



## OPTIMIZE YOUR GROCERY SHOPPING Make Your Pantry Work for You

The key to a well-stocked pantry is having the right staples for when you need to throw together a quick meal or snack. Keeping a few healthy items on hand can save you money, time, and stress!

**Store items correctly** to increase their shelf life – keep produce in a cool, dark, dry area and refrigerate or freeze food as necessary.

**Use the freezer!** Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are healthy, inexpensive, and last a long time.

**Buy in bulk** and freeze the extra. Many foods are less expensive to buy in bulk. Try freezing block or shredded cheese, spinach, lemons and limes, baked goods, breads, and meats.

**Draining and rinsing** canned goods reduces sodium.

### Pantry Staples to Keep on Hand

- Whole Grains: oats, brown rice, whole grain bread, cereal, pasta & crackers
- Legumes: dried beans and lentils can be bought in bulk, last for years, and are inexpensive. Plant-based proteins are also nutrient dense and an eco-friendly way to eat more protein and fiber.
- Canned fish
- Nuts and nut butter
- Olive oil, balsamic vinegar, white vinegar
- Eggs, cheese, Greek yogurt
- Salsa, hummus, and sauces
- Canned, frozen, or dried fruit and vegetables
- Produce with a long shelf life like carrots, sweet potato, onions, garlic, cabbage, winter squash, citrus fruits, apples
- Spices and herbs for flavor.



### READ THE LABEL!

When shopping, choose healthy non-perishables to donate or restock the pantry

1. Opt for items with less added sugar, saturated fats, and sodium – especially for canned goods, pick low sodium and no-salt added varieties
2. Choose fruits canned in water, 100% fruit juice, rather than syrup
3. Choose foods with good sources (>20%) of vitamin D, fiber, calcium, iron, and potassium

# FINESSE FAST FOOD

If you choose to get fast food...

1. Look for lower calorie options - aim for under 500
2. Get sauces and dressings on the side so you have control over the amount included
3. Pick lean proteins – chicken, turkey or fish
4. Go for grilled instead of fried or breaded meats
5. Choose your sides wisely - an apple or salad instead of fries or chips cuts down on calories, fat, and sodium
6. Watch the portions - the smallest size or even a kids menu item may a more reasonable portion size
7. Drinks can add calories and sugar too! Opt for diet sodas, unsweetened tea, or water



## MASTER MEAL PLANNING AND PREP

### WHY MEAL PLAN?

- Reduce food waste
- Save money by buying in bulk and limiting impulse-shopping
- Save time and stress by deciding meals ahead of time
- Generally healthier and cheaper than ordering food elsewhere
- You can make extra for the next day or freeze it for later!



### STEPS TO MEAL PLAN

1. Decide what you are cooking and how much of it you want to make
  - You can always make extra to eat another time
2. Create a list and grocery shop
  - What ingredients do I already have vs what do I need?
3. Prep for cooking
  - Pull out all ingredients, open cans, wash and chop produce to save time during cooking
4. Cook a delicious meal!
5. Package up leftovers for later in the week or freeze for another time.