

Basic Foods for Fridge, Freezer & Cupboard

By Alice Henneman, MS, RD, Extension Educator, ahenneman1@unl.edu

UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln

EXTENSION

Lancaster County

<http://lancaster.unl.edu/food>

Would you like to go to your cupboard, refrigerator or freezer and already have most—if not all—the ingredients needed to make a meal? Use these foods as a “starter list” to help you begin developing a list that works for you. These foods were picked because they’re commonly available and mix and match with a variety of other foods.

Fruits

FRESH

- Apples
- Bananas
- Grapes, seedless
- Oranges

CANNED

- Oranges, mandarin
- Pineapple, canned in juice (pineapple tidbits are a versatile form)

FROZEN

- Berries, such as blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, etc.

DRIED

- Raisins, dried cranberries, etc.

Vegetables

FRESH

- Bell peppers
- Carrots
- Cabbage, shredded (buy smallest package size if cooking for a few people)
- Lettuce, darker green varieties (Romaine, green leafy, etc.)
- Onion (sweet onions are most versatile if buying only an onion or two weekly)
- Potatoes (white and sweet)
- Tomatoes (cherry and grape tomatoes tend to have the best flavor when other tomatoes are out-of-season)

CANNED

(no-salt-added forms available)

- Corn
- Tomatoes, diced

FROZEN

- Corn
- Peas

Dairy Products

- Cheese, cheddar and/or other favorite varieties
- Ice cream or frozen yogurt, low fat or fat-free
- Milk, low fat or fat-free
- Yogurt, low fat or fat-free (vanilla-flavored yogurt is especially versatile; or add your own sweetener and vanilla to plain yogurt, if desired)

Meat, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts

- Beans, canned or dry, such as Great Northern, navy, kidney, red, black, pinto beans, etc. (check for “no-salt-added” canned varieties)
- Beef, ground, 90–95% lean
- Chicken breast, skinless
- Eggs, large (“large” suggested as many recipes are designed for use with this size)
- Fish (frozen fish fillets lend themselves to many quick meals; thaw overnight in the refrigerator in original package on a plate on bottom shelf for easy use the next day)
- Nuts (almonds, walnuts, etc.)
- Peanut butter
- Pork loin chops, boneless
- Salmon (including canned and/or frozen forms of salmon; canned salmon is available in water pack varieties and may be found canned without the skin, if desired)
- Tuna, canned (water pack and low sodium varieties are available)
- Turkey cutlets

Grains

- Bread, whole wheat (can purchase low sodium forms at some stores)
- Cereal (whole grain)
- Crackers (look for varieties that are whole grain and lower in salt)
- Oatmeal (“Old-fashioned” oatmeal is very versatile; simply pulse it a few times in a blender if a recipe calls for “quick oats.”)
- Pasta (consider whole grain varieties)
- Rice (include some whole grain rice, such as brown rice)

Oils

- Extra virgin olive oil for dressings, dipping and drizzling
- Mayonnaise-type salad dressing (light and low fat forms available)
- Other oil for cooking: canola, corn, cottonseed, safflower, soybean, sunflower
- Soft (tub or squeeze) margarine with no trans fats

Seasonings

- Black pepper (consider freshly ground)
- Chicken broth, low sodium
- Chili powder
- Cinnamon
- Garlic, fresh or dry
- Italian seasoning (can be used as a quick seasoning for salad dressings, soups, rubs for meat, etc.)
- Mustard, Dijon-type (can find no-salt-added forms in some stores)
- Rosemary, dried leafy (crush slightly right before using to release added flavor in recipes; an inexpensive mortar and pestle works well for this)
- Thyme, dried leafy (see note by rosemary)
- Vanilla
- Vinegar (consider vinegars such as balsamic, red wine, cider, and white wine or rice vinegar — start with a small bottle and see which you use the most; vinegar easily lasts at least a year)

Sugars

- Sugar, white granulated
- Sugar, brown

Other

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Know how. Know now.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension’s educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.