all the nuts and seeds and soaking and the dehydrator. So we stopped eating as much. It's easy enough to learn how to make sauerkraut, meat and fish. It's easy. So that's what we did and we could buy sprouted bread. It took me a while to really learn how to do all this stuff and now that I know how to do it, it's not hard at all, it's easy. It was overwhelming at first.

My concern is about people really restricting their diet too much and cutting out a whole part of the diet. Again, it's not very wise because you don't know what you're missing – and how things interplay. But, it gets tough.

It's tough to say, "Okay, child, you've been use to eating mac and cheese. And now you're going to have this hunk of meat and kale." It's just not so easy.

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**Jenny:** Yeah. I agree. That's one of my biggest concerns. A slow transition, is, I think easier. And, also, enjoy your food! If you enjoy your porridge, then love it! There's nothing wrong with enjoying your food. It's not a punishment to eat. But, anyway, let me get back to the questions we have here.

## How do I adapt my recipes?

**Jenny:** "How do I adopt a recipe when I soak grain if the original recipe doesn't call for soaking grains?" This question came from Kat. So I assume you'll talk about this in your class, but what's a good guideline.

**Ann Marie:** I'm going to talk about this in the webinar in detail – that's a free webinar we are doing. You have to play with it over time. That's what we've been doing for the last three or four years - playing with different recipes to see what works and how it works.

In general, I would say cookies generally, and muffins, quick breads and banana bread, you can easily use sprouted flour or you can soak them, just by soaking the flour overnight. I will say that it's always a good idea to freshly grind your grains.

So getting a grain mill, even a cheap fifty-dollar grain mill like a hand-crank mill is going to make a huge difference in terms of nutrition – if you can have freshly ground flour.

## On the importance of freshly ground flour.

**Jenny:** Absolutely, I agree. In fact, a grain mill is one of the first purchases that I made after making the transition to traditional foods. It was a gift – my mother-in-law bought it for us since I couldn't afford one of them at the time.

When I re-read Weston Price's work – *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* - I noticed that all the grain that traditional peoples ate in terms of bread or porridge or any grain, they were all ground fresh. All of them. And I think of those fat-soluble nutrients, and vitamin E in particular. They can go rancid really fast, and those nutrients can be lost in storage.

**Ann Marie:** That's right, but we do have freezers and refrigerators now, so, if you want, you can sprout your grains or buy sprouted grains sprouted grain flour, and you even mill a bunch of

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sprouted grain flour and store it in your freezer. That's okay to do.

**Jenny:** Absolutely Sophia asks, "Does soaking grains deactivate anti-nutrients, and if so, why is it recommended not to rinse the grain before cooking them Also, where do the anti-nutrients go?" I think it's a really interesting question, and I get it a lot. But first, there's nothing wrong with rinsing your whole grains. It's just that when you're making something with flour, you can't really rinse your flour.

**Ann Marie:** No.

**Jenny:** What are your thoughts on that? And aren't the anti-nutrients actually degraded? They don't dissolve in the water; they're degraded. Maybe you can clarify that?

**Ann Marie:** I do rinse some grain, especially when I soak whole corn for making tamales or tortillas. I do rinse that after it has been soaking in limewater. I also rinse my rice, but I'm not sure it's necessary. The issue is that a say, as for an example, using sourdough: you don't need to rinse your sourdough, right? I guess the best way to describe it is that the good stuff is being activated activated and the bad stuff getting deactivated or becoming inactive. Suddenly it doesn't have power; it's like a superhero - that's superhero doesn't have any more power. So you don't have to get rid of it if there's nothing left.

## How much cooking liquid do you need to add to soaked grains?

**Jenny:** Exactly. Sophia also asked, "While preparing a grain which has been soaking for the whole night, how has the ratio of water changed for cooking?"

For example, when I make my oatmeal, I have soaked it overnight and I generally add less water when I go to cook it since it has already absorbed so much water. I use about one-third less water, how about you?

**Ann Marie:** I think the recipe I use is two cups of water. You soak with the first cup of water, and then the second cup you add in the morning, so you're using less. Oatmeal ... I'll tell you my favorite way to make oatmeal now is we soak it overnight in the water and then you cook it in coconut milk.

**Jenny:** That sounds nice. That sounds good.

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## On the importance of sprouted oatmeal.

**Ann Marie:** I got that, actually, from one of my readers on facebook, actually. It's so good, and it's a little bit richer, but you can't taste the coconut.

Another thing, as far as oatmeal is concerned, is that I really think it's better, if you can, to get sprouted oatmeal. There's only one place selling it. It's not so easy to get sprouted oatmeal. The reason I say this is because, most of the oats are heat-treated, so you're not going to be able to deactivate the phytic as well, because it's been heat-treated. It's just not a living food anymore, it's kind of like cardboard. Well ... it still has good nutrition, but not anywhere near as much. So the best thing to do is buy the sprouted oats, and then flake them fresh.

