

GAIL'S

# SOURCING MAKING SHARING

A baker's approach to sustainability

2023

We are craft bakers. The ethos of a craft baker is simple – source high-quality ingredients from people you trust, apply your experience, skill and knowledge with the utmost care and gift your well-made loaf to people in your community. When you wake up the next day, you do this again with the same attention and dedication. There is no room for anything but thinking sustainably. You have selected your tools, your ingredients, from someone you know has a similar level of dedication and you understand the effort they have put into making it. You show this respect and care.

You do not make 11 because you need 10. You operate in ways that are not wasteful because you need to keep it simple to deal with nature's complexity. You take time to do it right with the minimum amount of distractions. Making a loaf like we do requires the flour bag, salt, water, a few bowls of different sizes, lots of hands, and an oven – we can make something world-class in a pretty small place measured by meters. Baking sustains and is sustainable if done right.

Our bakeries and all of us who make a loaf, a pastry or an amazing coffee are guardians of an ethos, the ethos of a craft baker, that frames the way we think about the world around us. We choose to make an impact with the smallest footprint. As we work and contribute our talents to serving our communities we are mindful of where we come from and what that means for how we act. Sustainability is just who we are.

Tom Molnar  
GAIL's Co-Founder



# OUR THREE FOCUSES



## 1 SOURCING

We choose to work with partners who share our belief that good food can do good.



## 3 SHARING

Our approach to sustainability nourishes our communities by sharing better, beautiful food.



## 2 MAKING

We're constantly looking for ways to improve how we make things in our bakeries by reducing, reusing and recycling.

# SOURCING

As we grow as a business, we have more responsibility and opportunity to have a greater positive impact. For us, the answer lies in the network of like-minded makers, growers and suppliers we work with every day.

Baking is our thing. It's what we have done every day for decades. But we don't know how to grow the best wheat. Or how to blend the perfect coffee or source heritage tomatoes just as they come into season. We could cut corners and find cheap, quick solutions that would make things easy. But we'd be compromising. And we don't do that.

Instead, we source produce from partners who take their work as seriously as we take ours. Producers who excel at what they do, and who share our ambition to make good food that does good too. These relationships benefit everyone. They share their beautiful produce, time, craft and evolving expertise. In return, we use our growing platform to support their businesses and help realise our shared goals. Our customers get real, delicious food. And collectively we tackle the challenges the food system faces and reduce its impact on our environment.

By working collaboratively we can move to a sourcing model where we give back as much, if not more, than we take. From regenerating the soil our wheat is grown in, to nourishing people in our communities, we all have a role to play. Choosing to do things the right way, rather than following convenience or profit, isn't always easy.

But when it matters this much, there is no other choice.

## 1200

We've saved 1,200 tonnes of wonky fruit thanks to our partnership with Daily Dose.

## 30%

Sourcing milk from Brades Farm helped reduce natural feed emissions by 30%.

## 450K

We used over 450K eggs from Cacklebean Eggs last year. Their hens are left to roam free, making them happier and their eggs more flavorful.

## 80%

80% of ingredients we use in our recipes are made or grown in the UK.

## 5733KG

In 2023 we saved 5,733kg of Quicke's cheddar off-cuts in our Waste Not recipes.

## COCOA

We use Islands Chocolate for our hot chocolate and hot cocoa. They control every step of the value chain and their chocolate has no additives and produced without deforestation.

## 900

We changed our oat milk so it's now made with made with British oats which are grown, milled, produced, and packed all within a 100-mile radius, helping save 900 food miles.

## £497K

Partnered with Union, who work to support coffee-growing communities and protect natural habitats, with £497K premiums paid over and above the global market price for our coffee.

## 10

We've started a partnership with 10 nature-focused farmers working to improve soil health, biodiversity and carbon sequestration on their land.

## 1HA

Almost a hectare of new wildflower meadow has been sown in Hall End Farm in Herefordshire in partnership with Wildpress, boosting local biodiversity and saving heritage UK apple varieties.

## POTATOES

Our crisps in partnership with Two Farmers are grown as part of crop rotation that improve soil health and are packed in industry-leading plastic free biodegradable bags.



