



# **Community Kitchen**

**5 X 5 Pantry**

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## Overview

This 5x5 Pantry Module gives you tips for setting up a home pantry. Consider five common ingredients each with five recipe suggestions. It is your choice for what to feed your family.

## Objectives

- To review information to help participants plan and set up their own kitchen pantry
- To provide a selection of recipe ideas for using various staple ingredients
- To socialize and enjoy group learning opportunities

## Materials Needed

- Participant's Manual
- 5x5 Pantry Module
- Groceries and equipment
- First Aid Kit including band aids

Funding Assistance Form to run Community Kitchens: Check with the NBPSDHU contact at 705-474-1400 ext. 5287 to determine if there is any current funding available to assist with grocery costs.

## Workshop Preparation

- Set up work area, displays and prepare snack. Allow 1-1½ hours.
- See facilitators Workshop Grocery List and Equipment List (Page 13-14).

## Workshop Outline

**2 ½ - 3 hours**

Introduction	Welcome, introductions, housekeeping items, snack
Ice breaker	
5x5 content	Setting up a Pantry, Food Storage
Group stations	Station 1: Cabbage Oriental and Potato Salad with Vinaigrette Station 2: Lean Beef with Tofu Sliders, Stuffed Green Peppers Station 3: Take Home Prep Station- 3 spices
Eat together and wrap up	Complete evaluation forms before you leave Give out leftovers for participants to take home
Facilitator's materials	Workstation Recipes Workstation Grocery List Workstation Kitchen Equipment Module Recipes

## Introduction, Welcome and Snack

Introduce yourself and welcome participants. Collect registration Forms. Serve Snack: Guacamole with crackers and carrot sticks.

### Guacamole

Serves around 4

Ingredients	Quantity
Avocados peeled pitted and mashed	2
Small onion diced	1
Plum tomato diced	1
Minced garlic	1 tsp
1 lime or lemon juiced	1
Salt and pepper	
Carrots or crackers for dipping	

#### TIP:

Save cans/packaging to show ingredients, can sizes, nutrition label etc.

Visual learners like to 'see' what you are using so they are familiar and will spot the item in the grocery store etc.

### Workshop Introduction

The 5x5 pantry will go over five common ingredients each with at least five recipe suggestions or ideas. It is your choice what to feed your family!

Start with basics. Outline that we have selected tasty recipes that support healthy eating and are suitable for chronic disease prevention (like diabetes, heart disease etc.). Being budget conscious, these recipes use common ingredients available from local grocery stores. I hope you will taste something new or a new way to use foods you know. There is a recipe booklet so you may find some new ideas that will work with your family.

### Housekeeping

Point out location of washrooms. Remind participants to wash hands often and clean as you go.

## Ice Breaker



Please tell me about a favourite food, a 'go-to', or a comfort food that you can make.

Look at possible themes from participants' answers like hot foods, salads, grains, foods with good memories (holiday/occasion foods).

Use this information to familiarize everyone with the benefits of stocking up a pantry for ease of preparation and having things on hand so the cost of special occasion meals does not get out of hand.

## 5x5 Talking Points

### What is a Pantry?

A pantry is the collection of foods and ingredients that you store and use for meal preparation.

### Setting up a pantry- one step at a time

- Create a Wish List of the items you want/need.
- Buy a basic item every time you shop.
- Soon to be bride or a new mother? Have a Pantry Set Up theme bridal or baby shower where everyone buys one basic ingredient. It all adds up and soon someone is on the way to being well stocked up.
- Staff - Looking for door prize ideas? Consider having basic ingredients and spices for participants.

## Setting Up Your Own Pantry

- You do not need to buy all ingredients at once. Buy only the amounts you have space for.
- Buy items at a bulk store or bulk section of the grocery store (rice, grains, pasta, skim milk powder, baking ingredients, herbs and spices).
- Choose brown rice and whole wheat pasta because they have more fibre than their white versions.
- Buy lower sodium or lower salt versions of canned goods, soup stocks etc. when possible.
- Be open to trying new foods like barley, lentils or tofu.

