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Gathering eggs from the henhouse in crisp morning air. Snapping beans on the front porch with Grandma. Sitting around a long farmhouse table passing bowls of mashed potatoes and platters of roasted chicken. When these images dance across my mind, they feel comforting. Reassuring. Idyllic.

In the tumultuous and unstable world we live in, it’s no wonder the idea of returning to our roots of simplicity and slowness appeals to us more than ever before.

Regardless of whether your love of farm life was planted in your mind from summers spent on your grandparent’s property, or it came from watching re-runs of Little House on the Prairie, there’s a movement of people who are drawn to the idea of bringing the wholesomeness of the farm into our everyday modern lives.

For some folks, this means packing up their bags and moving to the country, but that’s not always possible for everyone. The good news? That’s not the only way to bring a taste of the farm into your life.
Have you ever noticed that some of the most romanticized images we carry of old-fashioned living centers around food? Since food production is the heartbeat of a small farm, it only makes sense. The process of growing and harvesting connects us with nature, stretches our minds and muscles, and feeds our souls just as much as our stomachs. When you have a connection to your food, something magical happens. Not only does it taste better, but it also has this funny way of making you feel a little more whole. Dirt under your fingernails, sore muscles from a day of planting seeds, and the satisfaction of admiring a shelf of jars I canned myself brings me so much fulfillment, it’s worth every bit of extra time and effort.

Even if you live in the heart of a big city with no acreage in sight, you can still capture the essence of farm life in your kitchen. I love the trend of farmhouse-style kitchens these days, but in reality, cooking like a farmer isn’t about how you
decorate, it’s about how you cook and the food you craft in that space. And anyone can create that, regardless of where they live.

When I started on my own journey to embrace self-sufficiency, homesteading, and the old-fashioned lifestyle, my kitchen was the first place I transformed. Here are my top 5 ways to bring farmhouse vibes into your life and cook like a farmer no matter where you live.

1. Swap Those Ingredients

I’m not a fancy cook, which is why farm style cooking fits me so well. Farm food is whole food and usually features ingredients that can easily be grown at home. A simple as this style of cooking is, the beauty of it is that with the right cooking method and sprinkle of seasonings, you can turn basic rustic ingredients into 5-star masterpieces.

Therefore, the very first step in transforming your kitchen into a farm kitchen is to start swapping out processed ingredients for whole food options. It’s time to ditch the junk, my friends!

Here are a few examples of the ingredient swaps that made the biggest impact for me at the beginning of my journey:
+ Skip the margarine and opt for real butter (this will make a huge impact in flavor, too!)

+ Ditch the vegetable shortening and use coconut oil or even lard (here’s how to render lard at home)

+ Skip canned fruits and vegetables and opt for fresh produce from the farmer’s market instead.

+ Find a local farm where you can purchase locally grown chicken, beef, or pork instead of buying factory-farmed meats

+ Use organic, unbleached flour or venture into the world of heirloom grains instead of baking with regular white flour

+ Source raw or non-homogenized vat-pasteurized milk instead of conventional store milk

+ Make your own broth (here’s how) instead of buying cartons of broth or bouillon cubes (bonus: it tastes 100x better)

+ Buy fruit in bulk and make your own applesauce, jams, jellies, syrups, and canned fruit instead of buying these items at the store.

▶ And that’s only the beginning! Visit theprairiehomestead.com for plenty of farmhouse cooking recipes and tutorials.
2. Embrace Old-Fashioned Tools

Teflon, silicone, and random plastic-y kitchen gadgets...

They do nothing for me... Nothin’.

Give me a good cast iron skillet, a baking stone, and a wooden spoon and I’ll be one happy gal.

Once upon a time, I was all about the cheapest kitchen tools I could find, but after having to throw away numerous scratched non-stick pans and broken plastic spoons, I decided I’m happy to pay more for quality tools that will last a lifetime. My favorite kitchen tools include my wooden spoons, a stack of wooden cutting boards I’ve grabbed on sale here and there, chipped enamel bowls from the antique stores, and my battle-worn cast iron skillets hanging proudly on the wall, just to name a few.

Tools like cast iron, stoneware, copper, and wood get better with age. Heritage-style tools generally require minimal care, and with just a bit of consideration, they can be enjoyed by generations and avoid the landfill like their cheap counterparts. Not to mention, they will give your kitchen and table a lovely farmhouse feel as you cook and serve your meals in them.

Use this quick DIY recipe to keep your treasured wooden utensils and cutting boards moisturized and happy...
Spoon Butter Recipe

**INGREDIENTS:**

+ 2 tablespoons beeswax pellets
+ 6 tablespoons unrefined coconut oil

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Place the beeswax and coconut in a small glass jar and place the jar in a small saucepan filled 1/3 of the way with water.

2. Set on a burner over medium-low heat and stir occasionally until the beeswax is completely melted.

3. Repeat the process whenever your wooden spoons, utensils, or boards are looking dull and dry.
Your homemade spoon butter should keep for at least 4 months, if you don’t use it all before then!