1

# OUR PHILOSOPHY ON SOURCING



Bakers are nothing without our suppliers. Behind every loaf, sandwich, cake or pastry is a village of farmers, millers, growers and producers. We have always recognised that the quality of our baking is an expression of our ingredients and, as such, have always sought out the best people to provide us with the highest-quality produce available.

In the past, this approach has been rather casual: the shake of a hand and a general feeling of ‘the right fit’ was our strategy, if you could call it that. We are still guided by an instinctive feeling of compatibility with our suppliers, but, as we have grown, we have come to realise that our scale represents an opportunity to do more, to formalise our relationships a little to ensure we give our supplier community the best support so they can flourish and thrive.

That’s because we believe that building a healthier and more sustainable food system requires collaboration. It isn’t about one organisation getting there first and everyone else playing catch up because the food system is exactly that: a system, a complex, interconnected network. To improve it, we need people making advancements across the supply chain, at all different levels of size, and we need to get those people working together, partnering and supporting each other to create change at scale.

As improvements at all operational scales are needed, and because we see an opportunity to connect the growth of our business to those who we believe are making a positive impact, our community of small suppliers is a particular focus in our sustainability strategy. We see our role as identifying small and emerging food businesses that share our values around how food should be grown, sourced and made, and working with them to expand the impact they already have.

This is how we believe growth can be a force for good. We have an opportunity to do things differently, to forge relationships with our small suppliers built on trust, respect and understanding. To listen to the challenges they face and help them overcome them. To put humanity back into the supply chain and to encourage the good things we see happening around us. To turn small change into big change.

We commit to supporting these producers and sharing their exceptional food in our neighbourhoods.





2

THE WAY WE  
BAKE IS  
EVER-EVOLVING...

THE HEALTHIER



THE EARTH



THE BETTER



THE BREAD



### THE WAY WE BAKE IS EVER-EVOLVING...

As bakers, we are deeply connected to the environment around us. We constantly adapt our recipes to respond to factors like the availability of ingredients, culinary technology, changing tastes, and the urgent need to reduce our impact on the natural world.

Today, improving a recipe is less about tweaking ratios and more about engaging directly with where ingredients come from, how they are grown, and their impact on people and nature.

### GOOD BREAD STARTS IN THE SOIL

Today, much of the world's farmland has become exhausted from decades of intensive agriculture. The soil is depleted and the food it produces is much less nutritious and flavourful.

To make delicious, nutritionally rich bread, we need to work with suppliers who respect and revere the soil our wheat and grains are grown in. The healthier the earth, the better the bread.

So you'll now find a proportion of the wheat we use in our recipes comes from farmers practising regenerative agriculture. They use farming methods that promote biodiversity and soil health, making the land stronger and more fertile for generations to come. We're working in partnership with these farmers, and as they grow and their yield increases, so will the proportion of regenerative wheat in our bread.

### FARMER, MILLER, BAKER.

Our new initiative, The Wheat Project, began as a conversation with our millers about how we could support farmers to do better. Through them, we are now connected to ten nature-led farmers doing good things with their soil and improving biodiversity on their land.

For these farmers, change comes with challenges. Following nature, rather than trying to subdue it makes growing more unpredictable and uncertain. It's much harder to say how much they'll produce and what the exact specifications of the flour will be.

We can manage that. Our business works with nature in seasonal cycles, so we have a flexible buying system and a production process that can handle complexity.

It's not always easy, but it's the right thing to do. Adapting to the way nature provides is desperately needed to improve the food system.

### TOGETHER WE CAN FIX THE FOOD CHAIN

You can't do any of this without forming relationships built on trust. Contracts create efficiency, but relationships give you quality and traceability. When we get to know the people who grow our food and build trust with them, we put humanity into the supply chain. And when we understand the efforts of the farmers looking after their soil, we develop a deeper appreciation of value and quality, which we can then share with our customers.

From farmer to miller, miller to baker, the only way to make bread that's better for our planet, and our customers, is to consider the entire supply chain. We are only as resilient as our weakest link, so finding the right partners who are aligned in the food system and who feel comfortable with scale, is fundamental.



