



Happy, Healthy Pantry

Presented at Turner Farm, UC Center for Health and Wellness

Student Wellness Retreat

by Megan Tysoe

Happy Healthy Pantry:

A well-stocked whole-foods pantry is an essential tool for cooking healthy, well-balanced meals at home. Knowing what to have on hand will make cooking delicious meals at home easy, especially when supplementing with nutrient-dense, local produce.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list. This list is just a small sampling of what you can keep in your pantry for plant-based success – use it as a guide and supplement your taste by shopping organically at your local health food store.

Soaking and Sprouting: *In my own kitchen, I like to soak/sprout many of my grains, nuts, seeds, beans and legumes. The process of soaking and sprouting basically mimics nature's germination process of a seed into a plant, and increases not only nutrient content, but also aids in digestion. We won't go into this process today but you can find lots of information about soaking and sprouting online, as well as in the attached illustration.*

Whole Grains:

A whole grain is defined as having all of its original parts [bran, germ, endosperm], versus a refined grain that has been stripped of both the bran and the germ, which contain antioxidants, b-vitamins, fiber, minerals and healthy fats. Whole grains keep you full longer, regulate digestion and give you more nutrient bang for your buck!

Farro: Farro is an ancient grain (does contain gluten) that has been eaten for thousands of years around the world. It is a high fiber food that is great in salads and soups, and supplies more than 10 vitamins and minerals.

Rice: There are more than 40,000 varieties of rice around the world, and both brown rice and wild rice make great pantry staples. They are fantastic sources of energy, and brown rice has also been proven to help the nervous system function optimally. Rice can be used a number of ways, whether eaten as a side dish, made into fritters, or thrown into soup and stews for extra fiber.

Quinoa: Quinoa is a gluten-free grain high in protein that has been consumed for thousands of years in South America. It comes in red, white and black varieties and is also high in fiber, magnesium, iron and potassium. Also one of the easiest of all grains to cook! Great substitute for rice in dishes.

Oats: Most people are aware that oats are touted as a healthy-heart food option, because the specific type of fiber found in oats has been proven to lower cholesterol levels and therefore decrease the risk of developing heart disease. Oats also contain unique anti-oxidant compounds, and studies have also shown that oats can stabilize blood sugar and lower type 2 diabetes risk. Oats are great as a breakfast cereal in the morning, baked into muffins and crisps, or incorporated into a savory porridge.

Buckwheat: Buckwheat is a gluten-free whole grain that can be substituted for rice or quinoa, or made into a porridge like oats. Buckwheat soba noodles are also delicious, whole grain noodles that are often used in Asian cuisines as a substitute for wheat or rice noodles. Buckwheat is actually a fruit seed and not a cereal grain, and contains many powerful phytonutrients. Buckwheat has been proven to not only be good for your cardiovascular system, but also to help control blood sugar levels, prevent gallstones, and regulate digestion.

Beans + Legumes:

Beans and legumes are nutritional powerhouses that are also incredibly wallet-friendly and easy to cook. They add fiber and protein to any plant-based meal, as well as variety in flavor and taste. Beans and legumes in dry form should be soaked before cooking for optimal digestive support – it depends largely on the bean and can be easily researched online.

Beans: (black, kidney, garbanzo, great northern): There are many different varieties of beans, all of which can typically be bought either dry or canned. Beans are one of the least expensive sources of protein, and also contain complex carbs, fiber, and a powerhouse of nutrients and anti-oxidants. They're heart helpers, low in

fat, are incredibly versatile in recipes. They're perfect in dips, stews, soups and grain bowls, added into a salad, molded into patties or in tacos and enchiladas.

Peas: When fresh peas aren't available, dried peas are a great option as they're available all year long. Dried peas, a small but nutritionally mighty member of the legume family, are a very good source of cholesterol-lowering fiber. Not only can dried peas help lower cholesterol, they are also of special benefit in managing blood-sugar disorders since their high fiber content prevents blood sugar levels from rising rapidly after a meal.

Lentils: Lentils are one of the oldest commonly consumed legume in history, and like beans and peas have a slew of vitamins, minerals and fiber. They require less soaking time than other beans and legumes, which makes them an easier ingredient for the home cook.

Nuts + Seeds:

Nuts and seeds serve as great condiments in any plant-based diet, with a large range of health benefits depending on the specific nut and seed. All are wonderful on their own or in salads, as a substitute to peanut butter (great in dressings and sauces) and almost all can be made into milk substitutes.

Almonds: Almonds contain lots of healthy fats, fiber, protein, magnesium and vitamin E. The health benefits of almonds include lower blood sugar levels, reduced blood pressure and lower cholesterol levels. They can also reduce hunger and promote weight loss.

Brazil Nuts: Brazil is most well-known for containing high levels of selenium, an antioxidant that can help fortify the immune system, fight disease, promote healthy metabolism and decrease signs of aging.