Although I’ve used wooden cutting boards for years, I always assumed they probably harbored more bacteria than plastic boards. However, I recently stumbled across a research study at UC Davis confirming the exact opposite. The study showed that **plastic boards tend to hold onto bacteria more stubbornly than their wooden counterparts**, especially once they become scarred with knife cuts. Safe to say, I feel incredibly validated in my wooden cutting board choice. Take that, plastic.

### 3. Build a From-Scratch Pantry

Let’s face it; none of us have time to be in the kitchen all day. Even though I love to cook, as a homeschooling mom with 2 home businesses and a homestead to run, there are plenty of days when cooking supper is just not the top priority on my list. However (most of the time), we still manage to eat wholesome, farmhouse-style meals.

The secret? **Keep your pantry, cupboards, and freezer stocked with from-scratch staples.** Recipe cornerstones like homemade broth, DIY cream soup bases, BBQ sauce, and homemade pasta sauce will enable you to create a base for quick meals that hardly take any longer than cooking up...
a box of Hamburger Helper.

While you’re at it, set a goal to learn how to preserve fresh food, whether it is through freezing, dehydrating, or canning. Nothing says “farmhouse kitchen” better than a row of vibrant food in jars, especially when you’ve canned it yourself!

A few homemade fridge & pantry staples to get you started:

+ 5 Minute Homemade Mayo
+ Homemade BBQ Sauce
+ DIY Chocolate Milk Syrup
+ Homemade Caramel Sauce
+ Fresh Garden Salsa
+ Old-Fashioned Brined Pickles
+ Homemade Sour Cream
+ Real Homemade Butter
+ Peach Butter
+ Homemade Yogurt
+ Quick Homemade Breadcrumbs
How to Preserve Fresh Herbs in Olive Oil

INGREDIENTS:

+ Fresh herbs (such as oregano, rosemary, thyme, or sage)
+ Olive oil
+ An ice cube tray or silicone mold with small compartments

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Pull the woody stems from the herbs, and chop the leaves into small pieces.
2. Stuff the ice cube tray at least 3/4 of the way full with the herbs.
3. Pour the olive oil to fill the rest of the way.
4. Freeze for 2-3 hours, or until set.
5. Pop the cubes out of the tray, then store in a sealed container in the freezer until you need them.
4. Grow Your Own Ingredients

I believe everyone can grow something. And they should.

Apartment dwellers can rock the windowsill herb gardens and microgreens.

Suburbanites can plant tomatoes in buckets, potatoes in trash cans, and even lettuce, greens, beans, peas, and squash in a postage stamp sized yard.

And if you have a big backyard, or an acre or two? Well, then the possibilities are endless! Veggies galore, chickens, bees, maybe even a goat? I get excited just thinking about it.

Growing your own ingredients will not only help you channel your inner farmer, but they taste better and give you this amazing superhero feeling as you watch them grow.

It’s a win-win-win, really.
Here are some homegrown resources to help you get started ASAP:

+ Seed Starting Guide
+ How to Plant Garlic
+ How We Built Our Raised Beds
+ Raising Meat Chickens
+ How to Grow Potatoes
+ How to Grow Dwarf Fruit Trees
+ The Beginner’s Guide to Chicken Coops

5. Return to the Table

This one is the easiest of the list, but just might be my favorite.

Clear the bills, projects, and random clutter off the dining table, shut off the TV, and choose to eat supper at the dining table. You don’t need
tablecloths, candles, or even matching plates — just good food and people you love.

**Studies have shown that regular family dinners reduce substance abuse and depression in teens, and improve the vocabularies of younger children.** However, science and studies aside, I simply know of no better way to capture the wholesomeness and togetherness of the farmhouse lifestyle than sitting around the table breaking bread together. No matter where you live — in an apartment in Manhattan, in a suburban split-level in Iowa, or in a white clapboard farmhouse in Montana, we can all create an intentional space of connection and communication as we pass the green beans, talk about the day, and enjoy the company of family and friends. And that is what farm style food is truly all about.

*May the meals you create in your heritage kitchen feed not only your belly, but also your soul.*

*Happy Homesteading, my friends!*
I’m Jill Winger—a former Idaho girl who came to Wyoming to ride horses, and hasn’t looked back since. I didn’t grow up on a ranch, or farm, or even on acreage, but I’ve always had a deep-rooted obsession for the rural way of life. My handy hubby, Christian, and I purchased our 67-acre homestead in 2008, which we currently share with horses, dogs, beef cattle, dairy cattle, goats, chickens, ducks, and three wild prairie children.

Not too long after starting my own homesteading journey, I discovered I wasn’t the only one dreaming about compost piles and homemade bread. I started The Prairie Homestead with the goal of offering community, solidarity, and inspiration for other folks who are on this same path of returning to our roots in this fast-paced modern world. I just might be the most imperfect homesteader you’ll ever find and I most certainly don’t claim to have this whole thing figured out. But, I promise to share this crazy journey of mine as it happens — both the good and the bad.
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