



OUR PANTRY ESSENTIALS

A COOKING LESSON

*We're passionate about helping home cooks live happier, simpler, smarter in the kitchen.
We create meal plans and educational cooking content to empower our community to lead their healthiest lives.*

OILS, VINEGARS, + MORE FLAVORS

A little bit of fat + flavor makes a meal

Get the full tour of our kitchen & pantry in these video guides:

<http://bit.ly/17xsK5i>

1

OILS

- Keep one high-heat oil (this means the smoke-point is higher so it won't burn) such as canola, grapeseed, coconut, or avocado for high-heat cooking techniques, such as searing proteins, stir-frying, or sautéing.
- Keep one standard cooking oil (can be the same as high-heat) such as olive, canola, or sesame.
- Keep one good olive oil for raw applications like vinaigrettes or dipping.

2

VINEGARS

- Every pantry should have a few: balsamic, red wine / sherry, rice, apple cider are ones we reach for frequently.
- Vinegar + oils + herbs / condiments / aromatics = Endless vinaigrette options

3

SALTS

- Use kosher or sea salt for everyday cooking.
- Use table salt for baking as it's super granular and dissolves well.
- Keep an optional nicer salt for "finishing" dishes like a Maldon sea salt.

4

SWEETENERS

- A little sweetness helps balance out savory meals and tart vinaigrettes.
- Stock your preference of sugars, nectars, syrups, honeys, or no-cal alternatives.

5

HERBS & CITRUS

- Citrus brings out other flavors. Adding herbs & citrus helps finish out any dish.
- Puree herbs with olive oil for a quick herb sauce to spoon over proteins.

GRAINS, NUTS, PASTA, BEANS

Elements for bulking up any meal

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1

GRAINS

- Keep a mix of whole grains (e.g., barley, farro) + quicker cooking grains (e.g., rice, quinoa). Cooked grains also freeze well, so make a larger batch to freeze for easy reheating next time.
- Grains + veggies + vinaigrette = Health & easy grain bowl
- Grains + stock + veggies = Simple and clean soup

2

NUTS

- Nuts like almonds, walnuts, pistachios, and pine nuts are full of good fats so make filling snacks, but also make great supplements to meals, like salads, sautéed veggies, and grain bowls.
- Nuts + herbs + garlic + olive oil = Delicious pesto
- Food process nuts (like almonds) and use them to encrust a protein, like fish for extra texture and taste.

3

PASTAS

- When you have nothing else planned, pasta is always a reliable meal. Go beyond Italian pastas and stock up on couscous and Asian varieties like rice noodles.
- Pasta + crushed tomatoes + dried herbs + ground meat = Classic bolognese sauce
- Rice noodles + stock + frozen veggies = Way better than Cup O' Noodles

4

BEANS

- Dried or canned, these are a great and inexpensive vegetarian protein to have around. Cook dried beans in a slow cooker with 3x the water, and a few bay leaves for 3 hours on high.
- Add to soups, enchiladas, burritos, tacos, rice for an easy vegetarian meal.

SPICES, CONDIMENTS, ETHNIC FLAVORS

Jazz up the flavor of any meal

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1

SPICES

- Start with no more than 10 and experiment with them until you're ready to branch out to more. Our 3 most common used spices are: 1. coriander, 2. cumin, 3. paprika. Yours may be different!
- Pick 1 or 2 of your favorite ethnic flavors and buy their spice blends, like Chinese five spice, garam masala (Indian), za'atar (Middle Eastern), or ras al hanout (Moroccan).
- Add spices even when a recipe doesn't call for it to add more flavor: roasted veggies, soups, vinaigrettes, marinades . . . really anything!

2

CONDIMENTS / SAUCES

- A few things we keep on hand: Dijon mustard, ketchup, preserves, mayo / veganaise, soy sauce, fish sauce, hot sauces, BBQ sauces, tomato paste, anchovy paste, harissa, capers
- Nothing you cook should ever taste bland again when you use the above to add flavor.

3

ETHNIC ITEMS

- Thai curry pastes, coconut milk, Japanese miso pastes, Indian curry bases, enchilada sauces can easily be turned into quick, flavorful dinners just by adding your choice of proteins and veggies.
- Thai curry paste + coconut milk + stock + veggies = Rich veggie curry
- Indian curry base + chicken + frozen veggies = Better than Indian takeout
- Enchilada sauce + black beans + tortillas + cheese = Simple homemade veggie enchiladas

YOUR FREEZER

Be smart about your reserves

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1

FROZEN PROTEINS

- Buy proteins in bulk and then separate them into standard cooking amounts for freezing. Easily defrost by taking out of freezer before you leave for work in the morning. It'll be ready to cook when you return (just don't refreeze unfrozen proteins).
- Frozen seafood defrost quickly for last minute dinners.

2

FROZEN STARCHES

- Freeze tortillas, breads, fresh noodles, pastry crusts, and cooked grains. Freezing items like tortillas and breads is especially good for smaller families who won't get through a whole package before spoiling. Freezing will extend shelf-life.
- Tortillas + cooked rice + black beans + cheese + hot sauce = Hearty burritos
- Frozen veggies + milk & stock + pastry crust = Quick pot pie
- Breads + avocado + cheese = Delicious avocado melt

3

FROZEN VEGGIES

- Frozen veggies are just as good as fresh in most cases. Having some on hand means veggies can be part of every meal.
- Some that we stock: edamame, corn, carrots, peas, spinach, broccoli
- Add them to pot pies, soups, fried rice, and pasta sauces.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Don't overlook these basics

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1

THE ONION FAMILY

- Onions (white, yellow, green, red), garlic, and shallots are excellent aromatics for any dish. They can add sharpness when eaten raw and sweetness when cooked for longer.
- Begin soups, sautés, vinaigrettes, and marinades with them.
- Store them in a cool dark place away from potatoes.

2

DAIRY

- An assortment of cheese and a few eggs can form the base of a simple meal.
- Cheeses + eggs = Breakfast for dinner omelet
- Fried egg over pasta (or really anything) = Fancy restaurant worth dish
- Cheese + tomato sauce + protein baked in an oven = Bubbly cheesy casserole
- Divide cheeses up into standard cooking / serving amounts and freeze to prevent spoiling.

3

CANNED & BOXED GOODS

- Crushed or diced tomatoes and broths and stocks are always in our pantry.
- Beans + stock + diced tomatoes + veggies + spices = Veggie chili
- Crushed tomatoes + aromatics (like garlic and shallots) = Homemade tomato sauce
- Stock + rice + tomatoes = Flavored rice

4

BACK-UPS

- Having a few back-up meals – frozen leftovers or store bought frozen or boxed – mean that even on nights that you're too lazy to 'cook,' you still have something in the bank.



AS ALWAYS, WE LEAVE YOU WITH THE MOST
IMPORTANT COOKING (& LIFE) LESSON:

"No one is born a great cook. One learns by doing." - the great Julia Child

SO GO ON, AND DO!

If you think this content is valuable, please do [share it with others](#) so we can grow our
community of awesome home cooks