



Dinner from Thin Air: A Kitchen Pantry Checklist

With the right ingredients in your pantry, fridge, and freezer, you can always have the makings of a quick, easy, and delicious dinner, even on a busy weeknight. Take this checklist to the grocery store and you'll be surprising family and friends with your ability to pull dinner from thin air.

In Your Cabinet

Extra-virgin olive oil
Vegetable oil
Balsamic and red wine vinegar
Dijon mustard
Fresh garlic
Soy sauce
Dried oregano, basil leaves, thyme, rosemary, cayenne pepper, dill
Cinnamon
Salt and pepper
Canned beans
Pasta
Rice, Couscous
Bottled pasta sauce
Bottled salsa
Canned tomatoes
Raisins
Bottled marinated artichoke hearts
Roasted red peppers, mushrooms
Canned tuna and salmon
Canned chicken or vegetable broth

In Your Refrigerator

Eggs
Butter or margarine
Plain nonfat yogurt
Parmesan cheese
Cheddar and/or jack cheeses
Pecans and pine nuts
Bagged whole baby carrots
Onions
Potatoes

In Your Freezer

Pesto sauce
Bread and rolls
Sausages
Frozen vegetables
Chicken breasts

enriching ideas

for improving homemaking skills

Tips from Our Own

MANDY *Organizing Recipes:* Use an old photo album with clear plastic sleeves to organize all of those recipes you cut out of Martha Stewart and from the back of your Boboli- pizza- crust package. Slip them into different sections, arranged according to appetizer, salad, breakfast, etc. Once you've tried the recipe, write down your rating, including what you did or would have done differently with the recipe--or pull out and toss out those recipes that you probably won't make again. *Organizing Church Talks/Articles/Lessons/Pictures and Organizing Children's Articles/Medical Records/Warranties:* I organize all church talks/articles in one expandable folder divided by individual folders. Each individual folder is labeled a different topic, and my topics are created as I have an article, talk, picture or lesson to file. Until I have time to type up some additional folders, I toss any unfilled materials that don't fit into any of my current files in the front of the expandable folder. Current topics include: Atonement; Direction/Guidance; Nutrition; Opposition; Spiritual Balance; Temples. I use the same system to organize other items, like articles on child development. In that folder, I have folders with titles such as: Infant Care; Pregnancy; Child Birth; Warranties; Dalton's Medical Records; Preschool; Older Kids.

RUBY *Remembering Birthdays:* Use a card organizer. Mine isn't homemade, though they are easy to make I just found a really cute one in a Hallmark store marked down to \$5.00 so I couldn't resist! It is in a notebook like binder with a few pages per each month to write down birthdays or special occasions for that month and then a pocket to hold the cards you have purchased in advance for those months. There is also a handy address book in it as well to house all of the addresses for those you send cards to. **LAURA** *Reusable Monthly Menu Calendar:* To make a meal planner, take a blank calendar. I picked one that could be adapted for each month, so that I didn't have to worry about switching calendars each month. Then using scrapbook paper, stickers, and other decorative items, you can create a unique and fun plan-

ner. Next, laminate it. Then apply velcro to each of the blocks on the calendar and to the backs of the menu items. (Or, use sticky putty or tape.) This allows you to rearrange the calendar each month, week, or whenever you have a last minute change.

Also on display: **DANA's** APS Organizing Tips (so when you want that picture of your husband dressed-up at Halloween, you always know where to find it!), **ALLIE'S** "Office", and **KEMY'S** Bill Paying Secrets.

Organized Workspaces

- 1. Take a deep breath.** If you're starting out with an intimidating pile of "stuff," just plan to devote 30 minutes daily to sifting through it, and you *will* reach the bottom of the stack!
- 2. Ask questions.** Instead of "where should I put this?" ask: *Do I need this? Why? Where will I look for it when I want it?*
- 3. Categorize** paperwork that you keep into "action" (you must do something about it) or "reference" (you'll be consulting it for information later).
- 4. Use two trash cans:** a small container for papers and items that are clearly trash, and a large wastebasket for anything you're not sure about tossing. Empty it only every few weeks so you can rescue papers you later decide you need.
- 5. Clear your desktop.** Reserve the surface of your desk for items you use daily: in/out box, calendar, message pad. Supplies you only use occasionally (stapler, extra pens, labels) should be stored in your desk drawer where they're accessible, but not in the way.
- 6. Purge desk drawers.** Remove anything you use less than once a week and put it in a cabinet or storage closet.
- 7. Put files away.** Keep only one project at a time on your desk. When you finish with a file, put it away, even if you'll need it later. This habit clears your workspace and your mind for the task ahead.
- 8. Shelve reference material** near, but not on, your desk. This way they're always at hand, but never in the way.
- 9. Conduct regular cleansing rituals.** Set aside time to "sort and trash" weekly so you'll never have to confront an overwhelming mess again.

Housework & Other Emergencies

Cleaning Strategy #1

Music is the secret weapon in your cleaning arsenal. Before you pick up so much as a dust rag, pull out a rocking, hopping CD. It will boost your energy and put some rhythm into your mopping. Then, assemble all the tools & potions you will need—having them in one place will make the job easier and will allow you to keep pace with the music.