Hazelnuts: Hazelnuts are rich in unsaturated fats (mostly oleic acid), high in magnesium, calcium and vitamins B and E. Hazelnuts are good for your heart, help reduce the risk of cancer, and aid in muscle, skin, bone, joint and digestive health.

Pecans: Pecans are high in healthy unsaturated fat and just a handful a day can lower "bad" cholesterol. They also contain more than 19 vitamins and minerals including vitamins A, B, and E, folic acid, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, and zinc.

Walnuts: Walnuts contain a number of neuroprotective compounds, including vitamin E, folate, melatonin, omega-3 fats, and antioxidants. Research shows walnut consumption may support brain health.

Pistachios: Pistachios are one of the oldest nuts that were commonly used in the world. They are native to Asia, particularly in Iran and Iraq. Like other nuts, they promote a healthy heart, weight management, protection against diabetes and hypertension, and improved digestion.

Sesame Seeds: Sesame seeds are one of the oldest condiments known to man, and have been used in Asian cuisine for centuries. They're the main ingredient in tahini, which is used in hummus and a variety of dressings. Not only are sesame seeds an excellent source of copper and a very good source of manganese, but they are also a good source of calcium, magnesium, iron, phosphorus, vitamin B1, zinc, molybdenum, selenium, and dietary fiber

Flax Seeds: Flaxseeds (also called linseeds) are a rich source of micronutrients, dietary fiber, manganese, vitamin B1, and are probably most popularly known as being a great plant source of the essential fatty acid alpha-linolenic acid, also known as ALA or omega-3. The seeds come from flax, one of the oldest fiber crops in the world - known to have been cultivated in ancient Egypt and China.

Chia Seeds: Despite their tiny size, chia seeds are among the most nutritious foods on the planet. The Mayans and Aztecs have long prized chia seeds for their ability to deliver sustainable energy – 1 ounce alone provides 11 grams of fiber and 4 grams of protein, is high in omega-3's, and is loaded with antioxidants. Chia seeds are known for their gelatinous nature when mixed with water, which makes them an excellent egg substitute or thickener. They can be eaten raw, soaked in juice, added to porridges and puddings, or added to baked goods. You can also sprinkle them on top of cereal, yogurt, vegetables or rice dishes.

Vinegars:

Vinegar is said to have been discovered around 5000 BC, when unattended grape juice turned into wine and then vinegar. Originally used as a food preservative, vinegar's medicinal uses soon came to light. Hippocrates used vinegar to manage wounds, as well as for general healing, detoxing and cleansing, while medical practitioners in the 1700s used it to treat everything from poison ivy and croup to stomach aches. Vinegar, which means "sour wine" in French, can be made from virtually any carbohydrate that can be fermented, including most commonly grapes and apples. All vinegars have slightly different tastes, so it depends largely on personal preference which you choose to keep in your pantry – below are some of my favorites!

Apple Cider Vinegar: Apple cider vinegar has been touted by many as a "miracle cure" in the health food community, and proponents argue it can help you detox, balance your system and aid in weight loss, to name a few.

Champagne Vinegar: More mild in taste than apple cider vinegar and great in dressings

Balsamic Vinegar: Strong flavor, great in salad dressings

Oils:

There are many options when it comes to oils for cooking. It's important that when you're cooking with high heat, you choose your oils carefully. You'll want to cook with oils that can handle high heat and resist oxidation, and therefore the production of free radicals.

High heat: Refined olive, refined coconut, refined almond, avocado, refined grapeseed, refined sesame, refined sunflower and safflower

Medium heat: Macadamia, extra virgin olive, refined walnut

Sweeteners:

We know all too well that too much sugar can suppress the immune system, cause anxiety, ADD, headaches, depression and certain cancers, speed the aging process, contribute to arthritis, lead to weight gain, and result in constipation (just to name a few). In nature, we wouldn't be eating close to the amount of sugar we're eating today, and any sugar we would be consuming would be in its whole form. For example, when you eat an apple, you're not just getting the sugar in the fruit, you're also getting the minerals, vitamins, water, and fiber that help us metabolize the sugars more slowly. But ultimately, there will be special times when we want an added touch of sweetness, whether in a cup of coffee or homeT baked good, so when that happens just be mindful. Not all sweeteners are created equal. Sugar is still sugar and should always be consumed in moderation, but certain types including coconut sugar and honey have added health benefits that are nonT existent in white sugar, making them superior alternatives.

Try to Avoid:

Refined White Sugar: White sugar is made from sugarcane, in a process where the cane is crushed and separated into a syrup. The syrup is then reduced down, resulting in the formation of crystals. These crystals are separated from the syrup (which we know as molasses, which is very mineral rich and high in iron) through a centrifugal process and are then clarified and filtered. What is left is a highly refined product that is 99% sucrose, devoid of all vitamins, minerals and fiber. Extremely high on the GI index, consumption of white sugar will cause a sharp spike in blood sugar levels, in turn causing insulin levels to rise.

Brown Sugar: Brown sugar is 96% sucrose and is just refined white sugar with the addition of a small amount of molasses. It has a nuttier taste, but is only marginally better in terms of its nutrition profile over white sugar.

