Meals prepared at home may be less expensive and more nutritious than meals purchased from restaurants. Stocking your kitchen with nutritious foods can make it easier to prepare healthy meals for yourself and your family. This publication provides tips you can use to keep your kitchen stocked with healthy foods and easy recipes you can make at home.

For the Pantry or Cabinets

Some healthy shelf-stable foods for your pantry or cabinets are:

Grains
- Whole-grain breads, bagels, English muffins
- Whole-wheat or whole-corn tortillas
- Brown rice
- Whole-wheat pasta
- Quinoa, barley, farrow, etc.
- Popcorn
- Oatmeal
- Grits
- Low-sugar, whole-grain cereals
- Whole-grain crackers
Fruits and Vegetables

- Low-sodium or no-salt-added canned vegetables
- Canned fruit in 100 percent juice
- Dried fruit without added sugars
- Some fresh vegetables like white potatoes or sweet potatoes*
- Low-sodium pasta sauces
- Low-sodium tomato sauce, tomato paste, crushed tomatoes or diced tomatoes

Protein Foods

- Low-sodium canned tuna, salmon or other fish
- Low-sodium canned chicken
- Dried beans and peas
- Low-sodium or no-salt-added canned beans and peas
- Lentils
- Unsalted nuts
- Peanut butter and other nut butters

Dairy

- Shelf-stable milk
- Dried milk powder

Flavorings

- Onion*
- Garlic*
- Salt and pepper
- Herbs and spices (basil, oregano, parsley, garlic powder, chili powder, cinnamon, etc.)
- Vinegars (apple cider vinegar, red wine vinegar, balsamic vinegar, etc.)
- Vanilla

Cooking Staples

- Low-sodium chicken, beef or vegetable broth or stock
- Low-sodium, low-fat creamed soups
- Cooking oil (olive oil, canola oil, vegetable oil, etc.)
- Cooking spray
- Flour (all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, self-rising flour, etc.)
- Sugar
- Cornmeal
- Baking powder and baking soda
- Breadcrumbs
- Cocoa powder

*Store onion, garlic and potatoes in a place that is dark and dry.
For the Refrigerator

Some healthy options for your refrigerator are:

Fruits and Vegetables
- Fresh fruits and vegetables (buy fresh produce in season to save money)
- 100 percent juice

Protein Foods
- Fish and seafood
- Poultry
- Lean meats
- Tofu
- Eggs

Dairy
- Low-fat or fat-free milk
- Calcium and vitamin D fortified soy milk
- Low-fat or fat-free yogurt
- Cheese

For the Freezer

Some healthy foods for your freezer are:

Grains
- Frozen whole-grain waffles
- Frozen brown rice

Fruits and Vegetables
- Frozen vegetables without added salt or sauces
- Frozen fruit without added sugar

Protein Foods
- Frozen fish or seafood
- Frozen poultry
- Frozen lean meats
- Frozen edamame and other beans

If you don’t have many of these items in your kitchen now, add a few items to your shopping list, as your food budget allows.

Keep your pantry, refrigerator and freezer organized and clean so that your foods are safe and you can easily see the foods you have in your kitchen.
Quick and Easy Meals

Pantry Power Bowls

Power bowls are an easy and tasty way to pull together staples from your pantry, refrigerator and freezer to make a delicious, balanced meal. Power bowls are great for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Choose a pasta-based power bowl with vegetables and protein or a savory breakfast power bowl with grits, eggs, tomatoes and cheddar cheese. The possibilities are endless! Follow the steps below to create a power bowl that you and your family will enjoy!

Step 1: Choose a Grain Base and Add to Your Bowl

Some examples of grains include:

- Whole-wheat noodles
- Rice noodles
- Brown rice
- Quinoa
- Oatmeal
- Grits

Step 2: Choose One or More of Each Category of Mix-Ins and Add to Your Bowl

- Fruits and Vegetables (Fresh, frozen or canned)
  Some examples of fruits and vegetables include:
  - Broccoli
  - Asparagus
  - Spinach
  - Zucchini
  - Mushrooms
  - Squash
  - Green pepper
  - Corn
  - Lettuce
  - Tomatoes
  - Leafy greens: collard greens, mustard greens, kale, etc.
  - Green onion
  - Avocado
  - Oranges
  - Strawberries
  - Pineapple
  - Mango

- Proteins:
  Some examples of proteins include:
  - Chicken
  - Lean beef
  - Lean pork
Beans and peas: black beans, pinto beans, white beans, edamame, etc.
Fish
Seafood
Eggs
Tofu

Step 3: Choose a Sauce and Drizzle Over Your Bowl
Some examples of sauces include:
- Salsa
- Guacamole
- Ginger dressing
- Vinaigrette dressing
- Low-fat cream-based dressing: ranch, blue cheese, etc.
- Low-sodium soy sauce
- Pesto sauce
- Low-sodium marinara sauce
- Peanut sauce
- Maple syrup
- Low-fat sour cream or plain Greek yogurt

Step 4: Add Optional Toppings
Some examples of toppings include:
- Cheese: mozzarella, parmesan, feta, cheddar, blue cheese, etc.
- Nuts and Seeds: almond slices, walnuts, pecans, sunflower seeds, pine nuts, etc.
- Tortilla strips
- Dried herbs or chopped fresh herbs: basil, cilantro, parsley, chives, etc.
- Squeeze of lemon or lime juice

Frittata
Frittatas are an easy, delicious dish that can be enjoyed for breakfast, brunch, lunch or dinner. Frittatas are a great choice when you need to use ingredients before they spoil. Follow the steps below and choose ingredients for your frittata that you and your family will enjoy!

What you need:
- Six large eggs
- ¼ cup milk
- Flavorings, such as:
  - Salt and pepper
  - Basil
  - Oregano
  - Cumin
  - Dill
  - Thyme
- 2 cups of add-ins:
o Fresh, frozen or canned, cooked vegetables, such as:
  § Spinach
  § Broccoli
  § Mushrooms
  § Green peppers
  § Onions
  § Sun-dried tomatoes
  § Artichoke hearts
  § Sweet or white potatoes
  § Asparagus
  § Zucchini
  § Squash
o Cooked lean proteins, such as:
  § Chicken
  § Ham
  § Canadian Bacon
• 1/2 cup cheese (optional), such as:
  o Feta
  o Cheddar
  o Mozzarella
  o Parmesan
  o Goat cheese
  o Ricotta cheese

What to do:
• Wash your hands.
• Preheat the oven to 350 F.
• In a medium bowl, add the eggs, milk and any flavorings you desire. Whisk until combined.
• In an oven-safe skillet, lightly coat the skillet with oil or cooking spray and layer the add-ins and cheese (if desired).
• Pour the egg mixture over the add-ins and cheese.
• Bake for 20-30 minutes or until the frittata reaches an internal temperature of 160 F.

The author would like to thank Lisa Fuller, MS, RDN, and Cori Sweet, MPH, RDN for their review of this document.
Keep Your Kitchen Stocked for Nutritious, Quick and Easy Meals and Snacks

References and Resources