## A classic Pantry may contain the following

<b>Grains</b>	Rice, barley, oatmeal, pasta
<b>Vegetables and Fruit</b>	carrots, onions, potatoes, tomato paste, canned soups, canned vegetables (tomatoes, corn, peas), canned fruit (peaches, fruit cocktail, pineapple)
<b>Meat Alternatives</b>	canned beans (kidney beans, black beans etc.), peas (chickpeas), lentils dried peas, beans, lentils (split peas, navy beans) peanut butter, canned light tuna packed in water, canned salmon
<b>Milk and Alternatives</b>	skim milk powder (great for baking and milk puddings)
<b>Fats &amp; Oils</b>	margarine (non-hydrogenated), vegetable oil (canola, olive, safflower or sunflower)
<b>Baking Ingredients</b>	flour (all purpose, whole wheat), sugar (white, brown), baking powder, baking soda, corn starch, raisins, rolled oats, vanilla extract (artificial)
<b>Seasonings</b>	salt, pepper, beef bouillon cubes, chicken bouillon cubes, dry mustard, garlic powder, ketchup, soy sauce, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, dried herbs (basil, oregano, thyme), spices (paprika, cayenne, cinnamon, chili powder)

## How to Start to Stock a Kitchen/Pantry

To be able to prepare meals, you will need to start to stock a kitchen/pantry with basic ingredients. Very few of us can go to the grocery store and spend hundreds of dollars on stocking up a kitchen. It takes time to purchase pots, pans and cooking equipment as well as all the basic foods.

To help you start a kitchen pantry, think about your favourite meals, foods and 'go to' items. Make a list of these foods. You need to spend some time thinking about what ingredients (and equipment) you would need to make these recipes. This list will help you choose what needs to be in your pantry.

### Activity Sheet: My Favourite Food

Favourite Food	Ingredients	Equipment
Spaghetti	Ground meat, tomato sauce, extra vegetables, basil, parsley, pasta	Sauce pot, pot for pasta, cutting board, can opener
Meat Loaf	Meat, bread crumbs, spices, egg, ...	Mixing bowl, spoon, loaf pan



## Group Brainstorm

Understanding recipes, ingredients and equipment are some of the skills successful cooks need. Being creative and figuring out alternative uses for ingredients and how to use leftovers is yet another part of more advanced concepts within food skills knowledge.

Each and every one of us is unique and so are our food skills. Let us work together as a group to come up with ideas for how to use and possibly expand the uses for a single ingredient.

## Activity Shout Out

As a group let's do a *Shout Out* ideas for things you make that use a particular ingredient. Name an ingredient and tell us what you can make or how you can use it in the kitchen.

### Examples:

**Potatoes:** Think of a recipe or food that has potatoes in it...

*Possible Answers:*

**Side dishes:** mashed potatoes, baked potatoes, fries, roasted potatoes, scalloped, hash browned, potato & carrot pancakes, pierogis, carrot and potato casserole, potato skins/wedges with a dip...

**Soups:** Potato and onion/leek soup, vegetable soup, corn and potato, curried potato soup...

**Potato salad:** name a very variations, with yogurt/mayonnaise dressing, vinaigrette, served warm or cold...

**Cabbage:** Think of a recipe or food that has cabbage in it...

*Possible Answers:* coleslaw, minestrone, cabbage rolls, soup, sautéed side dish, cheese topped side, cooked chopped filling for egg rolls...

**Flour:** Think of a recipe or food that has flour in it...

Of course, I am thinking whole wheat flour with those extra nutrients but tell me how you use 'white' enriched all-purpose flour.

*Possible Answers:* bannock, bread, pizza dough, muffins, pancakes, other cakes, crumble toppings for fruit...

### Potential Answers for Shout Out activity:

**Oatmeal:** porridge, power bars, crisp topping, muffins, cookies, date squares, add to ground beef dishes...

**Flour:** pancakes/waffles, pizza, bannock, scones, muffins, breads...

**Berries:** crisp, topping on yogurt, smoothies, coulis/sauces, drying techniques, jam/jelly/syrups

**Apples:** fresh eating, crisp, muffins, cakes, topping on porridge, slices in grilled cheese, slices with peanut butter...

**Banana:** fresh eating, muffins, pancakes, smoothies, sliced served with yogurt and topped with chopped almonds, fried with caramel sauce, bread, cake, mashed and frozen for banana “ice cream” ...

**Pumpkin:** soup, muffins, cake, pancakes, oatmeal, side dish, sauce for pasta, pumpkin cinnamon buns, pumpkin cheese cake, pie, pumpkin corn bread...

