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Creating a Home Pantry

Don't have a home pantry? Now is the time to create one. For many people, going to the grocery store is a chore. Depending on how busy, tired, or stressed you are, this chore might be frustrating as well. Trips to the grocery store seem to be particularly stressful recently. Reducing the number of trips to the grocery store is one benefit of creating a home pantry. Once you get a home pantry, you will probably notice less trips to the grocery store and savings in your monthly food budget. What you put in your home pantry will depend on what ingredients you would use frequently, the space you have in your house for a home pantry, and the type of pantry you want.



Home pantries can take many forms based on the space you can set aside and the type of foods you want. For example, my great grandma had a top loading chest freezer with a cupboard above it in a smaller area next to her back door. She used as a pantry. The chest freezer is where she stored frozen perishable foods. The cupboard above held the dry and canned goods. For many people, this may seem to be a lot of storage. In actuality, the chest freezer was approximately about 7-10 cubic feet and the cupboard above it was your standard kitchen cupboard size. The freezer mainly held frozen vegetables, fruits, and meats. The cupboard was her 'dry' storage. It had flour, sugar, rice, pasta, etc.

The busyness of our normal day and the ease of modern day shopping has caused many people to eliminate the home pantry. Still, research shows the economic benefit of purchasing in bulk. While most of us have a little extra time to be with family and rediscover the simple pleasures in life, why not think about creating a home pantry? While you are thinking about it, make sure to think about foods with a good amount of nutrition and will stay fresh for a week or

longer. It is a great way to get the whole family involved in meal planning. If you are interested, here is a simple guide to help you get started:

- Beverages - Most people know it is a good idea to keep some bottled water on hand in case of a break in the water main. Other beverages can be kept in a pantry as well. These could be the actual beverage itself (like boxed, canned, or frozen 100% fruit juice) or could be packages of loose leaf tea or whole coffee beans.
- Breads - Breads are good to keep but how you keep them depends on the temperature and length of storage. Bread loaves will start to grow mold if there is too much moisture or they are stored for a long time. To extend the storage time of bread, you can store it in a refrigerator or freezer. The same thing goes for other bread type items like tortillas, English muffins, bagels, etc. On the other hand, items like flour and crackers can easily be stored in a pantry.
- Fruits - 'Sturdy' fruits, like apples and oranges, can be stored whole. It is best to check on them occasionally. Other fruits to have in your pantry can be dried, canned, or frozen.
- Grains - Grains are a staple in most meals. Additionally, grains will store easily. A home pantry could include some different types of pasta, rice, oatmeal, corn, etc.
- Milk - Milk can be stored in canned, frozen, or shelf-stable packaging. Also, dairy milk alternatives can be stored in the same way.
- Proteins - There are many ways different proteins can be stored. Animal proteins like beef, chicken, fish, and pork can be stored canned, frozen, or dried. Non-animal proteins like beans and legumes can be stored the same way. Nuts can be stored bagged, canned, or in nut butters (ex. Peanut butter).
- Sauces - Keep multi-use sauces and pastes on hand. These could include tomato paste, tomato sauce, pesto, alfredo, salsa, etc.
- Soups/broths - Soups and broths are another stand by to keep around. Depending on what type you are after, they generally can be found in canned, frozen, or shelf-stable cartons.
- Spices (whole) - Herbs, spices, and flavorings are not things people usually think of but they are a key component to cooking. As I mentioned in a previous article, it is best to purchase them in the most whole form possible and make sure to smell them before using them. If they do not smell right, do not use it.
- Vegetables - Similar to fruit, 'sturdy' vegetables can be stored fresh, like onions and potatoes. Other vegetables can be canned, frozen, or dried.

To schedule an appointment or request more information, please contact Tyler Johnson, tajohnson120@ksu.edu, or by calling 620-232-1930.

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