



Thurston County
**FOOD
BANK**

Kitchen Basics for Beginners



Nutrition With Limited Resources

Making nutritious meals doesn't have to be difficult or time-consuming! All you need are some basic building blocks. Start with:

- A dried grain like **rice** or **pasta**
- Add **veggies** (fresh, frozen, or canned)
- Add a **protein** like salmon (fresh, frozen, or canned)
- And a **sauce** or flavorings like **olive oil** and **garlic**, or **soy sauce** and **ginger**.

When you can, go **whole grain**, focus on **protein**, and eat as many **colorful veggies and fruit** as you can with your energy, time, and budget!



Nutrition can be more cost effective.

Chances are, what you're already eating can be made a little healthier with a few small changes. Eating ramen? Skip the high-sodium seasoning packet and make a peanut sauce (sesame oil, peanut butter, honey, soy sauce, rice vinegar, garlic, and ginger) instead! Throw in some veggies and you're good to go.

Are you new to cooking? Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Preparing safe food takes just four basic principles to keep in mind. These include: **Wash hands and surfaces often**, before you begin to cook or reheat something, and after you handle any raw foods. Also clean the surfaces often where you are preparing the foods.
- **Separate** raw meat, poultry, and egg products from cooked foods to avoid cross-contamination. Never place your cooked hamburgers on the same plate or container that touched the meat when it was raw or undercooked.
- **Use a food thermometer**. Raw meat, poultry, and egg products need to be cooked thoroughly. Use a food thermometer to ensure foods have reached a high enough temperature to kill any harmful bacteria that might be present.
- **Refrigerate everything promptly**. Don't leave pizza on the counter planning to come back later and put it away, because you could easily get distracted and hours later discover that it is still sitting out.
- And last but not least: **wash your produce!** Fresh produce may become contaminated with dirt and bacteria at any point during its journey from farm to table. Washing produce before preparing and eating can remove bacteria that may cause foodborne illness. Wash fresh produce under cool, running water.



Want to go a step further? Pesticide Wash

2 teaspoons baking soda
1 quart of water

Submerge the produce in at least 1 inch of liquid for 30 seconds and then rinse under cold running water.

Starting a Kitchen from Scratch

If you're living on your own for the first time, there's a good chance you're still expanding your kitchen tools. If you're feeling lost and don't know where to start, this list can guide you in the right direction.

Before you go shopping, make sure to check secondhand stores like Goodwill and see if you can find these items secondhand! It's usually cheaper and better for the environment.

Appliances like rice cookers and air fryers will come in handy, but make sure your dorm or apartment allows them before you purchase one.

Basic Kitchen Supplies

- Good knife (maybe even two! A large one and a small one.)
- Cutting board
- Sheet/cookie pan
- Frying pan (if using non-stick, don't use metal utensils in this pan!)
- Small/medium saucepot (think: boiling noodles)
- 2 large mixing bowls (1 plastic, 1 metal)
- Silicone tools (spatula, large spoons, tongs, whisk, ladle, etc.)
- Peeler
- Thermometer
- Oven mitts
- Washcloths just for use in the kitchen
- Microwaveable plastic containers with lids for storing leftovers or use in the microwave
- Optional: electric or stovetop kettle, rice cooker, air fryer, toaster oven, microwave, crock pot, etc.

Quick Kitchen Safety Tip:

- 1) **Never** use a metal utensil on a nonstick pan! Use wood or silicone only to avoid scratching the surface.
- 2) **No metal in the microwave!** Not even tin foil.
- 3) Does your non-stick pan have scratches? **Throw it out!**

Example Meals

- **Hearty Egg Burritos**
- **Microwaved Scrambled Eggs in Mug**

Example Grocery List

Produce: 1 head garlic
1 bunch green onion
1 bell pepper

Meat:

Dairy: Eggs
Milk
Cheddar chz

**Dry,
Canned,
or Boxed:** 1 package whole
wheat tortillas
Canola Oil
1 can black beans

Meal Plans & Grocery Lists

Not only is meal planning a great way to avoid food waste, it can help you keep your fridge full of foods that nourish your mind and body throughout our rainy PNW winters.

When making your meal plan, try to pick a few recipes that use a lot of the same ingredients to help eliminate food waste. And remember: eat the rainbow! The more colorful fruits and veggies you eat, the better.

Busy week ahead? Do some light meal prep!

A little preparation goes a long way. When you have the energy, some veggies can be cut in advance to save time later when you're overloaded with homework or the rainy weather starts getting to you.

Did You Know?

Canned and frozen fruits/vegetables are often thought to have less nutritional value than fresh produce, but they're actually just as healthy! You just need to read the labels and be mindful of what you're purchasing.

Canned/frozen items can sometimes have more sodium or sugar than fresh items, but you can fix this by:

- Rinsing the food off with tap water when possible
- Buying low/no-salt options
- Choosing items without added sugar, including fruit canned in juice rather than syrup



The Basics: How to Read a Recipe

- **Read the recipe well before starting.**
 - Do you have all the ingredients you need? Do you have the enough time for this recipe? Will you need to make any substitutions?
- **Prepare the ingredients.** If a recipe calls for a chopped onion, now is the time to get chopping!
 - Are your knife skills brand new? Watch a video on knife safety first.
- **Measure carefully.** Do you know what all the terms mean?
- **Pay attention to the order of steps.**
- If you make any changes to the recipe as you cook, write them down so you can prepare the dish the same way again if you end up liking it

Read this recipe and see if you have everything you need:

NUTRITIOUS RAMEN: PASTA E FAGIOLI

- 1 pack of ramen, broken into bite-size pieces
- 3/4 c. chopped vegetables of choice
 - Think: onions, carrots, celery, etc.
- 1 can of tomatoes
- 1 can of white beans
- 1 teaspoon Italian-style herbs (like Oregano)
- Splash of olive oil

1. Sauté vegetables olive oil in a small pot, then add water and part of the seasoning packet.
2. Add in canned tomatoes and dried Italian-style herbs like oregano to flavor the broth. Stir in noodles and cook until tender.
3. Lastly, stir in rinsed canned white beans. Enjoy!