**Lean ground beef:** \*consider an extender like TVP or tofu or breadcrumbs/oatmeal to change from 4 servings to 6. Sheppard’s Pie (mushroom or tomato), meat balls (Swedish, Italian, sub sandwiches), meat sauce, chili, cabbage rolls, lasagna, mini meat loaves, Sloppy Joes, tacos, wraps, meat stuffed green peppers, meat and veggie stuffing for squash or green peppers...

**Whole chicken:** roast, stock, toppings for pizza, quesadillas, filling in crepes, chicken & vegetable lasagna, chicken pot pie and variations, soup, fried rice, pilaf, tacos and wraps...

**Chicken thighs:** cacciatore, Adobo, BBQ, curry, herbed /breaded oven baked, tacos and wraps...

**Cabbage:** coleslaw, minestrone, cabbage rolls, soup, sauté side dish, cheese topped side, bubble & squeak, cooked chopped filling for egg rolls...

**Pork shoulder:** pulled pork, in a boiled dinner with veggies and cabbage, broth for bean soup, add chunks of pork to bean dishes...

**Sausage:** minestrone, chili, spaghetti /pasta dishes, crumble topping for pizza...

**Rutabaga:** puree or mash, fries, layered in scalloped potatoes, cubed in stew...

**Potatoes:** mashed, baked, skins, scalloped, oven baked fries, in soups (vegetable, potato leek), grated & grilled potato cakes, potato salad, potato/carrot/rutabaga casserole, frittata, bubble and squeak (pan fried potato pancake with leftovers)...

**Steak:** stroganoff with egg noodles, stir fry with veggies, BBQ spiced & thinly sliced for a sandwich, Philly steak sandwich, Chinese style sides: beef, ginger & green onions, beef & tomato...

**Chick peas:** hummus with several variations: spicy yellow lentil hummus, zesty Sriracha carrot hummus, black bean hummus, sweet potato hummus. Potato and chick pea curry, salad topper, any bean salads, chana masala, additions in soups and chili, spicy roasted chick peas for snacking, cookies, cake, bread, chick pea “egg salad” ...

**Rice:** plain or dressed up as a side, fried rice, salad side, in soup, in meatballs or cabbage rolls, rice pudding...

**Carrots:** sticks with dip, sides with any potato dish including scalloped, roasted, glazed, salads (pasta, potato, coleslaw), spaghetti sauces, carrot potato pancakes, soups, stir frys, casseroles, cakes, muffins, filling additions like carrots & mushrooms in Shepherd's Pie, dumplings/pierogis...

**Onions:** salads, sandwiches, burgers, relishes, salsas, sautéed in sides, soups and stocks, pilaf, egg/quiche dishes, caramelized with cheese dishes, eggs, burgers etc...

**Peanut Butter:** smoothie, with crackers, with apple slices for a quick snack, nut butters, power bars, dessert balls, in stir fry sauce...

**Lentils:** lentil veggie loaf, lentil Sheppard's pie, lentil cookies, lentil and carrot curried soup, dhal, old fashioned lentil soup...

**Beans:** dip, baked beans with toppings, salad toppers, bean salad, burgers, vegetarian meat loaf, chili, burritos, enchiladas...

**Tofu:** Honey Ginger Tofu, baked and marinated tofu, stir fry with tofu, smoothie (silken tofu), BBQ tofu (extra firm tofu), salad topper, tofu kababs with veggies, ground tofu added to ground beef (ex. meatloaf)...

**English Muffins:** tomato sauce & mini cheese pizza, tuna melt, crispy topped with salsa, topped with beans, topped with pulled pork, with beef slices, peanut butter and banana, egg and cheese sandwich...

**Eggs:** scrambled, poached, fried, omelets, huevos rancheros, eggs in a burrito, pancakes, hard cooked, devilled eggs, boiled (snack, in salads, egg salad sandwiches), quiche, frittata, desserts (pavlova, custards)

**Tomato soup:** soup, bean soup, tomato pea soup, carrot soup, spaghetti sauce, beef stew, meat loaf, 'wonder wieners', French Tomato dressing...

## Pantry Substitutions

(Adapted from 'The Basic Shelf Cookbook')

If you don't have an ingredient on hand, sometimes you can make a reasonable substitution.

