



Spring Cleaning Your Kitchen (WEEK ONE- DAY THREE)

Before We Begin-

Here we are on the third day in our kitchen! Fresh clean floors and a clean fridge greeted you this morning, but your accomplishments don't have to end there. Today we are going to tackle our pantry and getting this space in our home organized. As you clean it out, start noting dinner ideas for things that you can make from your pantry for future meals. My guess is that there is lots hiding in there and tons of great ingredients that could be made into some incredible meals. Make sure that you have a **one hour block of time** for each task that we are going to accomplish this week. Good luck and be sure to document all of your amazing progress and share it with us!

Meal Idea for Tonight:

To Die For Pot Roast

1 beef roast - any kind

1 package dried brown gravy mix

1 package dried Italian salad dressing mix

1 package dried ranch dressing mix

1 cup water

Place beef roast in slow cooker. Mix the dried mixes together in a bowl and sprinkle over the roast. Pour the water around the roast. Cook on low for seven to nine hours.

Day Three

Task to Accomplish: Organize pantries

Formula for Clean: The formula for clean will be a basic all-purpose cleaner and a microfiber cloth. The golden rule for cabinets, according to Martha Stewart, is to always spray or apply cleaners to a damp cloth rather than to the cabinet itself.

Begin by removing all of the items from your pantry and placing them on cookie sheets. As you pull items, check the expiration dates on the food and toss anything that is expired. Group the items as you go along and, if it is helpful, begin an inventory sheet of what you have in your pantry. This will help you for your next grocery day and for planning meals from your pantry.

Make sure to condense those boxes as you go along and then decide how you will put them back into your pantry. Grouping like-minded items together (baking supplies, pastas/rice, spices) and putting them in plastic containers or just grouping them together inside a shelf can help make items easier to find. If you have a lot of Mason jars, use these for pastas, rice, and to store some of your baking supplies. Clear containers and jars make things easier to see and know how much you have!

Side Note- I group my ingredients in plastic bins that I purchase from our local superstore. Anything you can find around the house or inexpensively in a discount store can help make grouping your items a little easier (even a dishwashing tub). This is just my system though and is not necessarily for everyone! I would encourage you to try something like this though if your cupboards are deep and items tend to get lost in the back!

Here is how I group my items:

Spices- Gather all of your spices together and wipe them down. Make sure to consolidate and get rid of any old spices or spices that you do not use. Our spice container is residing in the cupboard closest to the stove. I can pull the small basket down and take out whatever we need and slip it back into the cupboard when I am done cooking. This is much easier than rifling through fifty teeny bottles and makes shopping day easier too!

Cake/Cookie Decorating Supplies- These are items that are used less frequently, but still needed a home. I put these higher up in a basket with handles. Piping bags, piping tips, cookie cutters, food coloring, sprinkles and the birthday candles (that no one could ever find) all go into this container.

Baking Supplies: This is a pretty general category, but it is all of the items that I needed, but could never find. In this larger basket are our baking powder, baking soda, confectioner sugar, shortening, and cocoa powder.

Rice/Pasta: These ingredients go into a larger basket and all of the boxes are consolidated and smaller pastas and the rice were placed into clear Mason jars. The mason jars were labeled and have the cooking instructions labeled on them (unless I know the directions by heart). In the

Mason jars are white rice, brown rice, jasmine rice, orzo pasta, macaroni, and couscous. Larger pasta included linguine, angel hair, and thin spaghetti.

Flour/Sugar: This organizing unit goes into our Lazy Susan. This includes wheat flour, white flour, self-rising flour, cake flour, brown sugar, and white sugar.

Syrups/Oils/Vinegars: This organizing unit also goes into our Lazy Susan and includes corn oil, vegetable oil, canola oil, olive oil, balsamic vinegar, white wine vinegar, red wine vinegar, molasses, honey, and maple syrup. Using this unit eliminated the "sticky" factor, which usually occurred, making a huge mess in the bottom of our pantry. Any extra condiments also get put in there, as they are often used in recipes.

EXTRA CREDIT:

Visit wherever else you are storing food and clean and organize those areas too. Get rid of old food, donate items you know you won't eat to a shelter, and take inventory of what you have. Eating from your pantry will save you lots of money and will free up space for new ingredients when you make your next shopping trip!