

What's in Your Pantry

Sam: Well, good morning. Good morning. Happy *Sunday Snacks with Sam and Ellie*. Today we're here to talk to you about pantries because we've been talking about preparedness. And one of the things that's near and dear to my stomach is obviously having food on hand and your budget and being able to make food effectively efficiently.

And when I say efficiently, I mean like cost and taste, its taste is very crucial. No savings if nobody eats it. Yeah, it's gross.

And I got throw it out. I just literally Composted my Cost of supplies. That's what we're were talking about is really what do you have on hand?

What do you have in your pantry?

One of the interesting things is Ellie called me old.

Ellie: Well, not really. I just said 'pantry', I don't hear much anymore. You know, almost everybody's using their cupboards or their basement.

Sam: Well, my basement, but like my kitchen cabinets are overflowing or, you know, things like that. I guess 'pantry' is a word that I grew up with. Well, it is a right word. It's just that lots of people used to have houses that had a pantry in them. That doesn't seem to be part of homes much anymore. Yeah. They don't really build them into things anymore.

I know my townhouse had one, which I thought was actually interesting, but that's because my basement was finished and we didn't even have an actual separate dining room. We had an eat-in kitchen, so they had to have someplace to store something. We didn't have that much cabinetry. But in my house now, which was built in 1961, it doesn't have a pantry. We actually turned the coat closet, which was right next to our kitchen, into a pantry plus we have our overflow pantry in our basement.

One of the things that you brought up is that not a lot of people think about a pantry and like what to have in it. Now, obviously I live in a house, you live in an apartment. I used to live in a townhouse, but I still had a pantry. What does it look like for you? And then I can talk about what it looks like for me, because evidently they look different.

Ellie: Absolutely. I'm in about a 400 square foot apartment with no basement. Space under my bed for like a case of canned goods or things like toilet paper or pasta, Not under the bed. I put that on a shelf. I just don't want any critters, critters.

Those are actually on one of the shelves in my bedroom, I have pasta and ketchup and things like that, that I keep. Then in the kitchen I have one shelf that's like the latest canned goods and opened flour, crackers and things like that.

I have two shelves on a bookcase in the kitchen that are other canned items and boxes of cereal, that type of stuff. It's kind of wherever I can sneak in another shelf, but I literally, along with the freezer, could probably technically eat for a month or two without going to the grocery store.

Sam: Yeah. I mean, with the supplies that we have on hand, we could do equally the same thing - minus milk. I can't drink milk being lactose-intolerant anymore, but my kids and my husband love milk. That would be touch and go, but we could make do without it. We always have at least a month worth of food on hand.

Now, when I say that I'm talking, we have dry goods, canned goods, liquids, and a lot of paper supplies that I would use for cooking, such as parchment paper, tinfoil, technically it's not tinfoil anymore. I grew up with my grandparents that, so I still call it tinfoil, even though I don't think I was alive when tinfoil was even being used. Aluminum foil, and, and just odds and ends like a wax paper, things like that. Our pantry consists of two folds.

We have our *upstairs pantry*, which is things that we're currently eating. It's got open maple syrup, cereal, pasta, I think it's got popcorn in it in a glass jar, our open rice. And we've got all the snacky foods that the kids want to consume, like pretzels and things, in airtight containers. It's a mishmash of things, but it's organized. My shelf space is only like two, two feet wide maybe. Oh yeah. It's not like a big closet. No, it's an old coat closet. It was about two feet by two feet. Yeah, That sounds good.

Ellie: I just wanted them to realize it's not a big space.

Sam: No, and all I could fit in. There was a small little bookshelf to fit in there to hold all this stuff that I'm talking about. And we have a rolling-cart, the bookshelf's only like a foot deep and the rolling-cart's about a foot deep. We pull a rolling-cart out for the kids with all their snack stuff. It makes it easier because it's all in Tupperware containers and simple things that they can grab and go with.

Our *basement pantry*, which is, I guess, where I store most of the things, is where we've got all our canned goods or an entire metal shelf that we got from Home Depot. My husband and I tried to get a bunch of reclaimed shelving units, but they just weren't sturdy enough. I actually broke two of them.

We ended up being able to get reclaimed plastic shelves that we use for all our paper goods. Things like toilet paper, paper towels, napkins, paper plates, parchment paper and aluminum foil. I'm gonna say it right. It's not tinfoil as aluminum foil, wax paper. All those kinds of things are on the reclaimed shelves because that way they won't break because I evidently was overloading those shelves with too much canned goods.

We have all the canned goods, homemade stuff, and store bought because, I'm being honest and real, I personally do not want to be a massive consumer, but I also can recognize that I don't have time to make absolutely everything from scratch. Buying canned green beans when I'm the only one in the house that likes them. Yeah. Just makes sense. Makes sense. You know, having some canned corn on hand, when the deer keep eating all of the corn I plant, makes sense.

