

## **Liz's Pantry and Fridge Basics + a few quick ideas!**

*Please try to buy organic, unrefined, local products whenever you can!*

- **Oils and Butter**

- **Extra Virgin Olive Oil**

Total Fat: 14g (Saturated Fat 1.9g; Polyunsaturated Fat 1.4g; Monounsaturated Fat 10g)

Very strong anti-cancer and cardiovascular benefits, and is a particularly valuable source of antioxidant and anti-inflammatory phytonutrients, including a wide variety of polyphenols. Also a good source of vitamin E.

Extra virgin olive oil is derived from the first cold pressing of olives. It is the purest olive oil; unrefined, with no heat processing or chemical additives, so the oil retains its full nutritional value, as well as its high-quality flavor and aroma, and very low acidity.

Extra virgin olive oil is great for salads, drizzling, dipping, and I use for low/medium heat cooking too. My go-to oil.

Look for:

- Dark/tinted glass bottle. Avoid plastic. I even go so far as to grab one from the back of the shelf at the store, so it hasn't been exposed to as much fluorescent light. At home, store in a dark cupboard.
- Harvest date on the bottle. Unlike wine, oil doesn't improve with age. A harvest date that's within 1 year is best; no more than 2 years. Buy a quantity that you'll use up within a year.
- Name of the estate on the bottle. "Product of Italy" for example doesn't mean it's been made from Italian olives, or that they're from one region, or even that the oil is made from one type of olive. It can simply mean that it was bottled in Italy.
- Support small producers if you can. Certified organic is a good indicator of a quality product, but many responsible small growers can't afford the cost of organic certification.

Really worth supporting right now are small Greek olive oil producers. Greece has very little infrastructure to manufacture olive oil, and most all olives are sent to Italy to be produced. With the recent economic crisis in Greece, extreme tax hikes seriously threaten the survival of the last remaining small family owned olive groves that produce oil. Also at stake is these grower's ability to stay on the land that's been in their families for generations.

- **Virgin, High Oleic Sunflower Oil**

This is a light, mild flavored oil. I use for higher heat cooking, and when I don't want the flavor of olive oil in my cooked dish or salad. I like Smude's. It's local, responsibly grown/processed, delicious, and readily available.

Read about it at: <http://smudeoil.com/>

- **Sesame Oil and Toasted Sesame Oil for Asian style salad dressings, stir fries and other dishes**

- **More oils sometimes found in my pantry/fridge:** Unrefined coconut, flaxseed, hazelnut, walnut

- **Butter**

Total Fat: 12g (Saturated Fat 7g; Polyunsaturated Fat 0.4g; Monounsaturated Fat 3g)

While higher in saturated fat, real butter is a healthy choice when used in moderation. As fat goes, it's good fat, and it is real food. Never buy margarine; it is *not* real food.

Look for locally made butter that is organic, and/or from pasture raised or grass fed cows.

- **Ghee (Clarified Butter)**

Again, high in saturated fat, so it needs to be used in moderation. Excellent for high-heat cooking, (it has a higher smoke point than almost all oils), especially in dishes enhanced by butter's flavor richness. Terrific for omelets and other egg dishes, but is really good for all-around general cooking use. I sometimes substitute it for oil in such things as pancake and muffin batters.

You can purchase ghee in the store or make your own. I found a tutorial online that has good instructions *with* helpful photos: <http://toriavey.com/how-to/2013/01/how-to-clarify-butter/>

- **Avoid:**

Generally speaking, avoid refined (most common) vegetable oils; they're not good for you. The refining process alone is reason enough to make you never want to buy them again- they've usually been processed with hexane, (a petrochemical solvent), bleach, and other undesirables.

- **Never** use hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils, (a major source of trans fats)- so no margarine, and no shortening. If you have hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil (PHO) listed on a label of *anything* in your cupboard or fridge I would strongly encourage you to throw it away! In June, 2015 the FDA ruled that trans fat/PTO is NOT "generally recognized as safe" for use in human food. Food manufacturers have three years to remove hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils from their products. For those who believe shortening is required for a proper pie crust, use Spectrum Organic Shortening, which has 0 trans fat/PHO.

