

Stocking Your Plant-Based Pantry



Canned or Dried Beans

- Black beans
- Black-eyed peas
- Chickpeas (garbanzos)
- Great northern beans (cannellini)
- Pink beans
- Pinto beans
- Red or kidney beans
- Lentils



Pastas and Noodles

- Whole wheat pasta
- Gluten-free pasta
- Brown rice noodles
- Soba noodles



Nuts, Seeds, and Nut & Seed Butters

- Walnuts
- Almonds
- Cashews
- Pecans
- Sunflower seeds
- Pumpkin seeds
- Peanut butter (non-hydrogenated, such as Laura Scudder's)
- Almond butter
- Tahini
- Flax seeds



Other:

- Canned diced tomatoes
- Low-sodium tomato/pasta sauce
- Tamari or Bragg's liquid aminos
- Vinegars
- Salsas
- Dried herbs and spices and salt-free blends



Refrigerator Staples

- Perishable vegetables
- Frozen mixed vegetables
- Perishable fruits
- Frozen fruit
- Frozen organic edamame
- Sweet potatoes and white potatoes
- Hummus (make your own, or look for low-fat brands)
- Whole grain bread (freeze)
- Non-dairy milks
- Tofu
- Tempeh
- Citrus
- Nutritional yeast
- Whole wheat flour tortillas
- Corn tortillas



Whole Grains

- Barley
- Bulgur
- Couscous
- Millet
- Brown Rice
- Quinoa
- Wild rice
- Steel cut oats and/or old-fashioned oats

REMEMBER: *If it's ready in 30 seconds, or even two or three minutes, then it isn't a "whole" grain, meaning it isn't a health-promoting, disease-fighting choice! Steel cut oats, for example, will need to cook for 25 to 30 minutes. An unprocessed brown or wild rice may require 40 to 45 minutes of cooking time. See the hints and tips on the following pages, so you'll have these dietary staples on hand and ready to dish up in a moment's notice.*

Meal Planning and Grocery Shopping

Take inventory

Take inventory of items you already have in your kitchen. These items will be the foundation of your meals. This will reduce food waste and lighten your grocery bill.

Create your menu

Take time to map out the upcoming week and tally up how many meals will need to be prepared. Look for recipes that incorporate the items you already have on-hand.

Rely on leftovers! Instead of cooking a new meal every night, make double portions of 3-4 recipes each week so you can enjoy a few no-fuss nights of leftovers.

Simplify breakfast and lunch. Choose just a few breakfast and lunch options each week and make them in bulk to cut down on the amount of ingredients you have to purchase and the amount of time you have to spend in the kitchen.

Make your list

Now that you've taken inventory and have chosen your recipes, write your grocery list. Lists keep unhealthy temptations and impulse buys out of your cart. If it's not on the list, don't buy it!

Stick to the staples

The grocery store is full of high-priced specialty foods that claim to be the keys to good health. While some of these items may provide needed convenience (pre-chopped vegetables) and others might be fun to try (goji berries), none of these are essential to a healthy plant-based diet. To keep your grocery budget in check, stick to staples like in-season produce, frozen fruits and vegetables, beans, lentils, brown rice, oats and potatoes.

Buy in bulk and shop online

Visit your grocery store's bulk section to purchase staple foods in the exact quantities you need. If you live in an area that doesn't sell plant-based staples such as certain whole grains and beans, or if your local grocery store sells these items at a high markup, turn to the virtual bulk aisle online! Websites like Amazon.com and Thrivemarket.com sell staples at competitive prices.

Schedule prep time

After you've gathered all your ingredients from the grocery store, schedule some prep time in your kitchen. This is a crucial step to setting yourself up for a successful week. The goal of prep time is to ensure that a healthy meal is only 30 minutes away any day of the week, so identify steps that will ensure this convenience. Cook all grains and beans in large batches, make a few low-maintenance one-pot meals and freeze in individual portions. Wash and chop fruits and vegetables to make lunches and snacks easier to throw together. Make a large salad that will last several days.

Summer staples

- Buy in-season produce to maximize freshness. Wash and chop vegetables on the weekend to make them more accessible for weekday meals and snacks.
- Portion sliced vegetables into zip-top bags, and keep hummus and bean dips on hand for easy snacks.
- Make a big batch of bean burger patties and freeze in freezer-safe containers to have on hand for baking or grilling. These are great to bring along to a barbecue potluck.
- Slice fresh fruit like melons and pineapple in advance for refreshing breakfasts or snacks. Freeze in freezer bags to extend freshness. Frozen fruit is a satisfying summer treat!

Winter staples

- Cook a large batch of steel-cut oatmeal on the stovetop or in a crockpot. Mix in dried raisins or cranberries while oatmeal is still warm. Portion out and refrigerate for easy weekday breakfasts.
- Cook a large pot of lentil-vegetable soup or bean-vegetable chili and portion into individual servings to reheat for lunches.
- Batch cook other grains (brown rice, quinoa, barley, etc.) and plant protein foods (baked tofu, garbanzo beans, pinto beans, etc.) to make weeknight dinners easier to throw together.
- Keep frozen vegetables on hand to steam alongside prepared grains and beans.