

Cook Your Culture

Using Pantry Foods

EatSmart
MoveMore

Use this page as a guide to help you create and adapt your own recipes using food items from the food pantry!

1

Start With Pantry Foods

These foods can be used in many different cultural meals

- Rice or pasta
- Canned beans or vegetables
- Tomato sauce
- Peanut Butter
- Bread or Crackers
- Spices/seasonings

What foods do you have?



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2

Make It Work for You

You can keep the cultural meaning of a meal, even if ingredients change

- Fresh → canned or frozen fruits and vegetables
- Meat → beans, eggs, or canned meat
- Grains → rice, pasta, or bread can be used in many dishes
- Think about what gives a similar flavor or texture

3

Follow the Recipe (Your Way)

Use the recipe sheets as a guide

- Pick a recipe that looks familiar or interesting
- Use what you have
- Adjust ingredients as needed
- Keep it simple and flexible

Which recipe will you try?



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4

Build a Balanced Meal

Small additions can help your meal feel more complete

- Protein (beans, eggs, canned meats)
- Grains (rice, pasta, bread)
- Fruits or vegetables (fresh, canned, or frozen)

What will you add?



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Looking for a specific food or ingredient? Don't be afraid to ask!
Pantry staff may be able to help or keep your needs in mind for the future.

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Build Your Shopping List

Use this list to plan meals using foods from the pantry and items you may need from the store.

Meal:

Pantry Foods I Already Have

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Foods to Buy/Get From the Pantry

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Support Local Cultures

Using Pantry Foods

Support your community by offering foods that reflect cultural preferences, traditions, and dietary needs. By learning from your community, you can guide changes that make your pantry more culturally meaningful to the population.

Use this guide to explore ways to adapt pantry offerings, increase flexibility, and create a more inclusive food environment.

1

Start With Pantry Foods

These foods can be used in many different cultural meals

- Rice or pasta
- Canned beans or vegetables
- Garlic, onions, potato and tomato
- Bread, flour, oats
- Spices/seasonings
- Canned meats/fish

What foods are commonly available in your pantry?

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2

Know Your Community

Consider the needs and preferences of the people you serve

- Offer a variety of staple foods
- Include familiar ingredients when possible
- Fresh → canned options can be used
- Use simple substitutions based on availability
- Take feedback from community members

Who do you serve? What foods are important?

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3

Adapt and Expand Options

Small changes can increase accessibility and cultural relevance

- Add new items when possible
- Rotate culturally relevant items
- Partner with local markets or organizations
- Use feedback to guide choices

What small change could you make?

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4

Build Balanced Offerings

A variety of foods helps support overall nutrition

- Protein (beans, eggs, peanut butter, canned meats)
- Grains (rice, pasta, bread)
- Fruits or vegetables (fresh, canned, or frozen)

How can you offer a more balanced selection?

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When individuals ask about certain foods, use it as a chance to learn what is meaningful to them. These conversations can help guide future pantry offerings and better meet community needs.