Turbinado: Turbinado are the sugar crystals resulting from one centrifuge in the sugar making process. White sugar goes through three. Turbinado sugar therefore still has some vitamins and minerals, and is less refined than white sugar. It is approximately 95% sucrose.

Refined Fructose (High Fructose Corn Syrup): This sugar is made by converting cornstarch into dextrose. It's most often genetically modified, and has been proven to raise bad cholesterol, cause inflammation and damage the liver. Never buy any packaged products with High Fructose Corn Syrup on the ingredient list.

Agave: There's much debate about agave nowadays, and I generally do not recommend it as a sweetener. If you tend to gravitate towards it, I recommend doing your own research and reading articles for and against its consumption and deciding for yourself if it's something you want to consume. I try and avoid agave because it predominately consists of fructose, and high fructose consumption has been linked with obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

Favorite alternatives include:

Rapadura or Sucanat: These are brand names for sugarcane that has been juiced and then evaporated down to a solid. It has a strong molasses-like taste because it has not been centrifuged, making it quite mineral rich.

Coconut Nectar: Coconut nectar is a liquid sweetener that is derived from the sap of flower buds from the coconut palm tree. It is a low glycemic sweetener that contains a number of vitamins and minerals. The sap is evaporated at low temperatures, resulting in a mild sweetener similar to agave in taste. Unlike agave, coconut sugar contains little fructose and instead contains 70-79% sucrose. If the sap continues to evaporate you will be left with **coconut palm sugar**, a non-liquid sweetener with a rich, caramel like flavor. This is my favorite non-liquid sweetener to use when baking.

Maple Syrup: Just like coconut nectar, maple syrup is derived from sap. Sap of the maple tree is evaporated over boiling water which concentrates the sugars. It has a very distinct flavor, and while it is higher on the glycemic index than other sweeteners listed here it does contain beneficial minerals including manganese and zinc. It's also rich in calcium, potassium and iron.

Honey: If you're vegan you might avoid this sweetener, but honey is one of my favorite forms of sugar. When buying honey, try to buy a 100% local and raw variety. Honey is known for not only its great taste, but for its incredible healing properties. It's antibacterial and antimicrobial, making it a great choice to use in teas and other remedies when sick. In comparison to table sugar, it is minimally refined.

Dates: I include dates here not in their dehydrated form (date sugar) but in their whole form. Dates are deliciously sweet, and are a great sweetener for smoothies, nut mylks, and baked goods. When used in their whole form their fiber is still intact, which helps to regulate blood sugar levels. They're one of the most ancient food plants of the middle east, and are known to have cleansing properties for the large intestine and to help treat constipation. Fresh or dried, they're a great source of B vitamins as well as copper, iron and potassium.

SOAK + SPROUT

Seeds, nuts, grains and beans are covered in chemicals called enzyme inhibitors which prevent premature germination and store nutrients for plant growth. When humans consume these chemicals, they reduce the absorption of important minerals and proteins causing nutrient deficiencies and other health issues. Soaking and sprouting bypasses this issue as it activates the seed and neutralises the inhibitors.

MACADAMIA Do Not Soak Does Not Sprout	CASHEW 2-2 1/2hrs Soaking Does Not Sprout	PECAN 4-6hrs Soaking Does Not Sprout	ALMOND 8-12hrs Soaking 12hrs Sprouting	WALNUT 4hrs Soaking Does Not Sprout	BRAZILNUT Do Not Soak Does Not Sprout
PISTACHIO Do Not Soak Does Not Sprout	PINENUT Do Not Soak Does Not Sprout	SESAME 8hrs Soaking 1-2Days Sprouting	ADZUKI 8hrs Soaking 3-5Days Sprouting	CHICKPEA 12hrs Soaking 12hrs Sprouting	MUNG 1Day Soaking 2-5Days Sprouting
ALFALFA 8hrs Soaking 2-5Days Sprouting	FENUGREEK 8hrs Soaking 3-5Days Sprouting	FLAX 8hrs Soaking Does Not Sprout	LENTIL 8hrs Soaking 12hrs Sprouting	KAMUT 7hrs Soaking 2-3Days Sprouting	WHEAT 7hrs Soaking 2-3Days Sprouting
SUNFLOWER 2hrs Soaking 2-3Days Sprouting	HEMP Do Not Soak Does Not Sprout	PEPITA 8hrs Soaking 1-2Days Sprouting	OATS 8hrs Soaking 2-3Days Sprouting	SPELLT + RYE 8hrs Soaking 2-3Days Sprouting	
CORN 12hrs Soaking 2-3Days Sprouting	RICE 8hrs Soaking 3-5Days Sprouting	MILLET 8hrs Soaking 2-3Days Sprouting	QUINOA 2hrs Soaking 1-2Days Sprouting	BARLEY 6-8hrs Soaking 2Days Sprouting	
	BUCKWHEAT 15mins Soaking 1-2Days Sprouting				