- **Vinegar**

- If you have just one:
  - **Organic, Unfiltered Apple Cider** – my go-to, all-purpose vinegar; made from unfiltered, fermented organic apples. It can be purchased directly from Spring Creek Produce CSA; otherwise, Eden Organic or Bragg's are brands commonly available in stores.
- Others that are nice to have:
  - **White Wine and/or Red Wine** –mild; good for salad dressings; made from fermented grape wine.
  - **Rice** –sweet; good for stir fries and salad dressings; made from fermented rice wine. Often used in Asian cooking.
  - **Balsamic** –sweet and tangy; made from unfiltered, *unfermented*, pressed grape juice that is aged (the longer it ages, the more sweet and syrupy). Add to braised greens, savory dishes, as a marinade, drizzle over tomatoes (think bruschetta), cheese, fruit, ice cream/desserts
- Don't use! (except as a cleaning agent):
  - Distilled/White –is made by fermenting distilled grain or ethyl alcohol, and many use petroleum derivatives in processing.
  - **Basic Vinaigrette**  
2 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 Tbsp. acid (lemon juice, apple cider vinegar, etc.)  
  
Variations are endless. For mustard vinaigrette, add 1 tsp. Dijon mustard. Want it more savory? Add a little minced garlic. Want it sweet? Add a little honey or maple syrup. Stir in 2 Tbsp. plain yogurt to make it creamy. Want it Asian-style? Add a little ginger, dry mustard, soy sauce, and/or sesame oil and orange juice for acid. Try mixing in your favorite seasonal herbs and/or spices. The vinaigrette in our house tonight will likely have ½ tsp. ground pumpkin pie spice added to it!

- **Honey**

- **Maple Syrup**

Try to use honey or maple syrup *in moderation* as all-purpose sweetener instead of refined sugar.

- **Sugar, organic raw cane** (it'd be best not to have this in the cupboard, but it isn't realistic for most of us!)

- **Flour**

- **Whole Wheat and/or White Whole Wheat Unbleached All-Purpose (+ Pastry Flour, for bakers)**
- Others such as buckwheat for special uses and dietary restrictions

- **Cornmeal** (the finely milled type can be used for polenta too) Nice to have on hand for other purposes besides baking too- such as a breading for fish or chicken.

- **Basic Cornbread**

Whisk together:

1 ¼ cup organic whole wheat pastry flour  
¾ cup organic cornmeal  
¼ cup organic raw cane sugar  
2 tsp. baking powder

Whisk and add to dry ingredients:

1 cup milk  
¼ cup applesauce or light vegetable oil  
2 egg whites

Stir until just blended; don't over mix. Pour into greased 8" pan.  
Bake at 400° about 20 minutes, until lightly browned and toothpick comes out clean.

- **Orange You Glad You Live In Minnesota?! Cornmeal Coffee Cake**

Combine and set aside:

⅔ c. organic whole wheat pastry flour  
¼ c. finely ground yellow cornmeal  
1 tsp. baking powder

Whisk together in a separate bowl:

¼ c. olive oil  
2 egg whites  
½ c. raw cane sugar, plus 1/8 cup for the topping  
¼ c. orange juice  
Zest of 1 large orange, (optional but yummy)  
Add to dry ingredients, mixing just until fully blended (don't overbeat).

Place in a well greased 8" pan and sprinkle with 1/8 cup sugar. Bake at 350 for approx. 20-30 minutes, until a toothpick comes out clean. Allow the cake to cool before cutting.

- **Pasta**

- **Spaghetti/Fettuccini type** –for quick pasta dinners

- Saute onion and garlic in a drizzle of olive oil, add chopped vegetables (and optional herbs) of your choice and cook for a couple of minutes until just firm tender (cook tomatoes and greens a shorter time, 1-2 minutes, just until softened/wilted) and toss into cooked pasta; drizzle with a little more olive oil, season with salt and pepper and sprinkle with optional parmesan.
- Combine cooked pasta with seasoned tomato sauce

- **Rotini/Penne type** –for baked pasta recipes and pasta salads

- Combine warm cooked pasta with warm, seasoned tomato sauce and optional cooked, chopped vegetables; place in greased baking dish and sprinkle with shredded parmesan. Bake at 375° until cheese is melted and browned.

- **Egg Noodle type** –for soups and hot dishes

- Quick chicken noodle soup- saute onion, celery (+leaves if you wish), and carrot (about 1 c. total) in a drizzle of olive oil until carrot is just barely firm tender. Add bite-sized chicken pieces (1-2 c.) and saute until cooked through (or add pre-cooked chicken pieces- I keep leftovers on hand in my freezer). Pour in chicken or vegetable broth (about 2 qts.). Cook egg noodles (about ½ lb.) al dente in a separate pot, then add to the soup. Season to taste with salt and pepper. I also add 1+ tsp. dried tarragon.