**Jenny:** That's very interesting. So they've already been treated essentially.

**Ann Marie:** Yeah. They've germinated.

## What gluten-free grains are you missing?

**Jenny:** Sarah asks, "On being gluten-free, the grains I enjoy are quinoa, brown rice, millet and amaranth." She wants to know if she's missing any others that might be a good addition. What other gluten-free grains do you enjoy besides the basics: quinoa, brown rice, millet.

**Ann Marie:** Corn. I think corn is something a lot of people don't think about, and it's (I am going to do two whole classes on corn because there's so many great recipes). I grew up in Texas and grew up on tortillas, tortilla chips. I'm going to be doing tamales, but we're also going to be doing polenta, and there's a lot of Italian recipes that use corn. Corn. Hmm ... what else is there. Well, buckwheat?

**Jenny:** I love buckwheat, there's a lot of things you can do with buckwheat, and it has such a good flavor. I really love buckwheat, we eat buckwheat porridge and buckwheat banana bread.

**Ann Marie:** Yeah! And buckwheat pancakes, I love buckwheat pancakes.

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## What's better: brown rice or white rice?

**Jenny:** Meredith writes, “What’s better: brown rice or white rice?” Now this is an interesting question. I’ve seen this from a lot of paleo people who say, “Don’t eat any grains! Well ... white rice is okay.” What’s your perspective on this?

**Ann Marie:** I don’t understand the argument for white, I don’t really understand it. Maybe you know why they say that about white rice and brown rice.

*[NOTE from Jenny: I do. The argument in favor of white rice over brown is an effort to avoid not only antinutrients like phytic acid which is deactivated through soaking, sprouting or souring, but also antinutrients like lectins which are not deactivated through any of these methods. I still recommend choosing whole foods – including brown rice over white as you’ll see below.]*

**Ann Marie (continued):** White rice is like white flour. It’s polished. They take off the outer bran, so you’re not getting the nutrients. Most nutrients are in the outer part of the grain. So, is it because they just don’t want to through the process of treating it? I don’t know why they recommend it. I would definitely always go with brown rice and soak it.

I’m going to be teaching this in the class: if you use the same water to soak your rice over and over and over again, you just keep using it, its kind of like sourdough.

It retains the good beasts, the little beasties that break down the right stuff, so that’s what I do. It’s easy, and it’s no trouble. You can also sprout the rice. I think that’s much more nutritious than eating white rice. I am not a fanatic. If I’m going out for sushi and there’s not brown rice, I’m not going to be like, “Ooooh. There’s no brown rice, I’m not going to eat here.”

And that’s another thing, we don’t have to worry about phytic acid when it comes to white rice or white flour. I didn’t understand this when I first started on this journey, I thought, “Phytic acid is everywhere!” But it’s not. White flour and white rice is okay to eat, it’s just not as nutritious.

**Jenny:** Exactly. It’s just kind of devoid of the good stuff.

**Ann Marie:** But if you’re eating liver pate on white bread, you’re going to be okay.

**Jenny:** That’s about the only way I can get my liver pate down. It goes on a slice of good, [whole grain] crispy bread. When we go out to eat, we do white rice, because I know that the brown rice hasn’t been prepared properly. In our home we do brown rice.

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When I re-read *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration*, Price talks about the modern people were eating that caused poor health – the dental decay, the facial deformities. And, you know what? Polished white rice was number one along with white flour, white sugar and canned goods. I'm saying that, in our family, we stick with brown rice except when we eat out.

**Ann Marie:** It's more nutritious.

## Does soaking oats in water make them any more digestible?

**Jenny:** Candace writes, "I love baking with whole oats, but I want to neutralize the phytic acid." So we kind of addressed this already when we talked about sprouted oats. She wants to know if soaking in water and vinegar will make her oats any more digestible. So would your argument be that soaking oats isn't doing much if they're not sprouted, or what's your perspective?

**Ann Marie:** Oh no! Yes, it is. It's definitely working. I've actually heard Sally Fallon Morell address this, because a lot of people were talking about whether or not it does anything if the oats have been heat-treated, and she says it does. She can personally tell a difference, too, because she can't digest oats that haven't been soaked. It does make a difference.

And another thing she says, that I absolutely love is: Good, Better, Best. Gosh. We don't need to be perfect. It's already hard enough to cook traditional foods.

Everyone who comes to my house they say, "Wow, you do that from scratch. Wow, you make your own yogurt. Wow. You don't use your microwave?" And I don't!

It's hard enough. Let's not beat ourselves up, let's just do the best we can. If you soak your oatmeal and it's not sprouted, you're still doing great!

**Jenny:** Do the best you can, I think. Honestly. Do the best you can. Every little bit counts. I think that people overwhelm themselves unnecessarily.

