



STORE CUPBOARD *essentials*



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A well-stocked larder makes cooking meals easier and faster. Having some basics in the cupboards gives you an advantage when it comes to being able to rustle up a decent meal with the fridge looking a little bare.

Here are my tips, but you'll adjust the list for your own likes and dislikes.

It's easy to think that meals you put together almost entirely from store cupboard ingredients are the poor relation to any other meal. This is not the case. Let's not forget (and, indeed, we should celebrate) 'peasant foods' - dishes specific to a particular culture and made from easily accessible and inexpensive ingredients.

These include beans on toast, dhal and rice, and rice and peas. All are based on the sound nutritional principle of pairing a good vegetarian source of protein (like beans or lentils) with a grain (bread or rice).





TINS

Whole plum tomatoes
(sauces, soups, stews and casseroles)

Green/brown lentils
(soups, stews, veggie Bolognese, veggie burgers, dhals, etc.)

A variety of tinned beans including:
mixed beans/ black beans/ kidney beans/
cannellini beans
(stews, casseroles, dips)

Chickpeas
(hummus, stews and casseroles)

Coconut milk
(soups and curries)

Good-quality tinned tuna, salmon and
sardines
(pasta dishes, fishcakes)

Good-quality anchovies
(seasoning for sauces and stews)

PACKETS

Soba noodles
(made from buckwheat)

Basmati rice

Ready cooked lentils
(great for adding to salads)

Quinoa
(uncooked as well as ready-cooked
packets for when you're in a rush)

Dried pasta

JARS & BOTTLES

Mustard
(wholegrain, Dijon, English)

Vinegar
(red wine, cider, balsamic)

Coconut oil/ olive oil
(for frying)

Sesame oil
(for Eastern-inspired cooking)

Extra virgin olive oil
(for dressings)

Soy sauce/ Tamari soy sauce
Thai fish sauce
Capers
Passata/ tomato puree

Antipasti
(sundried tomatoes, black olives,
artichokes, roasted peppers, piquillo
peppers)

Sugar-free nut butter

MISC

Nuts
(unsalted almonds, cashews, walnuts,
pecans – use for sprinkling onto
porridge, yoghurt, salads, stews)

Ground almonds

Porridge oats

Flaxseeds/ chia seeds



HERBS & SPICES

Oregano

Herbes de Provence

Tarragon

Smoked paprika

Chilli flakes/ powder

Cinnamon*

Coriander*

Cumin*

Ginger*

Curry powder/ garam masala

Five spice

Sea salt/ Himalayan pink salt

Black peppercorns

Good quality stock

*It's best to buy your spices whole and grind them yourself if you can. This keeps the flavours fresher for longer.



ROASTED CHICKPEAS

Serves 3-4 as a snack

400g tin of chickpeas, drained

1 tsp olive oil

1 tsp smoked paprika

1 tsp ground cumin

1 tsp ground coriander

Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan. Tip the chickpeas into a bowl and combine with the rapeseed oil, smoked paprika, cumin and coriander. Toss well until the chickpeas are well coated, then tip out onto a baking tray and bake for 35 mins, moving them round the tray halfway through so they dry out evenly and go crunchy. Leave to cool, then store in an airtight container.





HUMMUS

serves 2

- 200g/7oz canned chickpeas
- 2 tbsp lemon juice (or more to taste)
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- pinch salt
- 1 tbsp tahini (sesame seed paste)
- 4 tbsp water
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp paprika

Drain the chickpeas and rinse in cold water. Reserve a few whole chickpeas for serving. Put the chickpeas, lemon juice, garlic, cumin, salt, tahini and water in a food processor and blend to a purée. Add more lemon juice, garlic, cumin or salt to taste. Use an additional splash of olive oil and a little water to loosen the consistency if you like.

Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and scatter with the reserved chickpeas. Sprinkle with paprika and serve with crudité's or flaxseed crackers.

CAULIFLOWER DHAL

serves 2

- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 2cm fresh root ginger, peeled and chopped
- ½ tsp turmeric
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- 2 tsp coconut oil or olive oil
- 75g red lentils, rinsed and drained
- 250g cauliflower, cut into florets
- 1 vegetable stock cube, crumbled

Put the onions, garlic, ginger, turmeric, cumin and cayenne pepper in a blender and whizz to a puree.

Heat the oil in a pan and add the pureed mixture, frying gently for 5 mins. Add the lentils, stock cube and 375ml water. Bring to the boil and simmer, uncovered, for 10 mins. Add the cauliflower, cover and simmer for a further 15 mins to allow the lentils to cook down, and for the cauliflower to soften. Serve with 40g brown basmati rice or cauliflower rice



MIXED BEAN CHILLI

serves 2

- 1 tsp coconut oil
- 1 onion
- 1 red pepper, diced
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp crushed chilli
- ½ tsp chilli powder
- 150g mushrooms, sliced
- ½ can of chopped tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato puree
- 1 x can mixed beans
(black beans work just as well)
- 1 veg stock cube

Heat the oil and fry the onion and garlic for 2 mins. Add the pepper and spices and sweat for 5 mins.

Add the mushrooms and cook for 1 min.

Tip in rest of ingredients and simmer for 5—10 mins.

Serve with sliced avocado, slices of lime, quinoa or cauliflower rice.





LENTIL BOLOGNESE

1 large onion,
(roughly chopped)

2 tbsp olive oil

4 cloves garlic, sliced

1/2 tsp oregano

2 tsp smoked paprika

1 tin of chopped tomatoes

250g mushrooms, chopped

1/2 courgette, finely diced

1 tin green lentils or
150g Puy lentils, rinsed

150g red lentils, rinsed

1.5l water

1 tbsp vegetable stock

2 tbsp tomato purée

1-2 tbsp balsamic vinegar

1 tbsp Worcester sauce

1 tsp Tamari

Zest of 1/2 unwaxed lemon

1 tsp sea salt

Ground black pepper

Add the oil to a large pan and heat on a low to medium heat. Add the onion and fry for 8-10 mins until soft and browning. Add in the garlic and spices and stir for another few mins, then add in the tomatoes, lentils, mushrooms, courgette, water, tomato purée and stock. Bring to the boil and then turn down the heat to low and simmer for 30 mins. Add a little more water if needed. Stir in the remaining ingredients and season to taste.