

Budget Friendly Kitchen Staple Checklist

By Dianne Staso, MS, R.D.

Frozen Fruits and Vegetables – are picked at peak freshness and then flash frozen to retain all their valuable nutrients. Frozen strawberries and blueberries are filled with Vitamin C and antioxidants, which boost our immune system. They can be used in smoothies, mixed in yogurt or overnight oats. Frozen broccoli and spinach can be mixed in pasta, rice, soups or cooked and served as a side dish.

Nuts, Seeds and Nut Butters – are good sources of protein and full of healthy fats, antioxidants, vitamins and minerals. Have nuts and seeds for snacks, put them on yogurt and oatmeal. Nut butters are great on toast, apples, bananas, in oatmeal or thrown in smoothies.

Beans and Lentils – are a great source of B vitamins, potassium and protein. Put them on top of baked potatoes topped with cheese or use in salads, pastas, soups, quesadillas or combined with a grain.

Canned Salmon, Chicken and Tuna – are inexpensive protein sources with a long shelf life. Make salmon cakes or use canned chicken and tuna for lunch salads.

Low sodium chicken or vegetable broth – great for soups and flavoring grains

Canned diced tomatoes, tomato paste, and jarred marina sauce – can use in chili's and pastas

Eggs – are a great source of inexpensive protein and essential vitamins and minerals. Eggs are great mixed with veggies.

Tofu – Inexpensive plant -based source of a complete protein, which is also an excellent source of calcium, made from soybeans. A 14 oz container is \$1.79. You can stir-fry, bake, and make into a mock egg salad.

Low- Fat Milk, Fortified Non-Dairy Milk Alternatives, Yogurt, and Cheeses– good sources of calcium and Vitamin D. Yogurt is a good source of probiotics to maintain a healthy gut. Cheeses- shredded, slices, blocks, cubes and/or string). A container of feta or goat cheese is also good to have to add to beans, eggs, and salads.

Grains – whole grains are an excellent source of B vitamins and fiber. Have oatmeal, brown rice, couscous, pastas, whole wheat crackers, popcorn, whole wheat bread, corn and flour tortillas for quick meals and snacks.

Onions and Garlic – are potent antioxidants and have antibacterial properties. They have a long shelf life and add flavor to our dishes.

Ground turkey, chicken breasts or thighs, lean ground beef, frozen seafood

Other Basics – Extra Virgin olive oil, canola oil, toasted sesame, balsamic or vinegars of choice, basic herbs and spices: dried basil, oregano, garlic and onion powder, chili powder, cumin, cinnamon.