If you don't have...	Use...
Bread crumbs	Crushed cereal, cracker crumbs
Brown sugar, packed 1 cup	White sugar, 1 cup
Buttermilk, 1 cup	Regular milk, slightly less than 1 cup + 1 tbsp lemon juice or vinegar. Let stand for 5 minutes before using
Cornstarch, 1 tbsp	Flour, 2 tbsp
Dried herbs, ½ tsp	Fresh herbs, 1 tbsp
Dry mustard, 1 tsp	Prepared mustard, 1 tbsp
Garlic powder, ¼ tsp	Garlic, 1 clove
Homemade broth	Broth in a carton, can or bouillon cubes
Tomato sauce with herbs	Pasta sauce in a jar or can
Lemon juice, 1 tsp	Vinegar, ½ tsp
Tomato sauce, 2 cups	Tomato paste, ¾ cup + 1 cup water
Tomato soup, 1 can (10 oz)	Tomato sauce, 1 cup + ¼ cup water

## Work Stations / Cooking Groups

*(80 minutes / 1 hour 20min)*

*Provide hair nets or bandanas, elastics for those with long hair, review proper hand washing practices & have all wash hands, review procedure for washing dishes (wash, rinse, sanitize and air dry if possible).*

*We are going to prepare four items that we hope will be something you can prepare at home again, and hopefully there will be a new ingredient or a new way to prepare a food in one of the dishes that you have not tried before.*

*We will split the group into two, each group will make two recipes and everyone will be able to enjoy all of the dishes at the end. Any leftovers can be taken home.*

**Station 1:** New Tastes: Cabbage Oriental Style, Potato Salad with Vinaigrette (pages 15-16)

**Station 2:** Lean Ground Beef Sliders (with TVP of Tofu), Stuffed Green Peppers (pages 17-18)

**Station 3:** Take Home Station with Giveaways: measure and portion ingredients with a recipe card to make a recipe.

**Equipment Needed:** baggies and tablespoons for measuring portions, labels, pens

Suggestions:

- 3-5 common spices like dried basil, thyme, Italian spices, ginger, cinnamon
- Pearl barley, or wild or brown rice with a recommended recipe
- Whole wheat pasta

## Eating Together and Reflection

Use the opportunity to encourage trying new foods and to answer questions. Have a friendly discussion to review key concepts taught.

## Evaluation

It is a great idea to evaluate your programs to learn for future sessions. If you're interested in a template evaluation, the health unit has one you can use.

## Clean Up / Wrap Up / Pack Up

If using funding assistance from NBPSDHU to run your Community Kitchen, please complete our data tracking forms! Thank You!

## Facilitators Materials and Notes

Facilitator's Grocery List (adjust quantities based on # of participants)

avocados	Italian seasoning
medium onions	pepper
tomato – prefer plum tomato if available	sesame seeds
lime or lemon	ground ginger
potatoes- prefer small new potatoes	garlic powder
celery	oregano
medium green peppers (use tops from stuffed pepper recipe for potato salad)	basil
small cabbage	
package tofu- firm or medium	can 341 mL /12 oz corn niblets
bulb garlic	can 541 mL/19 oz tomato sauce with herbs
green onions	can 796 mL/28 oz tomatoes (whole or diced)
bunch fresh parsley	
	egg
ketchup	Parmesan cheese - for green peppers
vegetable oil	cup long grain rice
soy sauce- low sodium	package slider buns
honey	spices/Ingredients for Station 3
cider vinegar	containers/baggies for station 3/leftovers
margarine	
lean ground beef	* If making Creamy Dressing for Potato Salad: Plain Greek yogurt Dry mustard powder

## Kitchen Equipment Needed

- Mixing bowls
- Cutting boards
- 2 Non-stick skillets-Sliders, Oriental Cabbage,
- 2 Medium saucepans -Rice stuffing mix for peppers, boiling water for peppers
- 1 small saucepan – heat up tomato & herb sauce for green peppers
- Can opener
- Garlic press
- Vegetable peeler
- Grater for cheese
- Chef’s knives
- Spoons
- Measuring Spoons- Station 1, Station 2, Station 3 Take Home Spices
- Flipper or lifter
- Serving dishes: 1 platter for sliders, bowl for potato salad,
- Medium saucepan
- Baking dish-big enough for 6 green peppers
- Induction hot plates- consider if need to set up additional cooking station
- Aprons, hair net/bandanas
- First Aid Kit with band aids
- Spoons/Forks/plates/napkins for tasting- Eating Together

