

there's much more to sift through in their *Baker's Catalogue*, which they've been mailing since 1990, and on their dynamic website, including baking ingredients, mixes, and even baking utensils and pans. "We have over nine hundred items, about half of which are branded King Arthur Flour," Tine says. "For example, we sell our own Vietnamese Cinnamon, which you can get directly from us and only a few other retailers like Amazon."

#### FOOD FIT FOR A KING

In the eighteenth century, the company imported wheat from England because of its higher quality. Today, the best available wheat is grown in the US, and that's the only wheat King Arthur Flour uses so it can provide top-notch flour to its customers. "We are strictly an unbleached product company," Tine states. "Theoretically, our insistence on high quality could give us profitability challenges because it is sometimes hard to reach the standard that we expect at a cost we want, but making sure that we're only launching products that we're proud of eventually makes it right in the long run."

According to Tine, many commercial flour products have two chemicals, bromate and chlorine, added to them. Bromate speeds up the aging and oxidation process for flours. Chlorine also chemically ages the product, but its primary purpose is to make a whiter-colored flour by bleaching out any

discoloration—which is why you may be used to seeing unbleached flour have a natural creamy color and bleached flour a brilliant white color. "Plus, to some degree, there's a taste difference because you can sometimes perceive the chlorine," Tine adds. "So we also believe we provide a better-tasting flour."

#### TREATING CUSTOMERS LIKE ROYALTY

In addition to providing premium products, King Arthur Flour goes to great lengths to cultivate direct relationships with its customers—always starting with the customers and asking what they want, Tine says. Its website, which went online in 1996, in particular has become a hot spot for King Arthur devotees. You'll find over 3,500 recipes and over 1,500 blog posts there, as well as baking guides and even access to a baker's hotline that's available seven days a week for baking emergencies.

The end result? A mecca of baking creativity as well as a hub for learning. "It's relatively easy to engage people on how to make great sourdough or chocolate chip cookies because people can quickly go home and do that," Tine says. "But by engaging them with that content, we can also engage them on more product-focused or industry-focused themes." So, for example, people who seek an apple pie recipe can also learn why unbleached flour is not only better tasting but also better for you.

In addition, people can learn how King Arthur Flour works closely with its US wheat farmers to provide better products—which Tine says is one of the company's biggest initiatives: "We've created vital, direct relationships with farmers. For example, our white whole wheat flour is what we call identity preserved, so we know the exact farmer and the plot that the wheat was grown on and can trace it back to the farmer. That creates a bond with our farmers and trust with our customers."

#### NOBLE GESTURES

For decades, the company has also sought to open paths to education, thanks to cofounder Brinna Sands's passion to teach others about baking. In 2000, Brinna's ultimate dream came true when King Arthur Flour built a baking-focused campus (dubbed Camelot) in Norwich, which hosts a baking school, a bakery and café, and a store. In addition, the company recently opened a West Coast baking school as part of Washington State University's Bread Lab to further organic grain breeding and agriculture innovation. Their baking education also includes a dozen online classes on crafts.com, in which over 100,000 students have already enrolled.

As far as younger students go, King Arthur Flour has imbued a love of baking into over 300,000 middle-school kids through its Baked for Good: Kids program. Since 1992, Baked for Good: Kids (originally called the Life Skills



// TODAY, THE BEST AVAILABLE WHEAT IS GROWN IN THE US, AND THAT'S THE ONLY WHEAT KING ARTHUR FLOUR USES SO IT CAN PROVIDE TOP-NOTCH FLOUR TO ITS CUSTOMERS.