- **Rice, Grains**

- **Long grain rice**, such as Basmati or Jasmine
- **Short grain rice**, such as Arborio (I keep on hand for use in risottos)
- **Wild Rice**
- **Quinoa, CousCous**

- **Carrots and Rice**

2 c. water  
1 c. long grain rice  
½ c. grated carrot  
1 tsp. light vegetable oil  
½ tsp. salt  
⅛ tsp. grated fresh ginger

In a medium saucepan, combine all ingredients and bring to a boil. Turn down heat to low simmer (keep uncovered) and cook for about 4-6 minutes, until you see "crater holes" on the surface of the rice. Cover, and cook about 8-10 minutes more, or until the water is absorbed.

- **Cranberry Wild Rice Salad**

Combine in a bowl:

- 4 c. cooked wild rice
- ½ c. chopped celery
- ½ c. dried cranberries
- ½ c. chopped bell pepper (green, red, or mixed)
- ¼ c. chopped green onion
- ¼ c. snipped/chopped fresh parsley, optional

Whisk together and toss into salad:

- ¼ c. cranberry juice
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- ¼ c. apple cider vinegar
- ½ tsp. dried basil
- 1 tsp. honey (or to taste)
- Salt and pepper to taste

- **Basic Quinoa Salad**

Combine in a bowl:

- 2 c. cooked quinoa
- 1 c. small-chopped tomato
- 1 c. small-chopped cucumber
- ¼ c. small-chopped green onion
- 2 Tbsp. (+/-) snipped fresh mint

Whisk together and toss into salad:

- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil

- **Dried/Canned Beans and Legumes**

Remember, these are vegetables! Very high in protein and nutrients, and very filling.

- **Cannellini, White Kidney, Garbanzo** –great in vegetable and poultry soups, and tossed into salads
- **Red Kidney, Black, Pinto** –use in hearty soups, salads, wraps, and in spicy dishes
- **French Green, Red, Brown Lentils** –add to soups or make a lentil salad

- **Basic Lentil Salad** (I've been making this since 1974!)

Combine in a saucepan:

- 1 c. green or brown lentils
- 3 c. water
- 1 small whole onion, poked with 2 whole cloves
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp. salt

Bring to a boil, cover, and low simmer for 20-30 minutes or until lentils are cooked firm-tender. Drain, discard onion and bay leaf, and cool slightly.

Toss into lentils:

- 1 c. small-chopped celery (+the celery top leaves, chopped)
- ¼-½ c. green onion, chopped (I used to use ½, now I like ¼ better...)
- ¼ c. fresh parsley, chopped/snipped
- ½ c. red pepper, chopped (optional- adds sweetness and looks festive for holidays)

Whisk together and stir into vegetables:

- 3 Tbsp. light vegetable oil
- 2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- ¼ tsp. dried oregano
- ⅛ tsp. black pepper

- **Buckwheat Groats** Available in the bulk section. I use to add crunch to yogurt, hot cereal, salads, etc. I also use them as a substitute for nuts in baking. A bonus: despite their name, they aren't wheat, and are gluten free!

- **Nuts and Seeds** Keep on hand, and add them to cereals, salads, hot dishes, wherever you wish! Try to eat a handful a day. To toast, you can either bake, or cook in a dry skillet for a few minute (watch closely, they roast quickly and burn easily). Use varieties of your choice, such as:
  - Almonds, Walnuts, Hazelnuts, Pecans
  - Seeds, ground Flax Seeds
- **Dried Fruit** Just like nuts, add to salads, cereals, or enjoy as a snack. Can substitute for fresh fruit in a pinch.
  - Cranberries, raisins, apricots, dates, blueberries, etc.
  - Note: keep frozen fruit on hand too! Much of the nutritional value (vitamin C is an exception) stays in fruit when frozen.
    - A Holiday Favorite: Dried Fruit Chutney and Nut Appetizer

1 c. mixed dried fruit (if using apricots or dates, snip to size of raisins and cranberries)  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  c. apple cider  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. ground ginger  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. ground cinnamon  
 3 oz. pkg. cream cheese  
 2-3 Tbsp. toasted, chopped walnuts

Combine dried fruit, cider, ginger, and cinnamon in a small saucepan and low simmer for about 5 minutes (stirring often), until the fruit is plump and sauce has thickened.  
 Place cream cheese on serving plate, spoon fruit mixture over cheese and sprinkle with nuts.  
 Serve with crackers.
    - Whole Wheat Blueberry Muffins

1 c. whole wheat flour  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  c. all-purpose flour  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  c. light brown sugar, tightly packed  
 1 Tbsp. + 1 tsp. baking powder  
 1 tsp. cinnamon  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. allspice  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt  
 1 c. buttermilk\*  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  c. unsweetened applesauce \*\*see below  
 1 egg  
 1 c. fresh or frozen blueberries

Preheat oven to 400°. Prepare a 12 muffin tin by lining cups with papers or greasing well.

