



COOKING WITH KERNZA®



Photo by Emily Woodward



Photo by Melissa Johnson

Thank you all for participating in the first round of Cooking with Kernza®* - a citizen science experiment!

The Land Institute launched this project in collaboration with Beth Dooley, The University of Minnesota Forever Green Initiative, and Perennial Pantry to help all of us understand why and how people use Kernza perennial grain.

Continue reading to see participants' feedback and learn about future opportunities to engage with the Kernza community.



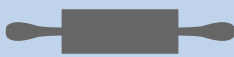
Photo by Melissa Johnson



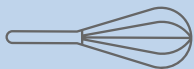
Photo by Caroline Saunders

Motivation

Folks who cooked and baked with Kernza® were motivated to participate in this project in a variety of ways. They were united by a common desire to contribute to climate-resilient agriculture systems research.



"Kernza promises a lot of good benefits for the earth, so I was curious to try it out."



"I would love to be part of the move towards climate positive staples."



"I follow The Land Institute's research and was thrilled to see a perennial grain on the market!"



"I work with a couple farmers who grow Kernza and with farmers who are interested in growing it in the future but want to learn more."

The Experience

Bakers enjoyed the color, texture, and smell of their Kernza flour. Many commented on the nutty and distinct flavor, while others noted the unique smell emanating from their ovens.

While a majority of those who completed the survey described Kernza as easy to use, a few grappled with hydration and the “rough cut” of the flour.

Some expected Kernza flour to function like rye flour; one noted that it was akin to wheat bran.

Makers described Kernza as....



“The smell! It is sweet and nutty...like graham flour. My daughter said the same thing without prompting from me.”

“The consistency seems to sit in between bran and white flour. I’ve been trying to use Kernza in the place of white flour, but maybe I should look to some bran flour recipes for inspiration.”

“It tastes better than I thought it would!! It was my first attempt and this recipe was a hit, my entire family went back for more!”

“The bread did not rise as high as usual. I think because of the rough cut of the grain. Next time I might run it through the coffee mill to get it more floury. It tastes great though!”



In your own words, what is the most important thing you gained through participating in this project?



"I love that there are commercial options now available for Kernza - it's really going to unlock its potential and I want to support that effort."

"I enjoyed talking to my family about perennial grains and rolling the dough out with my kids."



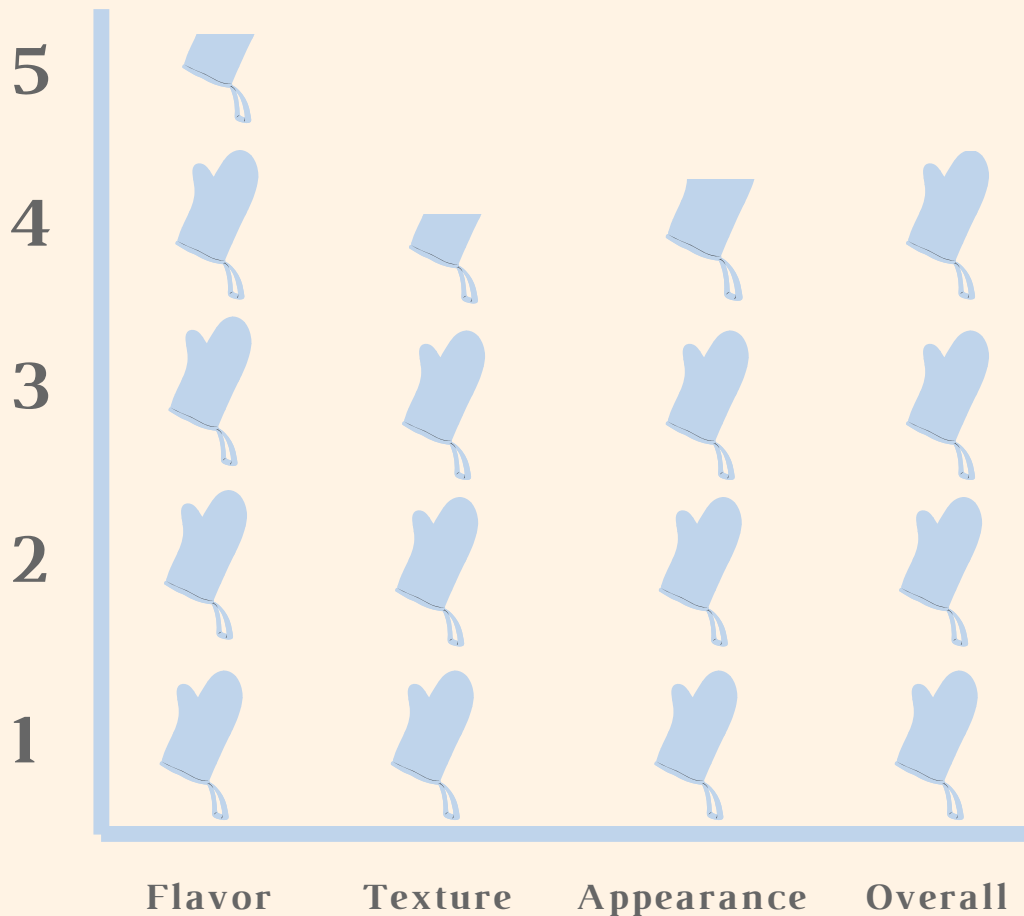
Photo by Lane Johnson

"I have seen research trial plots of Kernza (at UC Davis). For me it was really cool to see the finished product in flour form. I gained a fuller appreciation of agronomic research and what goes in to food products from the planting stage to a delicious cake coming out of the oven."

"I just think the entire project is so cool. I like knowing that in a small way I am helping to make a perennial [grain] commercially viable."

Kernza Performance

How did your Kernza flour perform in your recipe?*



22

Participants hailed from 22 different states

43

Almost half (43%) of the participants cooked with a friend or family member

87

87% used their own recipes

88

88% said they will bake with Kernza again

*Numerous respondents found this scale question challenging to evaluate because they either did not enter the experience with specific expectations or they primarily bake with whole grains and would never compare Kernza flour to white flour. We used the comparison to white flour because we expected it to be the most familiar to everyone. However, respondents' feedback was very insightful and will inform future communication about Kernza as well as survey development!



"It was a delicious loaf of bread. I found the aroma to be almost herbal while the flavor was a bit nutty and tiny bit sweet, and it performed quite well from the structure standpoint also."



"Compared to making these with whole wheat, the flavor was much more nutty and interesting."



"The biscuits did not spring up in the oven nearly as much as they do with standard flour....On the bright side, these biscuits can sometimes be a bit dry, and these were my moistest batch. I really love how the Kernza flavor stands alone. A little bit of butter (which isn't really even necessary) and you have a complex, comforting flavor. I love getting that kind of flavor from flour alone."

"The fascinating thing about Kernza flour is that it tastes a bit cinnamony! For that reason, I used it with raisins to create a raisin sourdough loaf, and man, was that good. Still the best bread I've ever made. I will say--it's pretty dense, and since it's a pretty chunky or rustic grind, it didn't perform very well when used alongside other whole wheat or lower-protein flours, but that's to be expected."



Ongoing & Upcoming

Opportunities

1

Continue submitting new recipes and feedback to the online survey until December 30th.
Invite your friends!

2

Join the Cooking with Kernza® Facebook page in order to swap recipes, trade tips, and meet other people within the Kernza® community.

3

Help co-create a Kernza community e-cookbook!
Details can be found on the Facebook page.
Please reach out to skelly@landinstitute.org with questions, comments, or ideas.