## Group Stations

### Station 1

#### Cabbage Oriental Style

Makes 4-6 servings

Adapted from Foodland Ontario

Ingredients	Quantity
vegetable oil	2 tbsp
medium onion, chopped	1
sesame seeds	1 tbsp
finely shredded cabbage (½ medium head)	4-5 cups
soy sauce	2 tbsp
honey	1 tbsp
apple juice or cider vinegar or rice wine vinegar	1 tbsp
ground ginger	¼ tsp
Dash pepper	

1. Pour oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium heat. Stir in onions and stir fry until golden, about 6-8 minutes. Add sesame seeds and cook for 2 minutes.
2. Add shredded cabbage and cook stirring occasionally for 5 minutes or longer- want it to be tender crisp but not overdone.
3. Combine sauce ingredients. Add to cooked cabbage in pan and heat through.
4. Serve warm.





## Potato Salad with choice of Creamy or Vinaigrette Dressing

Adapted from 'The Basic Shelf', 2011 Edition

Ingredients	Quantity
Potatoes, small new potatoes or cubed potatoes (leave peel on)	2 ½ lbs.
Corn niblets, drained	1 can (12 oz or 341 mL)
Green pepper, diced	½
Celery, thinly sliced	1 cup
Salt	½ tsp
Pepper	½ tsp
Garlic powder or fresh garlic cloves	1 ½ tsp powder or 2 cloves
Green onions, trimmed and sliced	3

1. Cook the potatoes in boiling water until they are just tender. \* Reminder to save some potato cooking water if choosing vinaigrette dressing.
2. Drain, peel and chill. Cut any large pieces into 1 inch chunks.
3. Chill potatoes. Stir in corn, green pepper, celery and green onions.
4. Select and prepare your dressing. Toss potatoes and dressing and chill before serving.

### Creamy Dressing

Ingredients	Quantity
Dry mustard powder	¼ tsp
Plain Greek yogurt	1 cup
Pepper and salt to taste	

1. In a medium bowl combine yogurt, garlic, dry mustard, pepper and salt.

### Vinaigrette Dressing

Ingredients	Quantity
Potato cooking water- reserve from Step 1	¼ cup
Olive oil	¼ cup
Lemon juice	2 tbsp
Fresh parsley	⅓ cup
Dijon mustard	1 tbsp
Green onions, roughly chopped	2
Cloves garlic, roughly chopped	2

1. In a food processor or blender combine all ingredients except potato water. Process to blend. Add in potato water and blend until smooth.
2. Drizzle over the potatoes. The potatoes will soak up the mixture and be very flavourful.

## Station 2

### Beef Sliders

Serves 6-8, adapted from 'The Basic Shelf Cookbook', 2011 Edition

Ingredients	Quantity
Lean ground beef	1 lb.
Tofu- medium or firm, drained and crumbled	1 package
Egg	2
Ketchup	2 tbsp
Finely chopped onion	¼ cup
Italian seasoning	½ tsp
Pepper	½ tsp
Slider buns	2 packages

1. Put ground beef, crumbled tofu, egg, ketchup, onion, Italian seasoning and pepper in a bowl. Mix well
2. Shape meat into balls then flatten.
3. Turn on stove to medium high heat. Using a non-stick skillet, place all sliders in the pan. Cook until browned then flip over to cook the other side. Turn heat to low, cover the skillet.
4. Arrange bottom slider buns on serving platter. Add cooked slider patties, top and serve with condiments of choice.



## Rice Stuffed Green Peppers

Serves 6, from the Basic Shelf Cookbook, 2011 Edition

You can keep the stuffing mix meat free or add ½ lb. cooked lean ground beef (or moose). Adding cooked lentils or chick peas is another option. You can prepare then freeze the stuffed peppers and bake/reheat them another time.