# 3

## WE'RE IMPROVING FOOD SYSTEMS TOGETHER

Innovation and seasonality impact on sustainable sourcing

We partner with Natoora to supply our seasonal soups and other fresh ingredients. We sat down with Tom Molnar, the CEO and co-founder of GAIL's and Franco Fabrini, the CEO and founder of Natoora to talk about soup, sustainability and seasonal eating.

#### **YOU'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR A LONG TIME. WHAT MAKES THE PARTNERSHIP WORK SO WELL?**

**TOM:** "I met Franco 20 years ago when he'd first started Natoora. I think we share a belief that there's a lot more appetite for good food grown and made responsibly than there are entrepreneurial people and ventures providing it. We both feel there is a lot of work for us to get done, and we have a genuine opportunity to shape a food system that isn't working properly."

#### **SUSTAINABLE, SEASONAL SOURCING IS A CORNERSTONE FOR YOU BOTH. HOW DOES IT SHAPE WHAT YOU DO?**

**FRANCO:** "I always say I started Natoora out of a selfish need for better quality produce, which I couldn't find. I remember being in a high-end deli in Manhattan and a woman was asking for peaches while it was snowing outside. I just thought, 'What the hell? Why do you want to eat peaches now? You should be wanting pumpkin soup!' That's when I knew I needed to do something, and it took five years from then to launch Natoora."

**TOM:** "We have to find more ways of getting seasonal produce to people. We know as bakers that ingredients are super important and if you have great sourcing you're 90 per cent of the way there. Then you just need to do a bit of work, but there should be a sense of just taking something out of the ground and feeding it to someone. Recently we were at Sharpham Park Farm, who grow the spelt we use, and Ano, our master baker, looked at the field and said, 'I want to put that all in a loaf'. I love that idea of more directly engaging with whatever a field can grow over the course of a year but putting it into a loaf – it's more true to what nature is there to provide."

#### **HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO MAKE BETTER FOOD CHOICES?**

**FRANCO:** "For us, it always comes back to flavour. If we taste something incredible, we'll respond positively, and you'll want that amazing peach again rather than one that tastes like cardboard. For me, flavour is a key educational tool because it emotionally connects with people. Behind properly flavourful food is good farming practices, better nutrition, better environmental impact and food that's better value for me and my health."

Soup is a good answer to your question, as it is very comforting and familiar. It's a very simple, humble way to communicate the flavour, quality and integrity of produce."

**TOM:** "I think it's about sheer bloodymindedness too. If we believe the whole field can be in a loaf, that flavour does matter, and we stick with it and educate people who are hungry for information, then that will change things. There's no silver bullet – we just need to show up over and over again."

#### **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU FACE AROUND CHANGING FOOD SYSTEMS?**

**FRANCO:** "We need change to happen quickly in the food system, but unfortunately we can't always move that quickly. It all takes time, but equally, that pace grounds you to nature and does a lot of good."

**TOM:** "You can't work ahead of nature. Once it gets moving, it has a speed limit."

**FRANCO:** "The more we can educate consumers that every food choice has an impact – good or bad – the more change we'll see. The biggest challenge we face as an organisation is getting consumers to know what to do with an artichoke so that they then buy an artichoke. Or if they don't know what to do with it, how can we make soup out of it so they can at least appreciate it and have that level of impact?"





#### HOW DO YOU MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT AT SCALE?

**FRANCO:** “The right partners who are aligned in the food system, who feel comfortable with scale, are fundamental. There is this feeling that small is good, big is bad, but you’re not going to change the world like that. The little bakeries doing something super artisan are fantastic, but they aren’t going to change things at scale, even if it’s great that they are there. GAIL’s has a huge and loyal customer base, so there is a lot of opportunity for positive impact. That’s why it’s exciting partnering with GAIL’s because the scale you’re at, the volume you can move, and the growth ahead of you, are huge.”

**TOM:** “I like to think of it as a network of people trying to do better things, all connected to each other – that’s more powerful. We’re part of a system that can represent part of the solution, but we need to work together.”

