



Why do I need to keep a well-stocked pantry?

A pantry can be anything from a designated closet in or near your kitchen to one shelf in a kitchen cabinet. Your available space and money will have a lot to do with where it is and how much is in it.

But why have one anyway?

Having a well-stocked pantry is NOT hoarding. It is NOT reacting to a crisis. It is NOT letting some things get dusty and out of date.

Having a well-stocked pantry IS keeping staples and well-rounded ingredients ready for a meal (or two). It IS peace of mind when the month lasts longer than the money. It IS knowing you can grab a few items off your shelf and put a decent meal in front of your family if you've forgotten to plan ahead.

With a tight food budget you may only be able to pick up one "extra" item during a shopping trip. But if you're able to do that each trip you'll be ahead in no time!

What are pantry staples?

Rice/noodles (*see note about storage below)

Canned meat (tuna, chicken, ham, salmon, vienna sausage)

Beans (dry is always cheaper but cans are easy to use)

Evaporated milk (saves the "real milk" for the kids and is perfect in recipes)

Canned vegetables/fruits (spend no more than \$.50 on canned vegetables. Fruit will be about a \$1. a can)

Peanut butter

Baked beans

Corn meal (*see note about storage below)

Jarred or canned pasta sauce

*these items will draw mealie bugs if not kept airtight and dry. Use clean mayonnaise jars/jelly jars/pasta sauce jars to store these items. You'll always know how much you have on hand. A great way to store flour also.

**Remember to check stores with "dollar" in their name. You can find 2 lbs. of rice, a 25 oz. jar of applesauce, 19 oz. jelly, all for \$1.00.