



Smart Tips & Kitchen Know-How

Good habits in the kitchen can save time and money and make getting meals on the table less stressful. The following are tried and true tips that can make your time in the kitchen more pleasurable and efficient.

ORGANIZATION

- **Organization is key to enjoying a stress-free kitchen** and staying on budget. Take time to organize your pantry and cupboards, fridge and freezer. Keep similar products together, for example cereals and grains, oils and vinegars, and spices and herbs. You'll find that when things have a designated place you'll be able to find things more easily – and avoid buying unnecessary duplicates.
- **Keep all bulk items**, such as flour, rice, beans stored in tightly closed jars or containers in a cool, dark place to keep them dry and pest free.
- **Keep kitchen counters clean** and clear of clutter that can be distracting when cooking; keep utensils and other frequently-used items at hand in a main drawer, cupboard, or in a container on your counter near your stove.
- **Keep cupboards and your refrigerator clean.** Spoiled foods can put nearby foods at risk for spoilage and can create smelly and unsanitary conditions. Wash down shelves with mild soap and warm water and then dry thoroughly to keep them fresh and clean – and keep your foods fresher longer, too.
- **Keep a running tab on your food inventory.** As you use something up, add it to your shopping list. When your favorite pantry items are on sale, buy an extra to keep on hand. Be sure to put the older item upfront and use it before opening a new can or jar.
- **Plan weekly menus and let ingredients work in different dishes.** For example, chicken can be the main focus of one meal; leftovers can be added to a soup or salad the next day. Be sure to add items to your weekly grocery list so you'll have everything you need. (Leftovers are perfect for lunch or as a snack).



continued



FOOD STORAGE AND PRODUCE PREPARATION

- **Embrace your freezer.** Freezers work more efficiently when full, so stock up on bulk and frozen items when on sale.
- **Store foods in airtight containers** whenever possible – air can dry out and spoil foods quickly. These containers can also help prevent nasty spills or accidents.
- **Store all cold items in the fridge or freezer immediately** when returning home from the grocery store. As you store your new items, bring all older items up front so you'll use those first.
- **Prep your produce.** When you arrive home, wash and dry lettuces and other greens. Layer the leaves in paper towels and place in a sealable plastic bag or container. Wash, dry and chop carrots, peppers and celery, and place in sealable containers. Everyone eats more veggies when they're ready for cooking, making salads, or even a grab & go snack.
- **Refrigerate raw meats and fish** and keep them separate from fruits, vegetables and other foods to avoid cross contamination. Make sure meats and fish don't drip liquids onto fridge shelves or onto foods below.



COOKING

- **Cook once. Eat twice.** Make extra portions of your favorite meals and freeze to use later.
- **Chop more veggies than you need for your meal.** Store in fridge for the next evening's dinner, or enjoy at lunch or as a snack. You can also freeze and use later for another evening meal when you're short on time.
- **Go meatless at least once a week.** Whole grains and beans are delicious, healthy and very satisfying alternatives.
- **At the end of the week, use recipes that let you use up lots of leftovers** – think soups, chilis and even pasta dishes. This will help you clean out your fridge, avoid food waste, and keep your food budget intact.

