

The Craft of Pantry-Stocking

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Imbolc 2021

A well-stocked pantry of ethically-sourced, affordable, nourishing, and delicious foods is foundational to our lives & our work. Indeed, the value of such a pantry extends *far* beyond our work. We invite you to consider the idea that pantry-stocking is *a craft*, one that can be approached with deep care & creativity.

Here, we share some of the key patterns that we consider when stocking our pantry ::

- **First, articulate your goals & then balance your priorities.** What is most important to you about how your food grows & where it comes from? You may not be able to meet all of your priorities in sourcing every ingredient, but you may try to get as many as you can. Our primary goals, for example, are to: meet our food needs; support regenerative agriculture & businesses; and reduce our harmful impacts however possible. Within those, our priorities include:
 - **Organically grown & non-GMO** (certified or not) -- To support agricultural practices that are good for the Earth; to minimize our consumption of chemicals; and to divest from industrial agriculture.
 - **Local & independent** -- To support small local farms, businesses and to reduce the distance our food travels (for a smaller carbon footprint, fresher food, and to support local economies).
 - **Fair Trade** -- For any commodity crops coming from far away places. While a 'Fair Trade' certification is no guarantee of a perfectly ethical choice, it feels like an important harm reduction measure in a globalized food system that so often exploits farmers in the Global South, and in markets that have evolved from plantation economies.
 - **Affordable** -- To help us keep our offerings accessible to as many of our connected communities as possible, and so that we may feel that much more generous with the food that we share freely.
- **Understand which ingredients are (or want be) at the foundations of your diet.** What do you most want to be eating? What foods feel amazing in your body? Which delight your being? Keep these ones around! As much as

possible, source them in minimally processed forms, while avoiding unnecessary ingredients. For us, our dry goods pantry is based on: whole grains; flours; dried beans; seeds; peanut butter; etc.. Our freezer pantry is about: frozen bones/organs/ground meat; fair trade bananas; previously prepared stews; and more. Our fridge pantry is about: eggs, butter, maple syrup, fermentation mothers & starters, and seasonal vegetables. If there are ingredients that do not sit well with your body, or that are connected to patterns of addiction for you, consider not keeping them around at home.

- **Buy in bulk.** One of the simplest ways to increase affordability and to reduce waste is to purchase food in bulk. Seek out buying clubs that make purchases from local distributors, or order in bulk through your local food co-op (if you have access to one). Sharing with friends & neighbors is what makes this reasonable for smaller households particularly. (So too does a passion for food prep). We now have connections to buying clubs in *N'Dakina* (Central Vermont) & *Lenapehoking* (Philadelphia), so if you want a hook-up, let us know!
- **Be strategic about the grocery store.** We try to keep our grocery store shopping to a minimum, as retail prices can feel prohibitively expensive. We aim to: learn which items we really do only need in small quantities; which stores carry that which is difficult to acquire elsewhere; and to identify good deals & sales.
- **Perhaps most practically, take notes of your findings.**
- **Grow relationships.** Every aspect of pantry stocking is improved by strong relationships across the food system. Knowing & speaking with your neighbors can support greatly in accessing bulk food. Additionally, knowing people who grow & distribute food may help you glean food that cannot be sold in retail markets and to enter into creative exchanges.
- **Intercept food headed for the waste stream.** So, so, so many food products are unnecessarily wasted because they are no longer suitable as commodities in a capitalistic food system (perhaps they are unique shapes, are past their expiration date, or are slightly damaged). These foods can be gleaned and processed in bulk into delicious, and stably storable nourishment. Try asking for seconds/spoilage at your local farmer's market or grocery store.
- **Grow your own food!** Whether your garden is a single potted herb in a sunny window, or a full-fledged farm, growing your own food is a vital form of Earth-connection. More, it is fun, magnificently fresh, and satisfying. (Pssst...

This is garden planning season! We don't yet know what our garden season holds for us, but we do know whose seed catalogs we'll be perusing :: the [Experimental Farm Network](#) & [True Love Seeds](#).)

- **Store the food with care.** Make your pantry is a place where food is: safe from pests; healthful; and accessible.
 - Bulk bins & well-jars. We store larger quantities of dry goods in glass jars (with gaskets), plastic bins (with gaskets!). Label them clearly.
 - Small accessible containers. Store smaller quantities in your kitchen for easy access. Re-fill them from the larger containers stored elsewhere. (Right now, our larger pantry is serving double-duty as furniture bases around our Home!)

It is a powerful act of self- & community-care to have the foods that serve your life & family at your fingertips, and in ample supply. A well-stocked pantry can also make hosting and offers of hospitality so much more generous. And (because there is no shortage of good reasons to do something worth doing), a well-stocked pantry also helps us feel well-prepared to feed ourselves & many more in the event of an emergency.

(We would so love to help you & your household design a customized pantry plan that addresses your unique dietary needs, preferences, & life-flows! If this interests you, please [complete this form](#) to begin.) <3.