



## How to Rid Your Pantry of Junk Food

Your house can always use a little Spring cleaning whether it's Spring or not, but have you considered cleaning your pantry too?

When you make the decision to start living a healthier lifestyle, it's crucial that you get rid of all the harmful foods that are in your kitchen and in your life (and probably frequently calling your name). Getting rid of all junk food is not only a great way to assure that you don't have easy access to sugary, salty, or fat-filled snacks but this also serves as a way to **de-clutter** your life. Clearing any clutter in your kitchen can set the stage for moving forward so that it is more easy to create conditions for success. That is why this is one of the very first exercises I give my clients as "homework" when they begin my program.

So, now let's **clean house!**

- Head to your kitchen and grab an extra large garbage bag. (Yes, an extra large one.)
- Toss anything into the bag that is obviously junk food such as candy, chips and cookies. (Note: even fruit juice has got to go!) Discard frozen dinners as well as they tend to be full of fat and sodium.
- Pay attention to the list of ingredients and the order in which they are listed. If an ingredient that is not healthy, such as sugar, is in the top 1-3 ingredients, this means that your food is full of it. So toss it out. Ingredients are listed in decreasing volume beginning with the highest volume.
- Start counting chemicals, not calories. Read the nutrition table if you're buying packaged foods. You'll most probably have to throw out any salad dressings or dipping sauces. And if you can't pronounce the name, chances are, it's not good for you. Check out this article that talks more about the hidden chemicals found in many packaged foods. [Click here.](#)
- Throw out expired foods that you just never got around to. You'll need to make way for all the healthy foods you'll be shopping for later.

Note: If the food in your bag is not expired and non-perishable, then consider finding a local charity or soup kitchen that would accept food donations.

Now, it's time to **go grocery shopping!**

Here is a basic list of plant-based foods you should now own. I have plenty of recipes involving these ingredients so be sure to be stocked with the below at all times.

### Nafsika's Grocery List (see separate print-out)

- Flax seeds
- Cashews
- Chickpeas
- Textured Vegetable Protein (dry) or Meatless Beef (frozen or refrigerated)
- Lentils
- Dry Beans (preferably mixed)
- Sunflower or Pumpkin Seeds
- Asparagus
- Wholegrain rice
- Quinoa
- Leek
- Kale
- Spinach
- Lettuce
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Celery
- Onions
- Garlic
- Russet Potatoes
- Sweet Potatoes
- Purple Beets and/or Golden Beets
- Nutritional Yeast
- Cauliflower
- Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO)
- Nafsika's Garden cheese alternatives (vegan)
- Red Wine Vinegar
- Sea Salt
- Ground Pepper
- Cinnamon Sticks
- Fresh Basil
- Fresh Parsley

Feel free to buy whatever else you like. The above are just the necessities. Your goal is to cook your food at home every day from scratch, thus avoiding eating any processed foods or preservatives. Check out some recipe ideas on my website at [plantbasedbynafsika.com](http://plantbasedbynafsika.com).

I recommend to set aside some time to **cook at least 2-3 meals for the week**. And, you can freeze whatever you'd like to store for a rainy day. This way, you'll be less likely to resort to poor food options.... especially since you'll be so proud of what you've accomplished.

Bon Appetit!