



# The Pantry Guide

## When I say pantry...

I'm not talking about an actual pantry - like starving artists have disposable closet space. Please. I'm simply referring to the foods you keep on hand in your kitchen. Whether I'm feeding friends on the fly, doctoring up something I found at the grocery store, or completely dead broke with nothing but despair and my kitchen, the pantry is an integral part to life as a starving artist.

## Tips for getting your pantry started...

1. **Start with what you know.** We all have ingredients we know we like to use all the time. Perhaps you like fresh garlic or maybe you can't get enough taco seasoning. Great! Start with your favorites and gradually pick and choose new ones over time. Which leads me to number two....
2. **Spread it out.** Ok, yes, you COULD go to the store and spend \$300 in one trip filling your cabinets, but who has the money for that? Also, it's hard to know all the things you might want or need on hand in one trip. More than likely you're going to discover items you want as you go. My pantry is ever-evolving, so I recommend the spread-it-out approach. Every time I make a trip to the grocery store I check out the non-perishables and buy a few of whatever's on sale. Items like canned tuna or boxed broths are exceptionally good sale items. Do this for a couple of weeks and you'll have a great variety of items in no time.
3. **Spices. Are. Everything.** Having an array of spices (even just 6) can be what turns your broke can of beans into a hearty, homemade meal. I'm telling you. They aren't always cheap, but the good news is that once you buy one, it's on your shelf forever. Buy them one at a time and you'll have a full rack before you know it. Six I recommend to start: Parsley, oregano, thyme, garlic powder, curry, and Italian seasoning.
4. **Pick your pantry space and stick to it.** It's too easy to go overboard (at least for me) when stocking your shelves. Decide in advance which shelf or cabinet(s) is/are going to be your storage. Once it's full, no more pantry buys. Also, be sure to think really hard before you purchase 6 cans of black beans or 12 packets of taco seasoning. I try and have no more than two of any one thing unless I know for certain I go through it on the regular.

## Also, some additional buying tips...

- **Buy your grains from bulk bins.** I know we all avoid Whole Foods like the plague, but their bulk grain section is starving artist heaven. Many common grains like rice, quinoa, and lentils can be found for less than \$2 per pound. All you need is a few sealable jars from Ikea and you are in business.
- **Costco is your best friend.** It's true. When you can afford it, buying in bulk really pays off, especially for meats and produce. Buying chicken thighs or ground beef in bulk and freezing them in smaller portions is a fantastic way to save money and be ready for the unexpected.

## **What's in MY Pantry...**

### **Canned Goods**

Black beans, pinto beans, dark red kidney beans, lima beans, refried beans, baked beans, diced tomatoes, fire roasted tomatoes, niblets sweet corn, pumpkin, tuna, sardines, anchovies, chicken broth, beef broth, coconut milk, coconut cream

### **Other Non-Perishables**

Pasta (shells, bowties, linguine, egg noodles), couscous, arborio rice, lentils, brown rice, pearly barley, split peas, popcorn kernels, chicken broth (box), vegetable broth (box), oatmeal, corn meal, cornstarch, jell-o instant pudding mix (vanilla), Lipton onion soup mix (for dip!), nutella

### **Sauces/Condiments/Oils**

Extra virgin olive oil, corn oil, coconut oil, sesame oil, black truffle oil (tiny bottle!), Tobasco (chipotle and regular), Sriracha, Tapatio, Worcestershire sauce, apple cider vinegar, white vinegar, kosher salt, black pepper, honey, agave,

### **For baking**

Flour, self-rising flour, granulated sugar, brown sugar, turbinado (raw) sugar, almond meal, corn starch, baking powder, baking soda, baker's chocolate, unsweetened cocoa powder, vanilla extract, almond extract, peppermint extract, food coloring, molasses, corn syrup, sweetened condensed milk

### **In the fridge**

Mayonnaise, mustard, soy sauce, relish, ketchup, barbecue sauce, Hershey's syrup, Vermont maple syrup, capers, eggs, butter, cream cheese, grated romano cheese, sliced smoked gouda (from TJs), tomato paste, anchovy paste, pickles, hummus, peanut butter, blackberry preserves

### **In the freezer**

Sweet peas, Trader Joe's Soy-cotash, salmon burgers, veggie burgers, homemade turkey or chicken stock, assorted fruits/berries, salt pork (for soup making)

### **Spice Rack**

oregano, basil, rosemary, cumin, smoked paprika, ginger, turmeric, cardamom, all spice, red pepper flakes, chili powder, poultry seasoning, Italian seasoning, Cajun Creole seasoning, bay leaves, ground mustard, whole nutmeg, cayenne pepper, paprika, ground cinnamon, coriander, cilantro, old bay, cinnamon sticks, parsley, cinnamon sugar, curry powder, sesame seeds

## **What's NEVER in my pantry...**

Ramen noodles, easy mac, canned soup, 'Instant' anything, canned vegetables (except corn), canned fruit, canned meat, canned/jarred gravy, jarred tomato sauce, any sort of meal or skillet kit, frozen prepared foods/dinners/pizzas