

## The knead for real bread

[Amy Norton](#) talks to Al Kippax, the owner of the newly opened Bluebird Bakery, about his quest to spread Real Bread through York

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Bread is a part of our daily life. It's been eaten across the globe in many shapes and forms since the dawn of agriculture itself. In its glorious versatility, bread can be doorstops of hot buttered toast; thick and hearty sarnies; dainty soldiers dipped into eggs. So the question is, why have we become content to eat such poor imitations of it?

Al Kippax, of the newly opened Bluebird Bakery on Little Shambles, is one of a wave of dedicated bakers asking this question. He backs the 'Real Bread' campaign, which aims to make bread "better for us, better for our communities, and better for the planet", using no processing aids or artificial additives in the baking process. The campaign looks to open our eyes to the damage done to bread by mass production, and make consumers aware of the difference between 'Real Bread' and its manufactured counterparts. When we think about what goes into a loaf of bread, we think simplicity: flour, water, yeast, salt. Yet Al advises us to take a look at the back of a standard shop-bought loaf: Hovis, Kingmill, or any supermarket's own. Immediately evident is the multitude of chemicals, e-numbers, acids and agents, which are only the ones legally required to be listed on the label. These industrial ingredients are required in the fast churning-out of processed loaves, which since the 60s has reached new bounds of efficiency; the 'Chorleywood' method of using low-protein wheat flour and working the dough mechanically produces bread in a mere three-and-a-half hours. Its low price also means that this bread is neither appreciated nor valued, "contributing to the massive food waste problem in this country," Al says.

Having begun his career as a trained chef, Al set up his own bakery delivery service - baking through the night and arriving early to sell at markets - before expanding into his own shop. He balances his time

between his bakeries on Little Shambles and in Malton, while caring for his young family.



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He's proud of the bread he sells, which is in his words "the antithesis to supermarket bread", as he uses organic and locally sourced ingredients as much as possible. This traceability, Al says, not only supports local farmers and gives peace of mind, but increases the protein and nutritional value of the product. Although it takes considerably longer, this method of baking is a labour of love and reward, producing loaves of a far better quality. Al in particular pushes sourdough as his ideal variety: after the dough is fermented overnight, the gluten and nutrients such as zinc are much more easily taken in by the body. Al suggests that the increase in people following "faddy diets", blaming gluten for bloating and irritation, would benefit from simply switching chemically concocted slices with a traditionally baked loaf. So the next time you reach for a loaf of sliced white on the shelf, consider whether what you're eating is really the best you could be buying. As bread is so essential to our lives, it makes perfect sense to eat it as nature intended it to be.



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