**FRANCO:** “In our industry, when you find a like-minded business that sees the world in the same way as you do, it’s almost a matter of responsibility to band together because the challenge is way too big to face alone: how do you get consumers to stop buying industrially produced food? It’s massive, and there aren’t many people out there trying to find solutions. A lot of the businesses in our world aren’t thinking about how to reinvest in the system and deliver positive impact – they are just selling food like a commodity.”

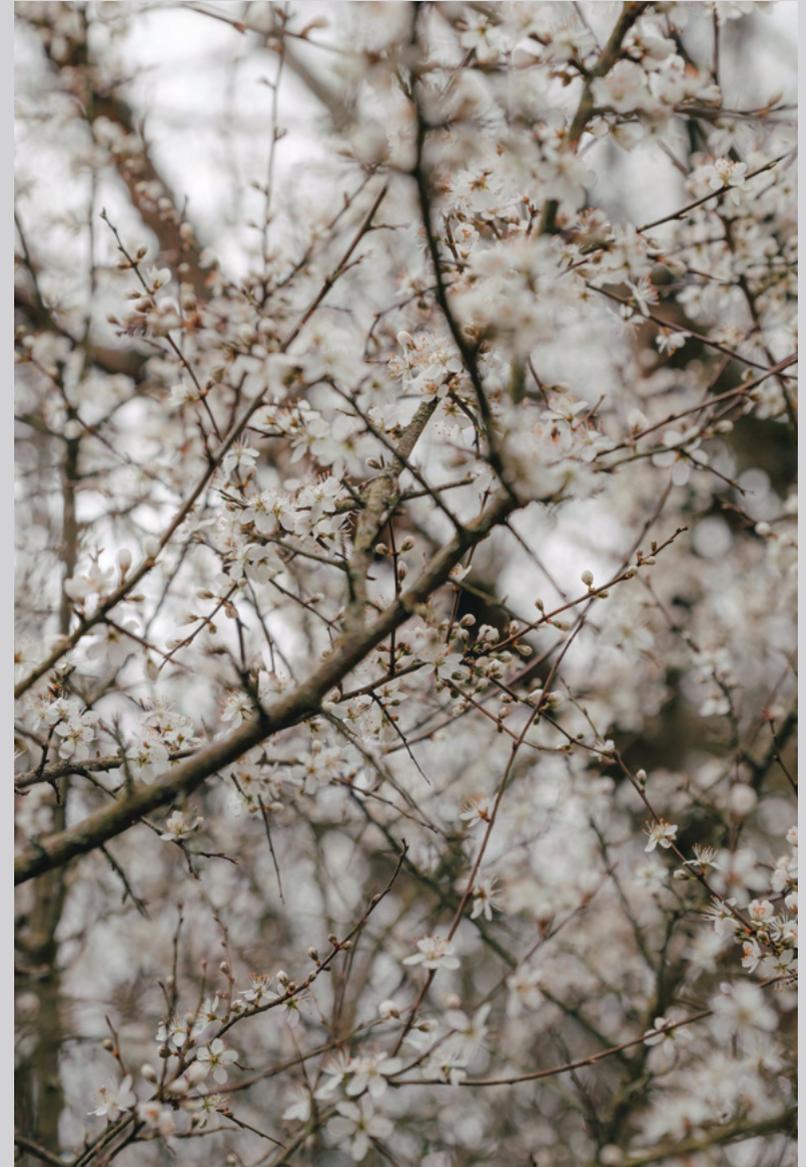
#### CHANGING THE FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN IS AN UPHILL STRUGGLE. WHAT GIVES YOU HOPE?

**TOM:** “I always use the coffee industry as a good example of an industry that took something that was hugely commoditised, de-commoditised it, and made sure the whole supply chain thought really hard about their role. Now, no one is buying a 50p styrofoam cup of coffee anymore – it tastes bad, you know it’s wrong. And I think wheat, fruit and veg, the potential is there. As a society, we went for quantity for so long, which was an amazing goal, but now we need to think about quality.”



