

# WHAT WE'RE READING...



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## How to Spring Clean Your Kitchen (and Your Diet)



Even if you haven't been indulging in rich, comforting meals all winter, chances are you've accumulated more unhealthy foods in your freezer, fridge and cupboard than you realize. To start off the new season on the right foot, a little spring cleaning for your food supply might be in order. We talked with the Nutrition Twins (aka Lyssie Lakatos and Tammy Lakatos-Shames) authors of

The Nutrition Twins' Veggie Cure, for their top tips to whip your kitchen into shape.

### Declutter Your Freezer

If you throw foods in the freezer and forget about them, it's time to clear out the old build up. Get rid of all the items with ice crystals forming on the food or the packaging. "Anything with freezer burn will taste worse, but it also often means that the nutrients are lost from foods, especially produce," says Lyssie Lakatos.

Keep some uncooked proteins like lean beef and chicken; it's good for up to nine months once frozen, and can help you skip a meal week at the grocery store. Fill the rest of your freezer with bags of frozen berries and peaches (with no preservatives), yogurts and hot cereals) and vegetables like peas, spinach and broccoli (to add to soups and increase the nutrition of takeout dishes). Want to keep a few swappable meals on hand for times you need a quick fix? Look for options with less than 100 calories and 400 mg of sodium, suggests Tammy Lakatos-Shames.

# READ MORE AT THE JUICE BAR

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[ NOTE: Some sentiments contained within "What We're Reading" articles may not strictly conform with Simple Again's nutritional outlook. We read articles containing opposing information all the time and derive our nutritional philosophies from the latest science, the opinions of experts worldwide and our anecdotal experiences in the field. We keep an open mind and a strong affinity for fact-based evidence to help make the world of nutrition "Simple Again" for you. ]

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Keep some uncooked protein, like lean beef and chicken; it's good for up to nine months once frozen, and can help you skip a midweek trip to the grocery store. Fill the rest of your freezer with bags of frozen berries and peaches (to throw in smoothies, yogurt and hot cereals) and vegetables like peas, spinach and broccoli (to add to soups and increase the nutrition of takeout dishes). Want to keep a few microwavable meals on hand for times you need a quick fix? Look for options with fewer than 400 calories and 400 mg of sodium, suggests Tammy Lakatos-Shames.

### Lighten Up Your Fridge

"From the pantry to the fridge, place the nutrient-dense items at eye level, front and center,

and put any treats in the back.”

Even with tons of frozen fruits and veggies in your freezer, you’ll want some fresh varieties as well. Aim for foods that will keep for several days in the fridge, such as apples, oranges, cauliflower and cabbage. “Don’t cut up anything or wash produce when you bring it home from the store,” says Tammy Lakatos-Shames. “You might think you’re saving time, but it will make everything go bad much sooner.” To make these items more convenient for packed lunches or snacks, she suggests prepping them only the night before you’ll be consuming them.

Swap out creamy condiments like salad dressings, mayo and sour cream for mustards, Greek yogurt or olive oil with balsamic vinegar or lemon juice. And always have a carton of eggs for quick-cooking protein that goes well with any meal or snack.

## Clean Your Cupboard

There’s more to junk food than potato chips. Toss items packed with sugar, sodium and preservatives, such as pretzels and most granola bars and energy bars. “Many of these really aren’t any better for you than a candy bar,” says Lyssie Lakatos. Instead, reach for options like air-popped popcorn (you can munch on three cups of it for only 100 calories) and pistachios — they’re only about three calories apiece, and shelling them slows down your eating, encouraging you to consume less.

Trade in high-sugar cereals — and keep in mind that even healthy-seeming choices like granola and gluten-free options can fall into this category — for oatmeal flavored with cinnamon and fruit. Load up on whole grains like quinoa, brown rice and wheat pasta; low-sodium beans for a punch of protein and fiber; and cans of fatty fish like tuna, sardines and salmon to get those omega-3s.

## Put Everything In Its Place

To ensure your healthy habits stick, it’s important to put some thought into the way you store your foods. “From the pantry to the fridge, place the nutrient-dense items at eye level, front and center, and put any treats in the back,” suggests Tammy Lakatos-Shames. “That way, you have to really dig for the less healthy items.” And make sure that everything is in the correct place to stay at its peak freshness. “Most people know that olive oil is packed with powerful phytonutrients and antioxidants,” says Lyssie Lakatos. “What you might not be aware of is that those antioxidants convert to pro-oxidants when the oil is exposed to heat over a prolonged period of time — which means consuming it can actually damage your body.” She suggests refrigerating olive oil as soon as you get home. Same thing goes for anything containing healthy fats, such as nuts, nut butters and fish oil in any form.

Stocking your kitchen with nutritious choices is the first step to healthy eating — and arranging your storage areas in a way that encourages you to reach for them ensures the kickoff to a slim new season.

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