**Ann Marie:** And then you don't want to do any of it, right? You just give up! I mean, we go out for pizza. We don't live in a bubble. I think we have to enjoy our lives and, like you said, enjoy our food. But, I'm going to teach you how to make healthier pizza at home, but that doesn't mean you're never going to go out.

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## Can I soak all-purpose flour?

**Jenny:** Jamie writes, “I’m wondering if you can soak all-purpose flour. I bought a bag before I switched to sprouted flour.” So she has a bag of all-purpose, how will that work?

**Ann Marie:** Well, look, I still have white flour in my cupboard just like I have sugar. The white sugar I almost only use for kombucha. The white flour, though – some of the recipes I do use white flour, and if you read *Nourishing Traditions*, some of the recipes in there use white flour. You really can’t make decent bagels without some white flour, or you have to use vital gluten which is a part of the flour. For me, it’s not a big deal to use some white flour. It’s sourdough.

First of all, don’t eat a lot of it and don’t eat it everyday. But if you’re going to use it, do sourdough. Personally, I notice a big difference. For example, if we go out and eat pizza, I always get gassy. My daughter’s always like, “We’ve been eating too much pizza!”

So I don’t think we need to be banning white flour from the kitchen. But you should always focus on whole grains.

**Jenny:** I remember in *Nourishing Traditions*, she does have a handful of recipes using white flour. She usually uses them in combination with other whole grain flours, like a compromise solution.

**Ann Marie:** The thing is if you decided, from now I on I’m only going to cook with whole grains and you bring out these large, dense bricks of bread to your family, they’re going to be like, “Yeah, not so much. That and the kale and the other stuff I don’t want, not so much.” But if you can learn how to make breads that are maybe partly white flour, but mostly whole grains, your family is going to love the breads and foods that you make. And the most of the recipes don’t have any white flour, just some.

## Isn’t it better if everyone avoids grain entirely?

**Jenny:** Joan writes, “Isn’t it better if everyone avoids grains entirely? Everyone should read *Wheat Belly*.”

Now, I haven’t read *Wheat Belly*. I personally avoid those trendy books that say, “Now this food is bad. No. Now this food is bad.” I haven’t read it, so I can’t comment on that book, but I do think that people need to trust what’s good for them. But what’s your thought on that?

**Ann Marie:** Yeah. We already talked about it. It’s different for everybody. I’m just really skepti-

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cal when someone is trying to push one diet on everybody. I can't tell you how many people have told me to stop eating grains, that I should stop eating grains if I want to lose weight or whatever. My experience with low-carb was not good. Since I've added grains back in, and I'm eating a lot of grains right now. I'm eating them at breakfast, lunch and dinner, and I'm eating double the calories that I did before. I'm eating double the amount of calories since October. I've measured myself with a tape measurer. I don't have a scale which is inaccurate anyway. I measure myself with a tape measurer and I'm the exact same size three months later. And my temperature is up. I went from 97s to low 98s.

For me, this is working and it's different for everybody. If low-carb or if paleo is working for you, keep doing it.

**Jenny:** But it really is about finding what works for you. It's not this one-size-fits-all thing. It's about individuals learning exactly how their bodies work. That's why I love traditional foods so much, because it can encompass all this beautiful things.

**Ann Marie:** There's no one perfect diet. Weston Price went around the world, and met all these different people eating very different diets and all thriving. All in perfect health. The other thing you have to consider is what will your family eat. And what will your family be happy about. You've got to work with that.

You can't just say, "From now on, we're going to eat snails and beef liver or beef hearts." "Oh, really?" You know, you've got to actually make things that are appealing. They'll want to have their friends over and not be like, "Those are the weird people."

**Jenny:** That's right. You have to work with what your family will actually eat. And it's easy to go on a diet that's restrictive for a short period of time, and then you kind of lose your steam. Whereas with something that's a little more open, you can allow yourself a little more grace and forgiveness.

**Ann Marie:** That's why I love the book *Nourishing Traditions*. They're traditions. Every Christmas we do tamales. Tortilla chips with guacamole, sourdough bread with butter – these are part of the traditional food. And I don't believe in saying they're bad. There's lots of people throughout the world that continue to eat these traditional foods.

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## Upcoming class and webinar.

**Jenny:** Well. Thank you so much, Ann Marie, for answering these questions we had about grains, and souring and all this wonderful stuff. Your class is coming up really soon, right?

**Ann Marie:** Yes. It starts February 15th.

**Jenny:** And you're going to have a webinar as well, right. It's sort of like a free question and answer session? People can sign up for it and get some information about this as well, correct?

**Ann Marie:** Yes. And I'm not sure if, by the time this airs I'll have the sign up for it ready, but I'm sure you'll be posting it.

**Jenny:** Yes, of course, because I think it's a good idea. Well ... cool ... thank you so much for your time.

**Ann Marie:** Thank you, Jenny.