“For most of the time we’ve been on this planet, we have lived harmoniously with the natural world. It will take a lot of work to get back to that, but it’s not beyond us.”

Anomarel Ogen,  
GAIL's Executive Head Baker



# MAKING

As bakers, we know there is no such thing as a finished recipe. There are always tweaks to be made, challenges to adapt to and new ideas to embrace. Our approach to sustainability is no different. We'll never settle for good enough when we know we can do better. We start where we always do: in our bakeries. We are constantly looking for ways to improve their impact by reducing, reusing and recycling.

It's a mindset that helped us see the potential in the pastry offcuts and surplus leftovers that now make up our award-winning WasteNot Range. And inspired us to partner with businesses who can help us package, deliver and recycle our food in a greener, more innovative way.

But it's not just about the food. It's about where we bake and the spaces we've created for our communities. From the low-energy technology we use in our kitchens to the upcycled wooden furniture you enjoy your morning coffee on. Every tile, wall, plate and planter has been considered.

It's just the baker's way.

# CO2

We've avoided 1,810.88 tonnes of CO2 and diverted 4,298.6 tonnes from landfill through our partnership with First Mile. None of GAIL's waste ends up in a landfill.

# 14K MILES

Introduced 655 NORT bio-plastic 3D printed track spotlights produced in the UK. The move saved the equivalent of removing eight pallets of light fittings from a boat travelling 14,000 miles from Asia to Europe.

# 2070L

We used 2,070 litres of Graphenstone paint, the most sustainable paint in the world.

# 1700M<sup>2</sup>

We used 1,700m<sup>2</sup> of Tarkett safety floor in our bakeries and new office. They are pioneers in sustainability and circular economy, with low environmental impact and can be recycled at the end of their life.

# 3450KG

RAW supplied 216 items of furniture to our bakeries, with one quarter of them made from refurbished or second life items. We completed six collections in our sites, with 3,450kg diverted from landfill and 92% of items collected being re-used or recycled.

# 87%

87% of our packaging is currently compostable or made from recyclable material.

# GREEN

Our bakeries have been powered by green energy since 2014.

# REDUCE

We've expanded the fleet of electric vehicles that deliver to our bakeries everyday and optimized routes to reduce carbon emissions.

# LED

Our bakeries are equipped with low-energy LED lighting; UNOX oven technology with smart power options; refrigeration and cold rooms to reduce energy usage, and automatic turn-off equipment when not in use.

# 99.6%

15.6 tonnes of used coffee collected by First Mile, with a 99.6% recycling rate in 22 trial sites. By rolling this out to all shops, we'll recycle 856,440kg of coffee in 2024.

# 10

Offering 10 products in our Waste Not range, where we use good ingredients that might otherwise go to waste in our baking. We reuse offcuts such as cheese and wonky fruit and include them in recipes to become wonderful new creations.



# 4

## CRAFT WITH A CONSCIENCE



Our approach to sustainability extends well beyond our kitchens to include every aspect of our bakeries. From the ground our wheat is grown in, to the chair you enjoy your morning coffee on.

This ethos led us to RAW, a British-based workshop that's making sustainable, modern furniture a force for good. RAW creates high-quality indoor and outdoor wood furniture, as well as offering a wood recycling service. Every piece they make represents contemporary design and a bold commitment to the environment. Mirroring GAIL's 'Waste Not' principle, they transform recycled and repurposed materials, converting them into timeless modern furniture.

RAW's team takes great care in sourcing ecologically sound materials for the bespoke modern furniture in our bakeries. Each piece is made with recycled materials and they consider the energy consumed during production and transportation. These upcycled pieces, along with recycled older furniture, breathe new life into our spaces with minimal impact on the environment.



Our partnership also helps to support the life-changing community work RAW facilitates by offering training and employment to individuals facing adversity.

They have built a vibrant tribe of talented staff who are reclaiming their lives after overcoming personal adversity. 70% of their dedicated workforce have triumphed over challenges like addiction, mental health issues, disability and homelessness. Each bench, table or planter that greets you in our bakeries represents a story of resilience and redemption.

