

Kitchen Organization



Clear Off Counters

- Empty counters mean a bigger kitchen. Clear off any items not being used frequently. This increases the work space available for all kitchen activities.

Clean Out Drawers, Cupboards, and Shelves

- Remove everything but the essential tools from kitchen drawers so that retrieving a tool is a “reach in, pick up, and go to work” motion. Do the same with cupboard and shelf items.
- Apply the A, B, C storage rule. Can you reach it without stretching or bending? It’s an “A” location. Do you have to reach or stoop? It’s a “B” location. Must you kneel, stand on a stool, or stick your head in a cupboard? It’s a “C” location. Put most frequency-used tools in the most convenient “A” locations, others in the rear, upper or lower “B” and “C” areas.

Condense Useful Tools

- The sink, stove, and mixing counter are the three main work centers of the kitchen. Move tools appropriate to those tasks close to those locations.
- Unstack items wherever possible so bowls, pans, and tools can be reached with one hand.
- If tools are frequently used, have several of each, usually at least three: i.e., measuring cups, measuring spoons, rubber scrappers, and wooden spoons.
- Use stackable storage containers to save space when they are empty.

Make the Kitchen Work for You and Your Family

- When in doubt, take a shelf or drawer full of kitchen tools to another part of the house and retrieve them when needed. Those rescued within the first week are the most important. The rest can be safely stored in “B” or “C” locations, given away, or even discarded.
- Keep only as many pans stored in an “A” location as there are elements on the stove.
- Less is more, because more is a chore. Simplify wherever possible and watch cooking and cleaning become much more pleasant.

Food Management - Master Menu, Grocery Lists, Shopping, and Food Preparation



Prepare the Master Menu

- Plan out twenty-eight favorite main meals (i.e., four main meals for each day of the week). Include vegetables, fruits, and breads. Prepare a four-week Master Menu indicating these main meals and side dishes. Write up recipe cards for all 28 meals and store in the front of a recipe box behind Sunday through Saturday card dividers. Rotate through the meals each month.

Plan Out the Weekly Menu

- Using the Master Menu as a guide, plan this week’s menu noting the unusual meals which this week will bring: i.e., leftovers to use up, a birthday dinner, or a picnic at the zoo.

Prepare a Master Grocery List

- Prepare a Master Grocery List with all the items which are regularly bought at the grocery store, both food and non-food. This is best done by going through the pantry, fridge, freezer, and by reviewing recent grocery receipts. Duplicate the Master Grocery List fifty-two times.

Complete a Weekly Grocery List

- Using a printed Master Grocery List, note which items to purchase that week. Include amount to purchase, price each, and total budget. This is an important first step in saving money.
- Spending money on sugar is of little nutritional value. Spend here frugally. Spending money on fruits, vegetables, eggs, and breads gives more for every dollar. Watch milk, cheese, and meat purchases. Make the food dollar stretch.

Use Shopping Methods to Get the Most From Every Dollar

- The best time to shop is early in the day, when alone (as possible), with a completed grocery list & best price information, and with a full stomach.
- Keep a calculator close at hand to compare prices. Bigger is not always cheaper, name brands are not always better, and end cap items are not always a good buy.

Food Purchases - Keep Grocery Shopping to a Minimum



Purchase Non-perishable Food in Bulk

- Once a Master Menu is in place, non-perishable food can be purchased for a whole year's needs. For example, serving an item once a week means 52 of them will be needed for a year.

Prepare an Inventory of Current Supplies

- Make a list of needed food supplies by making an inventory of cupboards, pantry, refrigerator, and by reviewing grocery receipts for the past several months.

Prepare a Shopping List and Calculate Expenses

- From the inventory make up a shopping list, calculate how much of each item will be needed for a year, and calculate the total cost. (If funding is limited, try to save 10% each week on groceries until there is sufficient means to begin purchasing items in bulk.)

Cherry Picking - Shop the Easy Way

- Without a wallet, visit three favorite stores, writing down the price of those items to be purchased. Come home and compare prices. Then return to each store the next day and purchase their cheapest items in bulk. This method gets the best possible prices, saves a tremendous amount of time, and avoids week to week decision-making.

Learn to Store the Food and Rotate It Properly

- All food items should be date-stamped and put behind older food. Put a rubber band around the last can or jar of everything. When this marked item is brought out of storage, it is time to add it to the grocery list. Food can be stored in produce boxes or sealed plastic buckets under mattresses, along an unused wall, or in a closet if space is limited.

The Best Price Box

- The truly efficient shopper has a method to keep track of the best-ever prices. This is done by keeping a written record of what prices have been paid at what stores in the past and trying to duplicate those prices or even beat them the next shopping trip!

Home Storage - A Better Way to be Self-Sufficient



Go to Your Cupboards instead of the Store

- Time, trouble, fuel, and repetitive decision making will all be reduced with one shopping trip a year for non-food items, i.e. toothpaste, shampoo, dish soap, laundry soap, and toilet paper.

What and How Many Will Be Needed?

- Inventory the non-food items which are regularly used around the house, review recent receipts, and then estimate how many of each item the family will need for a year.

Prepare a Shopping List, Calculate Costs, and Evaluate Savings

- Prepare a written shopping list, noting the amount of each item needed, the estimated cost each, and the total funding needed.

Cherry Picking - Save Time, Money, and Hassle

- Although it takes some time and trouble for a couple of days, hours and hours are saved over the rest of the year by "cherry picking". Without any money, visit several favorite stores, noting the price of those items to be purchased. Compare prices, return to each store, and purchase the cheapest items in bulk. It is usually wisest to stick to high quality products at their best possible prices than to spend time and energy every time the store offers a new kind on special.

Storage and Rotation: Where and How

- Date stamp all items and store, putting old stock in the front, new in the back. Buy first and then find storage areas later. There always seems to be room once the items are home.

Use the Best Price Box

- Keep good written records of all purchases. Carry the best price information whenever shopping is done to increase awareness of where and when to get the very best prices the next time the yearly "home storage" purchase is made.