

5 spring cleaning tips for your kitchen

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Having a clean and organized kitchen can set the tone for a season of fresh, healthy and budget-friendly meals ahead.



Spring cleaning is the necessary evil that comes with the welcome end of winter. Yes, we know most people would rather be anywhere else than indoors with cleaning supplies when the sun makes its vernal debut. But having a clean and organized kitchen and pantry can set the tone for a season of fresh, healthy and budget-friendly meals ahead, according to local nutritionists. Here, some of their expert tips.

Spring: [8 New Jersey hikes that are perfect for spring](#) ([/story/life/wellness/2017/04/17/8-new-jersey-hikes-prefect-spring/100466146/](#))

Healthy eating: [Cooking classes at Cooktique in Tenafly](#) ([/story/life/food/2017/04/14/healthy-cooking-classes-cooktique-tenafly/100132300/](#))

Take Stock

(Photo: Anne-Marie Caruso, North Jersey Media Group Staff P)

Before packing the fridge with juicy, sweet fruits and crisp, fresh vegetables, experts suggest reacquainting yourself with the food you already have. Lisa Suriano, a nutrition expert and Fair Lawn resident, swears by the “firstin, firstout” method of kitchen organization. Suriano, who runs Veggiecation ([http://veggiecation.com/aboutus/ourteam/](#)), a program that teaches children about nutrition and healthy eating, explains: “You put the items that are oldest closest to the front” to avoid wasting food. Find items with “sooner dates in terms of expiration” and place them at the front of the fridge or pantry – you’ll reach for those first, saving food, money and precious kitchen space. And even if your whole pantry turns out to have a long shelf life, Heather Shasha, a registered dietitian at the Little Falls ShopRite ([https://www.shoprite.com/dietitian/](#)), assures a thorough look “gives you an opportunity to see what you have left and where you need to restock,” avoiding doubling up or overbuying on certain foods.

Use What You Have

After diving into the nooks and crannies of the kitchen, you're bound to find some foods, whether fresh, frozen or canned, that are close to going bad. But this "does not mean food has to be thrown out," says [Dr. Felicia Stoler](http://www.feliciastoler.com/) (<http://www.feliciastoler.com/>), a Holmdel-based registered dietitian, exercise physiologist and nutrition consultant. Dr. Stoler explains she "repurpose[s] everything I can" to avoid wasting food.

Find jars or bottles about to turn that have just a few drops left? Salvage them, urges Suriano. Try, for example, adding apple cider vinegar to barbecue sauce to stretch it, then use the mixture for dipping or for marinating chicken. Leftover ranch dressing, Suriano explains, with some added fresh Greek yogurt, can become a dip for fresh vegetables.

The same goes for fresh items such as fruit and herbs. Shasha says browning bananas can be frozen and then blended into banana "ice cream," while herbs such as rosemary, dill, basil or mint can be combined with water and put into ice cube trays. Use them to infuse water or as bases for stocks or stir fries.

Don't Forget the Freezer

Suriano also recommends rifling through the freezer. Heat up soups, stews and sauce to make room for frozen fruit, ice pops and those herbinfused ice cubes. A hot bowl of soup still works for a chillier spring day, but once the summer heat hits, won't be as desirable.

Consider Natural Cleaners

Same goes for the kitchen closet. Toss old bottles of cleaner and considering going for natural alternatives, like storebought "green" cleaners, baking soda or vinegar.

A bottle of white vinegar is "so versatile." Suriano adds a drop of lemon essential oil. Sunny, just like spring.

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