Ingredients	Quantity
green peppers, medium sized	6
margarine	1 tbsp
large onions, finely chopped	1
garlic powder	¼ tsp
lean ground beef, cooked and drained (optional) or lentils	½ lb.
tomatoes	1 can (28 oz/796mL)
Water	1 cup
Rice	1 cup
Dried oregano	2 tsp
Dried basil	2 tsp
Tomato sauce with herbs (oregano and basil)	1 cup
Grated cheese (optional)	

1. Cut a thin slice off the tops of the peppers. Carefully remove and discard the seeds and white inner ribs. Save the tops and add them to a soup or salad.
2. Cook the peppers in a medium saucepan of boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain Place peppers upright in a shallow baking dish.
3. Turn on stove to medium heat. Melt margarine in a large frypan. Add onion and garlic powder. Cook until onion is soft, about 3-5 minutes.

**Meat option** - add ground beef. Cook until meat reaches safe internal temperature and drain off any fat.

4. Next stir in tomatoes, water, rice, oregano and basil. Add salt and pepper to taste. Heat to boiling, turn heat to low, cover and simmer until tender, about 20 minutes.
5. Turn on oven to 350°F.
6. Spoon the rice mixture into the peppers. Bake stuffed peppers for 30 minutes or until the peppers are tender. If you like, put some grated cheese on top and continue baking until the cheese is melted.
7. Optional- Serve with heated tomato sauce with herbs.

## APPENDIX

Use for handouts or speaking points

### Meal Planning Tips That Will Save You Money

Source: Page 11-15, 'Basic Shelf Cookbook'

#### Cook your Own Meals

- Cooking at home is less expensive than pre-prepared meals. You are in control. You get to decide how much salt, fats/oils and spices are added.
- Use smaller amounts of meat, chicken and fish. These are usually the most expensive foods. Mix meat, chicken and fish with other ingredients like rice, vegetables or potatoes to 'stretch' them when making soups, casseroles, stews or serve.
- Try to eat at least one meatless meal a week. Make a new recipe with meat alternates like beans, eggs, tofu, or peanut butter.
- Make a menu: People who plan ahead and write out their meals save money! Plan ahead and write out what you would like for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks for a whole week. Make a grocery list of the ingredients and foods you will need.
- Look at the grocery store flyers to see what foods are on sale. Use the sales to help you plan your meals. A lot of grocery stores do price matching, so keep that in mind!
- Make extras: Make a double recipe when the ingredients go on sale. Put the extras in the freezer to eat another time.



## Shopping tips to save \$

- Buy in season: use recipes for foods in season when they are fresh and affordable.
- Buy frozen or canned: when fresh foods are too expensive, look at the frozen and canned ones. They are just as nutritious. Choose canned vegetables with less salt (sodium). Drain and rinse the vegetables (and beans) under cold water to wash away some of the salt.
- Look high and low on grocery shelves. The less expensive brands are usually placed either higher or lower down on the shelves.
- Check the reduced section: day-old bread makes toast, grilled sandwiches or bread crumbs and bread stuffing. Reduced veggies are good for soup making. Ripe bananas are ideal for muffins or can be frozen for smoothies.
- Buy bulk: buy dried herbs, spices, rice, pasta, barley and flour from the bulk bins. You can buy just the quantity you need to save money.
- Be food safe: if you need to transport food any distance remember to bring a cooler and an ice pack. In the heat of the summer fresh veggies will stay crisper (won't go limp) if you transport them in a cooler.
- Bring your own reusable bags to pack your items.

## Tips for Reusable Bags

More and more shoppers are choosing reusable grocery bags instead of the plastic disposable bags that cost 5 cents each at grocery stores. It is important to keep your reusable bags clean for transporting food.

- Don't cross contaminate, use food totes just for foods.
- Shake out grocery bags after each use to get rid of any food debris.
- Choose reusable totes that can be properly cleaned and dried. Clean up any spills or food debris after each use. Wipe clean and allow to dry.
- Keep raw and ready to eat foods separated and try to use different bags for these items (just like you would use separate cutting boards for raw foods, fresh vegetable & fruit, and prepared foods).
- Double bag meats to prevent accidental leaks and spills by placing in a disposable plastic bag first then into your reusable bag.
- Replace old, worn or ripped totes.

