



Your Kitchen Essentials

When it comes to reducing food waste, planning your meals is really important. But plans change and by having a well-stocked kitchen you will always have tasty meal to cook.

Sian Breslin, a Stop Food Waste Ambassador and Founder of Siansplan.com, has given us some lists of the different types of foods that you should think about having in your kitchen. You don't have to have all of them, in fact you might have your own essentials that you prefer. These are just a starting point – we hope they are of some help.

Cupboard staples

These are the building blocks for most of the main meals you cook at home. Included below are whole grains rather than refined as they are far richer in nutrients. The antioxidants in whole grains have been shown to play a key role in reducing the risk of disease.

- Wholegrain bread
- Breadcrumbs - great way to use up stale bread and it can be frozen
- Wholegrain flour
- Basmati rice or brown rice
- Brown pasta
- Couscous
- Cornflour
- Lentils
- Potatoes
- Plain Flour
- Self Raising Flour
- Baking powder
- Bicarbonate of soda
- Sugar - caster, granulated
- Popping corn
- Noodles

Canned Goods

Canned food is just as nutritious as fresh and canned chopped tomatoes are often tastier. These are great ingredients to buy when on offer. Offers are a supermarket's way of making you buy more than you need and a lot of what we buy through offers goes to waste. Canned food is a different story as it has a long shelf life.

- Whole or Chopped tomatoes
- Beans - kidney beans, butter beans
- Baked beans
- Chickpeas
- Tinned fish - tuna, sardine, mackerel, salmon

Fridge and Freezer

Just like canned foods, frozen vegetables are as nutritious as fresh, especially during

the winter. Better still there's no preparation needed, use them to make soup, add to a stir fry or to make a quick meal.

- Frozen veg - peas, spinach and corn
- Frozen berries - watch out for offers
- Milk
- Cheese
- Eggs
- Butter

Condiments and Sauces

Stock cubes are essential in every store cupboard, you can use them to add flavour to rice dishes, couscous and in main meals such as spaghetti bolognese. Make sure to watch how much salt you add when using stock cubes as they can contain quite a bit of salt.

- Vegetable, beef, chicken stock cubes
- Curry paste
- Garlic paste
- Tomato paste
- Tomato ketchup
- Worcestershire sauce
- Mayonnaise
- White wine or rice vinegar
- Soy Sauce
- Mustard Honey
- Vinegar
- Peanut butter
- Brown sauce
- Gravy powder
- Hot pepper sauce
- Sweet chill sauce

Herbs and spices of life

Herbs and spices will add flavour to any dish you are cooking. Many recipes call for specific herbs or spices, so it is easy to be put off a recipe with a big ingredient list. However, if you have a few basics that you like these can usually cover most flavours so if you are just beginning to build up your store cupboard, cumin, mixed herbs and Italian herbs are three basic spices that you can use in a variety of dishes and is a good place to start on the spice journey! Often it is better to try and go for whole spices like black pepper corns, cumin seeds etc, they last longer and are often cheaper. If you are not into grinding them using a pestle and mortar use a small food blender. Otherwise the ground spices are fine.

When it comes to herbs a really cheap way to have them is to grow fresh ones in a window box or pot in your garden. This is a bit daunting at the start but once you get started is very rewarding.

- Cumin (seeds or ground)
- Mixed herbs
- Italian herbs
- Black pepper
- Sea salt
- Chilli flakes
- Dried rosemary
- Oregano
- Basil
- Thyme
- Parsley
- Coriander (ground)
- Chilli powder
- Paprika
- Turmeric
- Ginger
- Cinnamon
- Cardamon
- Cayenne
- Garam Masala