



The New Bread Basket

How the New Crop of Grain Growers, Plant Breeders, Maltsters, Bakers, Brewers, and Local Food Activists Are Redefining Our Daily Loaf

Amy Halloran

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**For media inquiries contact
Shay Totten**

stotten@chelseagreen.com
802.295.6300 ext.125

**For author events contact
Jenna Stewart**

jstewart@chelseagreen.com
802.295.6300 ext.120



“ **The story of a radical new band of grain pioneers who are returning grains to a local food crop.** ”

The New Bread Basket tells the story of how a radical new band of grain pioneers—farmers, millers, bakers, brewers and maltsters—are reinventing community grain systems and reintroducing grains as a local food crop.

Grains have been the staple of Western civilization for centuries. Ancient grains can be credited with settling down and “civilizing” our nomadic ancestors, and the symbolism of wheat and bread—amber waves of grain, the staff of life—still carries great meaning in our society. Yet, the processes behind grain production have become largely invisible, relegated to distant industrialized factories.

In *The New Bread Basket*, Amy Halloran channels her four-decade obsession with pancakes into an exploration of regional grain production, and she introduces readers to dozens of people who are reconnecting us to local grains: From a couple in Massachusetts who opened the first malthouse in New England in 100 years to a researcher at Washington State University developing a model to support grain growing outside of the traditional wheat belt.

Such pioneering projects allow consumers to turn away from factory bread and beer and return the production of these goods to a scale that respects people, local communities, and the health of the environment.

Today’s commodity grain industry has led many Americans to avoid eating gluten and carbohydrates. Yet our shared history with grains—from scythes to combines, from the village baker to Wonder Bread—suggests that changes in farming and processing could be the real reason grains have become suspect in popular nutrition. By returning to traditional methods like long sourdough fermentations, bakers could help address some of the dietary ills attributed to wheat.

The New Bread Basket reveals the village that stands behind every loaf and every pint. This book is a salute to the people making our foundational crops visible, and vital, once again.



Amy Halloran has been following the revival of the regional grain movement in the Northeast for several years. She writes about food and agriculture for newspapers, websites, and magazines such as *Edible Finger Lakes*, *Culinate*, and *Food Safety News*. Her involvement in local food systems began with the Troy Waterfront Farmers Market, which grew under her care into a fifty-vendor year-round market. Halloran teaches food justice at Russell Sage College, and her students partner with Capital District Community Gardens urban farm, The Produce Project. She lives in Troy, New York.

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