Rick Mower is the visionary behind RAW. Rejecting the notion of conventional success, he wanted to build a business where people could thrive: proud of their accomplishments, celebrated for their talent and defined by their present, not the past.

“The success stories that appealed to me became those of the people who’d overcome pretty much every disadvantage, misery and prejudice. I thought that those kinds of people would make an awesome workforce if only they had a place that not only cared for them but also became a place to be part of and, critically, proud of.”

Rick Mower,  
RAW Managing Director



# SHARING

All our efforts to source our ingredients better, to bake better, is done with the people we feed in mind. Because better bread means happier, healthier people. And happier, healthier people make for happier, healthier communities.

Every loaf of bread we make should have a beneficial impact on the world. Because our positive actions create ripples. Which turn into waves that make a real, transformative difference to our bread, our bakeries and our communities. We want our food to nourish people's bodies with the best ingredients and feed their souls with flavours that bring joy and pleasure. And we want that goodness to go further. Whether that's donating the food we have at the end of the day to local charities in need. Or forging partnerships and supporting schemes that give back to the people and places who make us who we are.

As bakers, working this way is instinctive. We have always been the link between the earth, the people and our communities. We're here to nourish, support and serve them all.

## 239

Reached 239 good causes in our communities through our partnership with Neighbourly, an equivalent of 80.8K meals in just six months.

## 62K

We sold 62,561 magic bags on To Good To Go, with £100k being re-invested towards supporting good causes.

## 422

422 hours of social impact have been generated through our partnership with RAW.

## BREAD

We updated the recipes of four of our most-loved loaves to be more flavorful, nutritious and sustainable. They are now baked with a variety of whole grains including emmer, spelt, rye and barley.

## 2 STARS

Our Hot Cross Bun recipe was improved with whole grains and ancient spices to be more nutritious and flavourful. They won a 2 star Great Taste Award as a result.

## DONATE

We donate our food surplus from every bakery to local charities every night, ensuring it reaches those who need it most.

## 12

We celebrated the graduation of the first cohort of 12 baristas in partnership with Well Grounded. The programme is designed to support individuals who have faced barriers to employment into a career in coffee.



# 5

## GOOD FOOD GOING FURTHER

Serving our second customer – charity connections and food surplus distribution



It's in a baker's nature to make sure there's always enough food to go around. This means that sometimes, we have a little extra left on the baker's table at the end of the day. Rather than seeing it as a waste, we view it as an opportunity to make good food go further.

We have always tried to donate as much of our leftover food as possible to the community. But it hasn't always been easy to manage and maintain collections. We wanted to do more, and better, but we needed help. So in 2023, we reached out to Neighbourly, a community food-sharing platform, who could help us get our food further.

Thanks to this new partnership, we have been able to expand our impact, connecting our surplus food to a network of over 29,000 local charities who work tirelessly to feed their communities.

We sat down with Richard Exton, Head of Neighbourhood Marketing at GAIL's, and Sophie Estelle, Manager of Grace House at the Single Homeless Project, to hear their thoughts on the impact of the Neighbourly partnership.

**RICHARD:** "We're a modern neighbourhood craft bakery, and being integrated into our communities is part of our DNA."

"We've always donated our surplus food, but it was never recorded or made official. Teaming up with Neighbourly now lets us record and measure the kind of impact we have through our donations, and we can start building relationships with specific charities.

It requires a bit more focus and planning, but I think the uptake we've had shows the passion we've got in our bakeries. One of the key things about Neighbourly is that it allows our bakeries to be connected to multiple charities, so if one can't collect surplus food another can.

If we can get to a place where we can confidently say 95% of our eligible food surplus is going to good causes, then we can move on to the next thing, which is about what we do with products that are currently not eligible, like cooked food. And then a step up from that is how do you start to support charities outside of food donations – how can we donate some of our time, for example? It's about creating a connection with our communities so that, from that one starting point of bread, we can have a much more significant positive impact.

We have the potential to make an impact on thousands of individuals. One of our bakeries has four charities connected to it, and when you look at their reach, you're talking about potentially benefiting 10,000 people. The beauty of it is that we can start to comprehend the impact we're having."