## Common Questions about Food Storage

Adapted from [www.stilltasty.com](http://www.stilltasty.com)

**Question:** Do I have to store ketchup and mustard in the fridge once they're opened?

**Answer:**

Technically speaking, you don't have to store opened bottles of ketchup and mustard in the refrigerator. It's a good idea because refrigeration helps these products stay fresher longer. Due to their high acid content, both mustard and ketchup will keep fine for about a month in the pantry. But after that, their flavor, appearance and texture will begin to break down much more quickly at normal room temperatures than in the cooler refrigerator temperature (40°F). An opened bottle of ketchup should stay at peak quality for about 6 months in the fridge; mustard for at least a year. Both will remain safe to consume for much longer if continuously refrigerated.

**Question:** Cheese is 'on-special'. Can I stock up and freeze it?

**Answer:**

Yes you can freeze cheese successfully if you're planning to use it for cooking purposes. Frozen cheese will remain safe to eat, but it may have change in its texture. It becomes more crumbly once thawed so it is best used in cooked dishes like sauces, soups and casseroles like lasagna. For best results, keep cheese frozen for no more than 6 months. When freezing cheese, cut it into portions no larger than ½ pound each, and wrap tightly in airtight wrapping or place inside a freezer bag. You can also grate cheese before freezing and place it in a freezer bag. Be sure to thaw the frozen cheese in your refrigerator, and plan to use thawed cheese within two or three days.

**Question:** Where should I store my bread - On the counter or in the fridge?

**Answer:**

The counter (room temperature) is the best place for your bread. Bread stored in the refrigerator will dry out and become stale much faster than bread stored at room temperature. For longer-term storage, you can freeze bread for up to 3 months. Soft-crust, pre-sliced breads will keep fresh for up to a week at room temperature; be sure to keep the original packaging tightly closed after each use. Soft-crust, unsliced breads will keep well 4-5 days on the counter, while hard-crust breads will keep fresh for 1-2 days.

## How and Where to Store Food

You have spent a lot of money to buy the food. Safe storage will make it last longer, stay fresh and delay or stop spoilage.

- Keep margarine, eggs (in the carton) and fluid milk in the fridge on the shelves.
- Use the fridge door spaces and door compartments to store condiments.
- Keep carrots, and lettuce loosely bagged in a crisper drawer.
- Keep onions and potatoes in a cool dark place like a cupboard, closet or a shelf. Keep them away from each other because onions give off a natural gas that will spoil the potatoes.
- Store other basic shelf ingredients in tightly sealed jars or plastic food grade containers to keep out insects/pests. Remember to label the contents (labels or masking tape) so you or a family member won't mix up sugar with salt etc.
- Read the 'expiry date' or best before (BB) date on canned foods and packages. These dates may be on the label and sometimes on the bottom of the container. Put the ones that will expire soon closest so you use them first.
- Throw away any food that you think may have spoiled.
- Write the date on packages or containers of rice, pasta, dried beans, flour, rolled oats, raisins, herbs and spices when you buy them so you know how old the food is. Use the oldest foods first.
- Put any leftover open canned foods (veggies, fruit, tuna, beans, tomato sauce) in a different container and cover it well. Keep in the refrigerator and use it up in the next 2-3 days.
- Store prepared foods and leftovers in the refrigerator or freeze. Label and date.
- Read label to check if the jarred food must be refrigerated once opened (mayonnaise).
- Opened jars of peanut butter and nut butters can be stored at room temperature.



## Best Before vs. Expiry Dates... What's the difference?

### Best Before Dates

The best before date is a guarantee of freshness. Best before dates are found on foods that will only stay fresh for 90 days or less. An unopened, properly stored product's best before date tells a consumer how long that food will keep its flavour and nutritional value. The manufacturer's nutritional claims may no longer apply after a best before date or if the product is not properly stored. The best before date no longer applies if a package is opened or if the food has been frozen.

Always check your food before consuming. Generally, if the food changes colour, appearance, or develops a bad smell, it is no longer safe to eat. Dented, leaking or bulging cans should be discarded. Food borne illness can be serious so 'if in doubt throw is out' is still the best advice.

### Expiry Dates

\*The Canadian Food Inspection Agency mandates that only five types of products need to be labelled with an expiration date:

- Baby formula and other human milk substitutes
- Nutritional supplements
- Meal replacements
- Pharmacist-sold foods for very low-energy diets
- Formulated liquid diets

Do not consume any of these products if they are past their expiry date.

