

Separation is in the Preparation

Preparing your own food is the best way to control exactly what you feed your body. If you are trying to eat well, it is also more budget-friendly than eating out all the time. Unfortunately, it's not necessarily as convenient, but here are a couple tips that will make it easier, faster, and more achievable.

#1: Ready Your Tool Kit

Cooking is always easier when you have the right tools on hand. Below is a list of kitchen items that will make life much easier.

Priority Items:

- Cutting Board(s)
- Knives: 8" Chef & 4" Paring
- Frying Pans: 10" & 12" or Wok
- Pots: 1 Large (8Qt), 1 Small (2-3Qt)
- Baking Pans: 9" & 13"
- 2-3 Wooden Spoons
- Heat Resistant Spatula and Spoon
- Tongs, Wisk, Scissors
- Measuring Spoons & Cups
- Small & Large Mixing Bowls
- Storage Containers (various sizes)
- Blender
- Slow Cooker

Suggested Items:

- Cookie Sheet & Muffin Tin
- Strainer
- Cheese Grater & Veggie Peeler
- Meat Tenderizer
- Mini-Food Processor
- Dutch Oven
- Hand or Stand Mixer
- Immersion Blender

#2: Stock the Pantry

Having a stock of essential ingredients already available will make it easier to grocery shop during the week. This list is not comprehensive and nothing is mandatory. As you discover new recipes, your stock will grow.

- **Oils:** Olive – Coconut – Avocado – Sesame? – Flaxseed?
- **Vinegars:** Balsamic – Apple Cider and/or Coconut – Red Wine? – Rice? – White Wine?
- **Spices:** Sea Salt – Black Pepper – Chili Powder – Cinnamon – Cumin – Curry Powder – Garlic Powder – Nutmeg – Oregano – Paprika – Red Chili Flakes – Rosemary – Thyme – Montreal Steak – a general spice mix (like Trader Joe's 21 Seasoning Salute) ***Be aware of added sugar***
- **Nuts and Seeds:** (For snacking and to toss onto salads) Almonds – Cashews – Flax Seeds – Pine Nuts – Pistachios – Pumpkin Seeds – Sesame Seeds – Sunflower Seeds – Walnuts
- **Miscellaneous:** (In any canned/pre-packaged items, watch for added sugar!) Canned Coconut Milk – Raw (Local) Honey – Pure Vanilla Extract – Organic Soy Sauce or Coconut Aminos – Dijon Mustard – Canned Pumpkin – Organic Low-Sodium Broths – Mix of Dried Fruit
- **Lentils and Beans:** (If you'll eat them) Green and Red Lentils – Navy beans – Black Beans – Kidney Beans – Chickpeas/Garbanzo Beans
- **Grains:** (If you'll eat them) Spelt – Quinoa – Whole Oats – Barley – Brown Rice
- **Frozen Fruits:** (Great for smoothies!) Bananas – Berries (Black, Blue, Rasp, Straw) – Peaches

#3: Make Too Much

The easiest way to stay on track is to already have healthful food on hand. Tonight's dinner makes a great lunch tomorrow too, and you can often repurpose leftovers into another meal—toss already cooked meat onto a salad, or throw veggies and/or meat into a pan with eggs for a delicious scramble!