Healthy Pantry Swaps!

Can't remember the last time you cleaned out your cupboards? It's time to start fresh. Here are 10 simple food swaps that will spice up your meals and make them a little more nutritious!

Adapted from Amanda Pressner's article in Fitness Magazine April 2010

1. **Stock up on:** Low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth  
   **Toss:** High-sodium broth

   Cooking side dishes with broth is a great way to amp up the flavor without adding a lot of fat or calories. But one cup of the regular stuff contains up to 40 percent of your recommended daily sodium intake. Choose broths that are lower in sodium -- 450 milligrams per serving or less -- and use them in mashed potatoes instead of butter or half-and-half; you'll save about 230 calories and 24 grams of fat per batch, says Jessica Fishman Levinson, RD, a nutritionist in New York City. Or swap butter or olive oil for broth in rice recipes and cut up to 36 calories and 5 to 6 grams of fat per serving. Broth also adds zing to steamed veggies. Just sub it for water and cook as usual.

2. **Stock up on:** Whole wheat flour  
   **Toss:** Half the 5-pound bag of white flour

   An easy way to get more fiber in your diet is to substitute whole wheat flour for up to half the white flour in recipes. "Each quarter cup will add an additional 3 grams of fiber to the dish, but you won't taste the difference," Zuckerbrot says. And since it makes cookies, cakes, and breads denser, you will feel fuller and be less likely to reach for seconds.

3. **Stock up on:** Canola and olive oils  
   **Toss:** Vegetable oil

   Canola oil is a great source of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids. "It has a mild flavor and a high smoking point, so it's ideal for sauteing and stir-frying," says Natalia Hancock, a culinary nutritionist for Rouge Tomate restaurant in New York City. When making salad dressing, cold dips, or spreads, reach for olive oil. It's an excellent source of oleic acid, a type of monounsaturated fat, which research shows suppresses hunger.

4. **Stock up on:** Dried beans  
   **Toss:** Canned beans

   Canned beans are convenient, but they can cost twice as much per pound as the dried kind and have 50 times the sodium. Soak dried beans in water overnight, drain them in the a.m., and freeze what you don't use. They'll last up to six months, and no defrosting is required, says Leanne Ely, author of the Saving Dinner cookbook series. A 1-pound bag of beans yields 5 to 6 cups cooked.

5. **Stock up on:** Chunk light tuna packets  
   **Toss:** Canned albacore tuna

   The chunk light variety has all the nutrients and protein that fancier white-meat tuna does but about one-third the amount of mercury. Don't like the darker meat? Opt for brands of albacore that use troll- or pole-and-line-caught fish, like Wild Planet, suggests Elizabeth Brown, RD, a nutritionist in Houston. These fish are much younger and smaller, which means they've had less time to accumulate the harmful heavy metal.

6. **Stock up on:** Cocoa powder  
   **Toss:** Chocolate chips

   Sweet treats don't have to be off-limits, even if you're counting calories. Instead of high-calorie, high-fat chocolate chips (a half cup has 560 calories and 32 grams of fat), add 3 tablespoons of cocoa powder to cookie, cake, or muffin batter before baking. *Voila,* the chocolaty flavor you crave for just 37 calories and 2 grams of fat.

7. **Stock up on:** Artichoke hearts  
   **Toss:** Green olives

   Eat just four olives and you've consumed about 2 grams of fat. Artichoke hearts give you a hint of the same salty flavor with zero fat. Ounce for ounce, they contain more antioxidants than any other vegetable (and
about 50 percent more than blueberries). They can taste briny straight from the can, so rinse first. Put them in salads and stews and on pizzas, says Jody Adams, chef and owner of Rialto Restaurant in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Or add artichokes to a fresh tomato sauce and serve over pasta.

8. **Stock up on:** Panko bread crumbs  
**Toss:** Regular bread crumbs

Not only do they contain half the calories of the Italian kind -- 110 versus 220 per half cup -- but “because panko bread crumbs are lighter and coarser, they tend to absorb less oil and fat,” Levinson says. They also stay crisper after cooking, making them perfect for breaded chicken, meat, and fish dishes. Plus, panko has about one-tenth the sodium of many regular bread crumbs.

9. **Stock up on:** Salsa verde  
**Toss:** Ranch- and onion-dip mixes

Each half-cup portion of this salsa contains just 60 calories and counts as a serving of vegetables. It's made with green tomatillos, a great plant source of the B vitamin niacin, which helps keep your cholesterol low.

10. **Stock up on:** Hearty whole grains  
**Toss:** White rice

During processing, white rice is stripped of up to 90 percent of its B vitamins, 60 percent of its iron, and most of its fiber and essential fatty acids, Zuckerbrot says. Eating whole grains will provide you with as much as 8 grams of fiber per serving and can reduce your risk for heart disease by roughly 20 percent. Bust out of the brown rice rut with bulgur, wheat berries, and farro. Cook these grains as you would rice (simmer, covered, over low heat) and add them to soups, salads, and stir-fries.