Combine all dry ingredients in a large bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together the buttermilk, applesauce, and egg. Fold gently into the dry ingredients, until well blended. Don't overmix. Stir in blueberries.

Spoon batter into cups, dividing evenly. Bake about 20 minutes, until golden and inserted toothpick comes out clean. Transfer muffins to cooling rack.

\* In a pinch, make a buttermilk substitute: add enough milk to 1 Tbsp. lemon juice to make one cup. Allow to sit for about 5 minutes before using so that it curdles.
- **Unsweetened Applesauce**

I keep in cupboard/fridge as a quick fruit substitute in winter (alongside a pork chop or in my oatmeal for instance)  
 I also often use it in baked goods' recipes as a substitute for oil. It is an even exchange: 1 c. oil = 1 c. applesauce.
- **Chicken/Beef/Vegetable Broth**

I use 'Better Than Bouillon', which comes in a jar that's kept in the fridge. I like it better than dry granules or boxed broth; and appreciate being able to take out just the amount I need. Flavor is not like homemade, but I think it is an excellent, convenient substitute.
- **Powdered Milk**

I keep this on hand just so I know I always have some at the ready for recipes (but we don't drink a lot of milk).

- **Canned Tomatoes** (I always have canned diced tomatoes and tomato paste on hand)
  - **Quick Winter Soup: Tomato Basil with Corn** (using canned tomatoes and frozen corn)
    - ½ c. minced onion
    - 2 cloves garlic, minced
    - 2 Tbsp. olive oil
    - 28 oz. can crushed or diced organic tomatoes
    - 1 c. water
    - 3 c. fresh or frozen organic corn kernels
    - 1 c. snipped fresh basil
    - Salt and pepper

Saute the onion and garlic in olive oil a few minutes, until soft and aromatic. Pour in tomatoes, simmer for 5-8 minutes, until liquid has been reduced.

Add water and corn, and continue cooking another 5 minutes until warmed through (if frozen corn is unthawed, it might take 1-2 minutes longer). Stir in basil and season with salt and pepper.
- **Canned Tuna**

Greenpeace Guide for choosing a responsible tuna brand: <http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/oceans/tuna-guide/>

I keep a few cans of tuna in my cupboard all year for last minute, emergency meals. Mix a can with a little mayo, a splash of lemon juice and dash of dill and spread on a sandwich. Add elbow pasta, a little more mayo, and you've got a pasta salad. Toss with white beans, large-chopped raw veggies, and a vinaigrette for a "spa salad". Combine a can of tuna with a little onion, celery, a can of mushroom soup, splash of milk, ½ c. or so of shredded cheddar and ½ lb. egg noodles (cooked); spoon into a greased dish and bake at 375° for about 20-30 minutes, until browned and bubbly; serve with some broccoli and corn bread and you've got a very comforting, easy dinner.

Note: remember to thoroughly drain the tuna before using.
- **Oatmeal**
- Breakfast is the most important meal of the day! Add dried fruit, nuts, plain yogurt or milk to your liking and you'll be full until lunch. Choose organic, local grains whenever possible. Most area co-ops carry grains and oatmeal (*and* corn chips!) from Whole Grain Milling -a southern MN, family owned farm and company. I've worked with the Hilgendorf family for years; they are down to earth, warm and friendly, great business people, and their products are top notch. They dry process, which is awesome and extremely rare- most all oats on the market today are steam processed which draws out the nutrients. Look in the bulk section for the Whole Grain Milling label.
- **Bread** (I keep breadcrumbs and croutons in my freezer too)
- **Tortilla Wraps/Taco Shells/Pizza Crusts**

Easy way to transform leftover shredded, chopped veggies and/or pieces of meat/poultry into a meal.
- **Popcorn** We love Whole Grain Milling's popcorn (they offer both yellow and white); found in the bulk section of most local co-ops.
- **Aluminum-Free Baking Powder and Soda**
- **Pure Vanilla Extract**
- **Cocoa Powder**
- **Salt, Kosher** (+fine sea salt)
- **Black Peppercorns** (I like Tellicherry) **or Ground Black Pepper**

- **Ground Spices/Dried Herbs I most like to have on hand**

We like to go to Penzey's, or buy in bulk at a local co-op. When you buy in bulk, you can buy any quantity you want- just a pinch or a cupful.

