

HEALTHY MEAL PREP

how to stock your kitchen



Whether you like to meal prep for the week or cook as you go, having a kitchen stocked with healthy staple ingredients makes cooking healthy recipes so much easier.

WHY KEEP YOUR KITCHEN STOCKED?

Shortens your Grocery List

Do you ever look at a recipe and feel overwhelmed by the number of ingredients you need to buy in order to make it? By keeping a few essential ingredients on hand, those new recipes often seem much more doable.

Helps with Meal Planning

When it's time to decide on a menu for the week, your pantry is a great place to start. Looking through your cabinets, fridge, and freezer can help you plan your meals based on what you have on hand.

Provides Last-Minute Meal Support

If you're not one to plan your menu in advance, a well-stocked kitchen can keep you from having to run to the grocery store after a busy day. This is usually when we opt for a quick (and often unhealthy) takeout meal. Having a few go-to recipes to rely on helps as well.

Makes Healthy Snacking Easy






When we're feeling hungry, most of us reach for what we have in our cupboards and fridge. Keeping healthy staples like fruit, cheese, yogurt, and nuts on hand encourages us to make healthier food choices.

Saves You Money

While there is an initial investment, a well-stocked kitchen can save you money in the long run. Buy staple items when they are on sale and, if you have the space, consider bulk-buying ingredients that you enjoy cooking with and use regularly.



Top Tips

-  **Clear out the junk**
Start fresh by clearing your pantry, fridge, and freezer of packaged processed foods. Items with added preservatives and fillers and high sodium and sugar are not healthy meal friendly!
-  **Have a few go-to recipes**
Household favourites are a great place to start when stocking your kitchen. This helps to ensure that you always have a meal to fall back on – and the ingredients to make it happen.
-  **Invest in glass or plastic containers**
Clear, airtight containers are great for storing dry goods like nuts, flour, grains, pasta, and beans. They make it easier to see what's in your pantry and help keep foods fresh for longer. If you're buying in bulk, food-safe oxygen absorbers and a vacuum sealer are handy.
-  **Store food properly**
Understand the best way to store the foods in your pantry. For example, oils should be kept in a cool, dark place. Flours and nuts can be kept in the pantry for several months. Keep frozen foods in freezer bags or airtight containers to avoid freezer burn.
-  **Keep food organized**
Organize your kitchen so you can easily see what you have on hand and use them before they spoil. Follow the rule of FIFO (first in, first out) meaning that newer items are placed behind older ones so they are used before they expire.

HEALTHY *Staples* TO HAVE ON HAND

What you stock your kitchen with should be based on what you and your family enjoy. Depending on the type of cuisine you cook most often, there may be items you can add or remove from the list below. It's simply a starting point for building a healthy pantry that works for you.

Grains & Legumes

- Whole-grain brown, red, black, or wild rice
- Dried lentils
- Dried beans
- Quinoa
- Rolled oats
- Whole grains: farro, barley
- Whole wheat or legume pasta
- Whole wheat breadcrumbs

Nuts, Seeds & Dried Fruit

- Almonds, cashews, walnuts
- Chia seeds
- Flax seeds
- Dried fruit: dates, figs, raisins, blueberries, apricots
- Natural peanut butter
- Other nut butters

Tip: Unopened packaged nuts will keep for up to 6 months past the best-by date when stored in a cool, dry place. Or store them in the freezer for up to 2 years!

Baking & Sweeteners

- Whole grain flours
- Baking powder
- Baking soda
- Cornstarch
- Honey
- Pure maple syrup
- Dark chocolate
- Unsweetened cocoa powder
- Vanilla extract
- Yeast

Tip: Store maple syrup in the fridge once opened.

Oils, Vinegars & Sauces

- Avocado or canola oil
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Apple cider vinegar
- Balsamic vinegar
- Dijon mustard
- Barbecue sauce (HFCS-free)
- Low-sodium soy sauce
- Salsa

Canned Goods

- Chickpeas, black beans, cannellini beans (sodium-free)
- Vegetables: corn, green beans, mushrooms
- Diced tomatoes
- Tomato paste
- Pasta sauce (low-sugar)
- Coconut milk
- Apple sauce
- Low-sodium broth
- Canned salmon or tuna

Spices & Herbs

- Dried herbs: basil, oregano, sage, rosemary, thyme
- Ground spices: black pepper, cumin, chili, turmeric, garlic, paprika, curry powder
- Whole spices: black pepper, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves
- Red pepper flakes
- Ginger
- Garlic

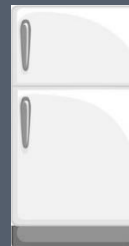
Tip: Store fresh ginger in the freezer for a longer shelf life.

Long-Lasting Fruits & Veggies

- Sweet potatoes
- Butternut & spaghetti squash
- Carrots
- Beets
- Apples
- Pomegranates
- Citrus fruits

Don't forget about your fridge & freezer!

Keep essentials on hand like butter, eggs, Greek yogurt, milk (or alternatives), parmesan, and tofu packed in water.



Freeze whole-grain bread, pizza dough, and lean proteins. Frozen fruit and vegetables mean you always have nutrient-dense produce available.

Sources: foodal.com/knowledge/how-to/stock-healthy-pantry | goodness.com.au/blog/how-to-create-a-healthy-pantry-9-top-tips
healthline.com/nutrition/healthy-staples# | Images by Unsplash