

*Pantry Chic – What’s on-hand has become where it’s at.*

It wasn’t so long ago that even someone with a lovely, fully appointed kitchen would proudly admit that their cupboard was bare. Eating-out and carrying-in continue to be commonplace. But, for a variety of reasons – health concerns, penny pinching, boredom – cooking is returning.

However, for the prodigals as well as those who never left the kitchen, the complexion of the larder has changed dramatically.

With heightened interest in freshness and good nutrition, today’s pantry regularly embraces the refrigerator and freezer as much if not more than the cupboard shelf. Convenience ingredients rely less on preservatives and more on flavor intensity, ethnic interest, and optimizing healthy lifestyles.

The Trend Curve at the end of this issue presents some perspective regarding the shift in the variety and emphasis of pantry staples.

Recent food editorial has looked at the changing American pantry from a variety of angles.

*Dinner in No Time* “A well-stocked pantry and a few fresh items are the ingredients for super fast suppers.” (*Family Circle*, May 2006) The seven recipes in the article are illustrated with both the finished dish and examples of the ingredients.



*Family Circle* May 2006

*Save or Spend on Pantry Staples?* “While grocery options keep expanding – manufacturers introduced nearly 16,000 new products last year, according to the Food Institute Report – the time and money you spend shopping for truly great-tasting ingredients doesn’t have to.” (*Cooking Light*, March, 2006) The article recommends you spend on sea salt, whole peppercorns, extra virgin olive oil, aged vinegar, long-grain and jasmine rices and pure vanilla. Save on frozen blueberries, old-fashioned oatmeal, green tea and beans.

*Pre-Washed, Pre-Peeled, Pre-Chopped, Pre-Fab Food* “Serious cooks are taking a serious look at the new convenience ingredients sold in supermarkets... High-quality prepared ingredients can be a godsend because an invisible helper has done all of the chopping, slicing, peeling and other prepping for you. It’s like having a sous-chef.” (*Food & Wine*, March 2006) OK, so pantry *per se* may not be emphasized, but the convenience ingredients mentioned are natural pantry items.

*Simple Sauces from the Pantry* “Armed with a well-stocked kitchen, you can use on-hand staples to deliciously dress up meat, poultry, fish, and pasta in a hurry.” (Cooking Light, May 2006) The article also suggests that readers visit the magazine’s website ([www.cookinglight.com/features](http://www.cookinglight.com/features)) and take an interactive pantry quiz in order to “...rate how your on-hand pantry staples stack up.” The quiz rates pantries as Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced, then provides lists of additional items for consideration.



www.cookinglight.com

*Try a Taste of Fall* “A handful of pantry ingredients turns a harvest of fragrant and juicy fruits into versatile desserts and side dishes.” (Southern Living October 2005)

*From the Pantry* “Expand your menu with dependable staples from the pantry ... Some of the best cooking starts with the simplest ingredients – and many are pre-packaged and probably in your pantry right now. Begin with the basics, such as tomato sauce, canned beans, or premade dough, then pair with fresh-from-the-market ingredients, and the results will delight you” (Country Living January 2005) This feature article suggests a variety of pantry strategies including a page of Pantry Pointers.



Country Living January 2005

*Global Grocery* “Supermarkets and superstores cater to mainstream America, including burgeoning Asian and Latino populations. In general, Americans have more (Cooking Light April 2006) diverse palates, and ethnic foods that were once exotic are now everyday staples.” Ethnic ingredients may be the newcomers to the kitchen larder, but their popularity proves they are there to stay.



Chipotle Chiles



Asian Noodles



Panko

**What about the “old standbys?”**

Though we are not declaring that these items have completely disappeared from the kitchen larder, we are saying that recipe developers can no longer automatically assume that these will be “on-hand” in the kitchen.

- All-purpose Flour
- Baking mixes (like Bisquick)
- Baking powder
- Butter or margarine
- Cake flour
- Cake mixes
- Canned condensed soups

- Canned tuna
- Cornstarch
- Cream of Tartar
- Granulated sugar
- Ground beef
- Mayonnaise
- Powdered (confectioners’) sugar

- Process American cheese
- Tomato paste
- Shortening
- Unflavored gelatin
- Yeast

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The following publications are in the FoodWatch Media Database:

Magazines:

Better Homes & Gardens; Bon Appetit; Cooking Light; Country Living; Ebony; Essence; Family Circle; Food & Wine; Good Housekeeping; Gourmet; Ladies' Home Journal; Metropolitan Home; Midwest Living; Martha Stewart Living; Parents; Redbook; Southern Living; Sunset; Taste of Home; Woman's Day; Working Mother.

Newspapers:

Atlanta Journal; Boston Globe; Chicago Tribune; Dallas Morning News; Kansas City Star; Los Angeles Times; Los Angeles Times Sunday Magazine; Milwaukee Journal; Orlando Sentinel; New York Times; New York Times Sunday Magazine; San Francisco Chronicle; Seattle Times; Washington Post.

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