**General use:**

- Basil
- Dill
- Marjoram and/or Oregano
- Rosemary
- Tarragon
- Thyme

**Often used for baking:**

- Allspice
- Cardamom
- Cinnamon
- Cloves
- Nutmeg

**Spicy dishes:**

- Chili Powder
- Cumin
- Curry
- Garlic Salt/Powder
- Ginger
- Mustard
- Red Pepper Flakes

- **Condiments/Sauces**

- Mayonnaise
- Ketchup
- Dijon Mustard (plus other mustards if you wish: Coarse/Whole Grain, Yellow)
- Tamari and/or Soy Sauce
- Hot Sauce, such as Sriracha or Tobasco
- Lemon juice (and/or fresh lemons/limes)
- Other/Nice to have:
  - Olives and Capers (I keep Kalamatas on hand mostly for salads and as a spur of the moment appetizer, and we like capers with baked fish and chicken-tomato dishes, and Mediterranean salads)
  - Horseradish Sauce
  - Peanut butter (my husband uses on toast, I use as a substitute for mayo on my BLT's)
  - All-Fruit Jam
  - Salsa
  - An indulgence often in our fridge: Wax Orchard's Classic Fudge Sauce (a fat-free fruit sweetened dark chocolate ice cream sauce- just 45 calories per Tbsp.)

- **Refrigerator/Pantry Perishables**

- **Cheese** –at a minimum, I keep block or shredded cheddar and parmesan on hand for salads, casseroles, wraps, and countless other uses throughout each week. A small block or two of other cheese is nice to have around for sandwiches, mac and cheese, or a last minute appetizer. Cream cheese or chevre is usually in my fridge too, mostly for creamy sauce and dip recipes.

- **Eggs (or egg substitute)**

- **Milk and/or Cream**

- **Plain Yogurt**

Very versatile. Works in lots of recipes, and as a substitute for sour cream. I usually drain in a sieve over the sink for a while (at least 30-60 minutes is best), which will allow liquids to seep out so it becomes thicker.

If you like sweet yogurt, add just a little drizzle of honey or maple syrup. If you must buy pre-sweetened yogurt, I strongly encourage you to read the label and consider this: 4g sugar on the label = 1 tsp. granulated sugar. Strawberry Original Yoplait, for example, has 26g in a ¾ cup container. That means it's like adding 6½ tsp. of granulated sugar to your less-than-one cup serving of yogurt!

- **Celery**

- **Carrots**

- **Onion** (for salads, I like to keep green onion on hand in the refrigerator too)

- **Garlic**

- **Fresh Ginger** (I keep a small piece on hand for Asian-style dishes)

- **Fruit** Try to eat at least 2 c. per day - if fresh isn't available, frozen, unsweetened 100% fruit juice, or 1 c. dried fruit is ok too.

Think color! The amazing power of purple and blue fruits is undeniable, but red strawberries and raspberries, orange melons are great too.

- **Fresh Herbs** (if you like, or need for a recipe)

- **Fresh Vegetables in your fridge/freezer/pantry:**

Every day you should have at least 2½ - 3 cups of a variety of vegetables. A variety is important because different kinds of vegetables perform different, critical tasks inside your body. All veggies in this sense are power veggies. You need to have a good balance in order to really get the most out of the vegetables in your diet. If you just eat 2 cups of mashed potatoes –or even 2 cups of broccoli- you're not getting the full vegetable impact your body needs. Keep lots of your new-found favorites on hand!

Here are the main groups:

- Brassicas, and leafy greens –the cancer fighting antioxidant, Omega 3's
  - Kale, Broccoli, Cabbage, Spinach
- Brightly colored veggies –heart healthy and vitamin rich
  - Bell Peppers, Summer Squash, Radishes, Eggplant
- Starchy veggies –good fiber source, cholesterol lowering
  - Winter Squash, Beets, Corn, Potatoes
- Dried beans and peas –high protein and nutrient
  - Kidney, lima, pintos, split peas, lentils