When we're talking about pantry, don't think it has to be something like you make all your jams and jelly, you can all of your own food, having a variety of pre-made stuff from the store and having everything that you have that you've created on your own, kind of fills that out and gives you a very diverse pantry.

Ellie: Yeah. Well, when you talk about sustainability that doesn't have to be that you make your stuff, it's just thinking ahead. You're not left in a jam or in a situation where you can't get it. It can be store bought and it's still fine, you know?

Sam: Yeah. Like throughout COVID I thought it was hilarious.

I still want to know where all of this homemade bread is. Where did all of you who stole all of the yeast from the grocery stores, but your bread that you made? I'm not hunting you down. I just find it funny. Yeah. It was very hard for me to find yeast and I don't use that much yeast in the grand scheme of things, but still, where did it all go?

We always have on hand a 25-pound bag of flour, bread flour that we store in old containers that we got from our local bakery that are food grade safe that we've washed and scrubbed out really good.

We'll usually put in bags to just keep everything fresh, Really tight on Those. They are really tight, especially the, the extra gaskets that they put in there. Oh, sometimes I feel like I'm going to break my fingers. But then on top of it, I have obviously canned black beans, chickpeas, and those kinds of things where you can make meals from them.

When we talk about a pantry, it's about having staples on hand that you can use to *make a lot of different things*. For me, that's always having beans and flour and variety of vegetables. And then, like I was saying, I have different types of flour for friends that are gluten intolerant. I still haven't mastered gluten-free bread, but, I can always buy that. There's room. There's room for growth in my baking repertoire.

TIP:

But I always have like bags of beans and stuff too, because they're inexpensive. They're easy to store, especially in those buckets. I get them from the local bakery. The beans really hydrate easily, which is one of the things I learned this year, even because I was just rehydrating by pouring cold, tap water over them. I rinse everything here, I learned a tip. You actually put hot water on the beans. You fill your tea kettle, boil **hot water**. After you've rinsed them, pour the hot water on them and let them soak overnight. And actually they rehydrate so much better - go figure, who knew.

With your pantry I would recommend designating one or two small spaces in your kitchen to have excess - not even excess, just staples to be able to build meals from, like having rice and beans, having flour, having pasta, you know. These are all simple, dry goods that you can keep on hand and you can build so many wonderful things with them, you know?

You can even use your library for cookbook ideas or, as you like to say, I used your method this week, even what do you normally tell me to do? Because I used it and it saved my life,

TIP:

Ellie: Put those two or three items you have in a **Google search and say 'recipe easy'**. I always include easy. And there's always great recipes with the simplest things that you would have never thought of.

Sam: Oh, I'm telling you, she's a hundred percent, right? Because last night when I needed something to do with my butternut squash, it wasn't soup because I was not in the mood to make butternut squash soup. I had a lot of carrots and butternut squash. I needed an easy recipe that I can throw together before I go do something else. I found this maple-roasted butternut squash and carrots with maple and cumin. And it was delicious. My whole family actually loved it. I was pleasantly surprised. Star on that recipe.

With your pantry, what are your tips for pantries?

Maybe other people have small spaces like Ellie, or, you know, what are questions that you might have? Put them in the comments below. We would love to hear from you.

TIP:

Ellie: One thought, make sure that your pantry is made up of things that you will eat.

Oh yeah. Yeah. Don't get carried away, seeing something out there and go, oh, this is a great deal. And then find out that it sits there for 10 years. Cause nobody wants to eat it. It's items for your preparations - that you pretty much eat all the time.

Like I love fire roasted tomatoes. And I always include a can with the tomato sauce. So I just buy a case of it and slide it under my bed because, rather than buying one or two every time I'm shopping, cause I always use it with the sauce.

TIP:

Sam: Make sure that your pantry initially is being built with things that you'll eat. Another key point - **it doesn't have to be done overnight**. That was the big thing that I always learned from the time I was little from my grandmother. A pantry is built and it's not built in a day.

It is something that you can just constantly be adding to and growing and expanding because at the end of the day, the goal is to have a minimum of one month of food supply on hand for your family. That can be a single person like you or a family of four, like me.

Ellie: And it's delightful to find out that when there's a storm and the electric's out for three days, you have things you can make.

(NOTE: when you do not have a working stove, remember that you can use a grill or Sterno fuel, etc to heat things up. Do a bit of research for a simple back-up plan. It doesn't require a lot to keep you safe for a few days.)

Yep. You know, so it's wonderful when you don't have to wait and wonder what you're going to eat because you've thought of things that will tide you over. It's a good feeling!

Sam: Again, in the comments below, we would love to hear from you a tip or trick that you have for your pantry. And if you have any questions, please plug them in. We are more than happy to help. We have over a hundred years' experience between the two of us of just random, crazy!

Have a good one. Everybody Have a great day.

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