Motivation to Clean

Some time ago, the First Presidency felt impressed to send a directive to all members of the Church which said, in part:

"We earnestly call upon members of the Church everywhere to clean up and beautify their homes, surroundings, farms, and places of business. Our homes and our buildings are showcases of what we believe. They should be attractive and give every indication of cleanliness, orderliness, and self-esteem."

An orderly home can encourage creativity—supplies are easily located, work surfaces and areas are available, and there is a general feeling of progress and excellence permeating the household. Pleasant physical conditions bring out the best in people—patience, thoughtfulness, courtesy, and love are common results. Perhaps Sir Winston Churchill had some of these things in mind when he said: "We shape our houses, then our houses shape us."

It's fortunate for everyone when children help with the daily routine of the home. This isn't difficult if they've been given early and consistent teaching by wise parents so that it's their habit to be clean and neat. They should grow up putting away their toys and books, hanging up their clothes, making their beds, and leaving their rooms in order. It should also be part of the children's day, as they become old enough to do so, to assist with such duties as kitchen cleanup, bathroom cleaning, vacuuming, dusting, sweeping, wastebaskets, and lawn mowing.

The game "Twenty Pick-Up" is one way to get a family team into action. If the family room is cluttered with toys and game pieces, everyone picks up 20 things. A "Family-Fix-It-Night" several times a year is what every home needs! It's a good idea if all of these occasions are topped off with rootbeer floats, popcorn, or some other treat. Successful families work together and then play and grow together. — **Daryl Hoole**

Spring Cleaning

*Here's the worst about housework: Every year about 40 pounds of dust sneaks into your house and settles into every possible nook and cranny. The good news is that it doesn't arrive all at once and your regular housecleaning (however hasty) gets rid of some of it. The bad news is that the other 38 pounds continue to lurk in less obvious places. Tracking down and scrubbing away this dirt is the annual rite known as Spring Cleaning. **Warning:** Attempting to tackle items on this checklist all at once can be hazardous to your mental and physical health! Spread them over a few weekends, so you don't lose momentum or sanity.*

Wash windows. Ideally, this should be done twice a year. ● **Clean window screens.** ● **Wash or dry-clean drapes.** ● **Wash shower curtain** with bleach and water mixture, or buy a fresh curtain. ● **Wash walls & woodwork** as needed. ● **Shampoo carpets.** ● **Have upholstered furniture professionally cleaned.** Don't forget throw pillows. ● **Clean out clothes closets.** Donate unused clothes, shoes, toys, or other items. ● **Clean & straighten the linen closet.** ● **Clean out medicine cabinets.** Discard expired medicines. ● **Clean out kitchen cabinets.** Throw away expired food and wipe the interior. ● **Change shelf paper.** ● **Move large appliances.** Clean under and behind them. Vacuum dust from the front coil of the refrigerator (it's important to do this at least twice a year). ● **Clean the refrigerator.** Empty it out and thoroughly clean shelves and walls of unit; reorganize items as you replace them. ● **Clean the oven & stovetop.** ● **Go through bookshelves.** Remove books that can be donated, given away, or sold. Dust books and shelves with soft cloth. ● **Clean ashes from fireplace.** Scrub hearth.



Bare Minimum Housework: From Pigsty to Presentable in Six Steps

Okay, so you had a busy week. The place looks more like a hurricane than a home. Your friend is coming by in five minutes...

- 1. Close the door!** The whole point of bare minimum housework is to do only what's immediately necessary. Decide which areas of your home will be on view and focus your energy and attention there. Don't forget the bathroom. In a true housework emergency, any door that shuts can be your best friend.
- 2. Attack clutter.** Make a rapid circuit, picking up anything that doesn't belong. Do this with a trash bag in one hand and laundry basket in the other. Fill trash bag as you go and pile miscellaneous items into the basket for tossing behind those closed doors.
- 3. Dust.** After tidying, dusting gives you the biggest bang for your cleaning buck. Grab a soft cloth and start at the top, working down. The job will go much faster if you move everything off tables and other surfaces before you start. When surfaces are clean, dust and wipe smudges off lamps and decorative items before replacing them.
- 4. Fluff and straighten.** Now that your furniture is visible, with clutter and dust cleared, make the room look inviting. Fluff throw pillows, straighten slipcovers, arrange knick-knacks, and stack magazines attractively.
- 5. Vacuum and nitpick.** If there's time, run the vacuum. If not, pick up smaller throw rugs and shake them outside, then pick any obvious lint, threads, dead plant leaves, etc., off the carpet. If you have hardwood floors, go to the areas where dust bunnies collect (in corners, under tables, behind doors), and scoop them up with a damp paper towel.
- 6. Speed-scrub the bathroom.** Cleaning a bathroom can be done quickly, no matter how grim it looks when you begin. First, stow everything you can in a cabinet: move toothpaste, makeup, shaving cream, and last week's mail out of sight. If you can get away with it, close the shower curtain and ignore the bathtub. Arm yourself with gloves, liquid cleaner with bleach, paper towels, and sponge. Douse the sink with liquid cleaner and pour a quarter cup into the toilet. After the cleanser has steeped for a minute, wash sink quickly, rinse, and polish faucets, handles, and mirror with a damp towel. Scrub toilet with a brush, and use a wet sponge or paper towels to wipe dust and hair from the floor and base of the toilet. Keep wiping floor as you back out of the room.