

Nutritious kitchen essentials.

Sometimes you've just got to make do with what you've got in the house. Our kitchen essentials guide gives you some tips on how to build a nutritious food stash, and some inspiration for cooking delicious meals with essential ingredients.

Versatile fridge fillers

Hummous, low fat coleslaw, salsa and cottage cheese

Individual pots of low fat, flavoured and natural yogurt

A box of free range eggs - scrambled or poached on toast, hard boiled or served as an omelette with some added vegetables. Also, great cracked when stirred into brown rice with some prawns.

Avocado/guacamole

Olives and feta

Individual portions of cheese

Reduced fat mayonnaise and salad cream

Freezer must-haves

Chicken breasts can be defrosted one at a time, cubed or cut into strips and added to vegetable stir-fries or curries. Serve with brown rice or noodles and a shake of soya sauce for added flavour.

Prawns are perfect for the freezer. Add a little natural yogurt or low-fat mayonnaise and rocket or avocado for a tasty sandwich, use in a curry or add to a stir fry.

Fruits and vegetables can contain more vitamins and minerals frozen than fresh as they are frozen quickly after harvesting. They also have a longer life than perishable versions. They're great for smoothies or adding to pasta sauces (peppers, onions and peas hold up particularly well) with a can of tuna to top a portion of wholemeal pasta. Sprinkle with a little parmesan or grated cheddar or toasted pine nuts.



Cupboard basics

Large bags of grains such as rice, quinoa, noodles and bulgur wheat have long shelf lives and are great for bulking out your meals. Keep in an airtight container in a cool, dry place to maintain the quality (and taste).

Jumbo rolled oats will soak up milk or fruit juice if refrigerated overnight or can be added directly to yogurt if you're out of milk.

Tins of beans, chickpeas or lentils are high in protein and fibre and low in fat. They can liven up a simple soup, casserole, stir fry or salad, or can be made into burgers, hummous or curries.

Potatoes for jacket potatoes are great with baked beans or tinned tuna and sweetcorn.

Nut and seed butter can be stored for months and combined with fresh ingredients such as chopped apple or a banana.

Rye crispbreads and spelt crackers are extremely versatile and often keep for longer than a loaf of bread.

Tinned sardines and mackerel provide an omega 3 hit and are great on toast or added to pasta sauces.

Dried fruits and tinned fruits in natural juice are great alternatives when fresh produce is in high demand.

Seeds and nuts add a satisfying crunch to breakfasts and salads but are also great between meals. They also help incorporate macronutrients like fat and protein that you may not get if your cupboards are full of rice, rice, and more rice!

Green curry paste and a can of coconut milk combined with whichever vegetables you have available make a quick Thai curry (frozen peppers, peas or beans work especially well).

If bread is hard to come by, try tortilla wraps, bagels, ciabatta, focaccia, pitta, sourdough, rye, pumpnickel or muffins. Anything goes! Freeze them to make them last longer, or try making your own.

Tinned tomatoes are a must as a base for sauces while olives, fish sauce, black bean sauce, olive oil, dried chillies, mixed herbs, sun-dried tomatoes, soya sauce and anchovies add depth and flavour.

Reduced salt stock cubes or bouillon can be added to soups or rice for extra flavour.

Advice
from expert
nutritionists.

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