**SOPHIE:** "We support women with no recourse to public funds, which means they have no access to benefits and they're not allowed to work. Within that cohort, there is a lot of malnutrition, and the women who come to us are unlikely to cook for themselves, so having food like this to give to them really makes a difference to their lives.

There's been quite a lot of research recently around nutrition and homelessness; most people who are homeless are completely malnourished because they just aren't feeding themselves properly."

"It's about people from lots of different backgrounds and experiences coming together, having a good time and eating – that's the power of food."

"One of the things we do with the food we collect is cook together because we want to build a client's sense of independence and their life skills. Through the act of cooking you see women start to open up, to chat, to start laughing. Then, everyone sits down and eats together. The positivity from that is enormous."

"We're a modern neighbourhood craft bakery, and being integrated into our communities is part of our DNA."



# 6

## BETTER FOOD FOR ALL

Fermentation, grains & diversity for better nutrition



**MORE GRAINS**



We partner with Nattoora to supply our seasonal soups to provide.

**MORE FLAVOUR**

Flavour and nutrition are expressions of each other. But they are also expressions of the ingredients that made them in the first place, which is why nourishing, delicious food is more likely to come from sustainable and diverse farming practices.

This intersection of taste, nutrition and sustainability constantly inspires us. Because, as bakers, our main goal has always been to serve our communities with food that nourishes both the people and the place.

That's why we are pleased to introduce a new initiative called The Way We Bake. The aim is to make tastier, more sustainable loaves with a greater variety of grains, grown in ways that support the shift away from exploitive farming and which can feed our communities properly for generations to come.

#### **MORE GRAINS. MORE FLAVOUR**

We are upping the number of grains used in our bread to include Emmer, Spelt, Rye and Barley. This means our breads have richer, more complex flavours with a greater diversity of essential



minerals and vitamins. We also like to use as many whole grains as we can. Retaining and using everything the plant has put into its grain has many benefits, from avoiding waste to baking a more nutritionally complete loaf. But with 90% of us not getting enough fibre, one of the main advantages of wholegrain food is its high roughage content, which improves gut health and aids digestion.

#### **THE WILD POWER OF FERMENTATION**

Our fermented starters – the foundations of every loaf we bake – thrive when fed varied and robust grains. A healthy fermented starter is the key to maximising the full potential of flour, unlocking its flavour and available nutrients. Unlike the industrial fermentation practised by huge, commercial bakeries, we take a craft approach which allows a natural complexity to emerge. We like to think of it as a wild meadow, rather than a flower trade show.

Craft fermentation isn't just about a baking technique: it's about putting life back into the whole journey, from the soil to the customer. If you nurture relationships and look after people, and you do that at scale, more people will have access to nutritional food and our communities and the life around them will grow and prosper.



# OUR OUTLOOK

Thirty years since we started, our mission to make well-made bread more readily available has led us to a place we never imagined. As we've grown, so has our mission. We are always staying curious, challenging ourselves, pushing forward on our journey to make adjustments to the food system. With our size comes a sense of responsibility so that our growth is connected to an ecosystem making a positive impact.

We want to do better as we do more, to learn, to set an example of what good means and looks like by:

- Continuing to champion good farming practices, starting with our Wheat Project in partnership with 10 soil-focused UK farms.
- Continuously looking at updating our bread recipes to be more nutritious, flavourful and sustainable.
- Celebrating and supporting innovative makers and growers that make a stronger food system.
- Building more sustainable bakeries by being mindful of material choices and reducing operational energy requirements.
- Engaging with our communities to make good food go further through charity partnerships.

As we better understand our relationship to food and the food system we will continue to evolve what we do. Much of that is about nurturing our community and having conversations. As we get bigger, it's not just us growing, but a whole network of people like us who are farming in the right way or making food that's alive and healthy.

Thanks for reading our impact report.  
If you have any comments or questions  
on sustainability at GAIL's please get  
in touch on [gailsbread.co.uk/contact-us](https://gailsbread.co.uk/contact-us).



GAIL'S