



KITCHEN TIPS TO SAVE YOU TIME & MONEY



Don't be afraid of cooking without a recipe or "winging it." Let a well-stocked kitchen be your inspiration! Take inventory of what you already have on hand. Make a list and keep it on your phone or in your wallet. Use a small whiteboard in the kitchen to jot down things you run out of during the week. Follow the rules of FIFO-first in, first out when using up ingredients in your pantry, refrigerator and freezer. A little stocking up on the essentials ahead of time makes mealtime planning and cooking easier.

"Out of sight, out of mind." An unorganized refrigerator leads to money down the drain. To extend the life of produce, remove things from bags so you can clearly see and find what you have. For smaller more fragile items, store in airtight, see-through containers or re-sealable bags. Regularly wipe down and keep shelves and drawers clean to prevent any cross-contamination. Never refrigerate tomatoes, avocados, potatoes or bananas.



Like garlic but hate all the time it takes to find it under all that outer papery skin? Separate whole heads of garlic into individual cloves and store in a small bowl near your stove. When your next recipe calls for garlic, simply smash what you need with the flat side of your knife. Or place separate cloves in a small microwave-safe bowl and heat for 10 seconds. The garlic will slip right out of the skin!

Bags of onions are a good value, but ever toss half of them away by the time you get to using them all? Next time try this. Peel away the skin, trim the roots and keep in a resealable bag in the refrigerator. Your onions will last longer and are ready to be chopped for your next recipe.



Whole heads of red, green or romaine lettuce are often less expensive than pre-cut salad packages which tend to get soggy and go to waste quickly if not used. To get the most of your grocery dollars and save space in your refrigerator, chop, wash and dry salad greens and place in a large resealable bag with a layer of dry paper towels and keep in your crisper. Mix in other heartier vegetables like cabbage, broccoli stems, shredded carrots and radishes for color and texture.

Turn compostable scraps into meals. The leaves from the hearts of celery are tender and flavorful and add beautiful color to things like pasta salads and soups. Fresh herbs are a great way to add flavor to meals any time of the year. Blend them into eggs, pestos, salad dressings and herb butters. For a great topping on casseroles or salads, make a picada out of toasted and minced stale bread. Add herbs, chopped nuts, and the zest from old oranges or lemons.



Do you know how cold your refrigerator is? The ideal temperature for your refrigerator is 35°, just below the danger zone of 41° and warmer than 32° to prevent freezing. You wouldn't think such a small variance would make a difference, but it does when it comes to how long perishable items like produce or leftovers stay safe to consume and maintain their integrity. A low-cost, free standing thermometer placed in your refrigerator can help you maintain a consistent temperature and ensure you don't toss out food unnecessarily.

It helps to start cooking with a clean kitchen. Empty the dishwasher, clean off the counters. Fill a sink with hot, soapy water to clean up larger pots and pans as you go. Use a large colander to hold all your freshly rinsed fruits and veggies while you work through a recipe. A colorful display of healthy ingredients can provide motivation when you're tired and hungry at the end of a long day.