








STOCK UP: PANTRY GUIDE


By Julie Cottrell, MS, RD, LD

Here are some top picks for stocking your pantry. These are minimally processed, lower carb, nutrient-dense foods and ingredients. Keeping items like these on hand can help you throw healthy meals together quickly.

Oils	Salad Dressing	Mayo	Flavored Vinegars	Apple Cider Vinegar
				
Olive, avocado oil & coconut oil are the best options. Get EVOO in a dark glass container; store all oils away from heat.	Make your own or buy brands that use olive or avocado oil, NOT soybean oil . Find locally or purchase online. Primal Kitchen and Bragg's are good.	Most commercial brands use soybean oil; find ones that use avocado oil instead. Primal Kitchen , Chosen Foods & Better Body Foods are good.	There are many vinegar flavors: Balsamic, red wine, white wine, pomegranate; use these to make your own salad dressing. Simple dressing recipes here .	Apple cider vinegar is great for gut health & blood sugar; potential benefits here . Use in homemade salad dressings; 28 ways to use it listed here .
Olives	Ketchup	Mustard	Barbeque Sauce	Roasted Red Peppers
				
A source of monounsaturated fat . Use for snacking, on salads, or as an ingredient for a pop of salty flavor.	Look for brands lower in sugar and without HFCS . Also avoid sucralose. Primal Kitchen is a really good option.	Stone ground, dijon, yellow; there are many varieties! Use on burgers; in low-carb wraps; an ingredient to add a punch of flavor.	Lower sugar commercial barbeque sauce usually has sucralose in it. Look for ones made with stevia or make your own .	Add a pop of flavor to a low-carb lettuce wrap; add to boiled eggs; add to salad and other recipes. Read this for more inspiration!
Pesto	Marinara Sauce	Alfredo Sauce	Pizza Sauce	Stewed Tomatoes
				
Pesto is great in a low-carb wrap for lunch; or add a dollop to boiled eggs; use as a sauce on pizza; other uses as well. Mezzetta is a quality brand; olive oil is the first ingredient.	Rao's is an excellent brand of low carb marinara sauce . Available in several flavors. Use with pasta alternatives for a low-carb meal. Find at Walmart, Costco, Sam's and online.	Rao's also makes an outstanding alfredo sauce . Try the recipe in CARB SWAPS that pairs this sauce with cabbage noodles for Chicken Broccoli Alfredo.	There are several brands of lower carb pizza sauce, including Rao's . Use on a cauliflower crust; make a portobello mushroom based pizza; or on a crust made with almond flour.	Buy chopped or stewed tomatoes in a carton rather than cans (no BPA). Use as an ingredient in soups, casseroles and one-pot meals. Pomi is low in sodium too!
















PANTRY GUIDE (continued)

Broth	Soup	Beans/Legumes	Bean Blends	Salsa
				
<p>Organic broth and bone broth are available in cartons. Avoid bouillon cubes. If extra, pour into an ice cube tray, freeze and create “broth cubes” for future use.</p>	<p>Kettle & Fire is high quality, but pricey. Pacific Foods and Amy's are also good. Also try making your own; boil a whole chicken, add veggies.</p>	<p>Canned beans can be used as part of a lower-carb plan. Sprinkle on salad, use with Mexican dishes, add to soups. Get lower sodium versions and rinse before using.</p>	<p>Bean blends can also be used as a handy ingredient to spice up a dish. Use this Taco Fiesta blend above to sprinkle on low-carb fajita bowls or taco salads.</p>	<p>A great way to spice up a dish! Add to fajita bowls, use with eggs, and in many casseroles. Matteo's brand is outstanding and is available at most stores.</p>
Tuna	Chicken - Canned	Chicken - Pouch	Wickles Spicy Spread	Nuts and Seeds
				
<p>Tuna is an easy protein to add to salads or use to make tuna salad. Wild caught unflavored is the best option; only use a couple times/week due to mercury content.</p>	<p>Canned chicken can be used to make EASY CHICKEN SALAD or can be added to any salad as a quick protein item. Not as high quality as organic, but works great in a pinch!</p>	<p>Chicken in a pouch is another way to keep chicken on hand to use in recipes or on salads. It's higher in sodium than fresh chicken; pair it with veggies, avocado and other fresh ingredients.</p>	<p>This is a tasty condiment to add to eggs, use in a low carb deli meat wrap, or use to spice up any dish. This version has 0 carbs; Wickles pickle relish does have sugar/carbs.</p>	<p>Good snack but limit to one ounce/day. Add chopped nuts or pumpkin seeds to salads. Chopped nuts are great on yogurt too. Read more about nuts here. Store in the fridge or freezer to maximize freshness.</p>
Nut Butter	Cauliflower Rice	Miracle Noodles	Onions	Potatoes
				
<p>Nut butters like peanut butter and almond butter can be part of a healthy plan. Limit to 2 Tbsp/day. Find ones with the least amount of ingredients and added sugar.</p>	<p>In addition to the frozen varieties, you can also buy cauliflower rice in a pouch to store in the pantry. Full Green and Kitchen and Love, and Slideaway Foods brands are examples.</p>	<p>Shirataki noodles are a low-calorie, low-carb alternative to pasta. MIRACLE NOODLES makes options in spaghetti, fettuccine and more. Many potential health benefits; read more here.</p>	<p>Keep a bag of onions on hand to dice and use in casseroles, soup/stew, omelets; slice and add to burgers; saute with bell peppers to use with fajitas; or roast in the oven along with other veggies.</p>	<p>Potatoes are a gluten-free, single-ingredient food, but are high in starch and carbs. Ok to use in small amounts as part of a healthy plan. Try cooking a day ahead to create “resistant starch”.</p>

Jerky - Beef	Jerky - Other	Protein Shake Mix	IQ Bars	Quick Treats
				
<p>Look for ones with minimal ingredients; avoid ones with lots of sugar and chemicals. Grass-fed options are great like CHOMPS and PALEOVALLEY. An easy, transportable snack.</p>	<p>Besides beef sticks, jerky can also be made from turkey, pork and venison; PALEOVALLEY makes many flavors. CHOMPS makes free-range turkey and venison sticks as well. Great for snacks; pair with string cheese.</p>	<p>Find a brand you like with at least 20 grams protein per scoop but is low in sugar and carbs; also be careful which sugar alternative is used. See PROTEIN SHAKES for examples. Use for a quick meal or snack.</p>	<p>IQ Bars are an example of a processed food that can be found locally, is made with quality ingredients, is pretty low in carbs/sugar, and tastes good too! They come in several flavors.</p>	<p>If you have a real sweet tooth, you might want to invest in a couple of items to use when a craving strikes. Here are some quality options: RX SUGAR BARS, CHOCXO, UNREAL BARS</p>
Taco/Fajita Seasoning	Spices, Herbs and Seasonings	Italian Seasoning Blend	Ground Cinnamon	Smoked Paprika
				
<p>Store-bought taco seasoning often has MSG and other additives; make your own taco seasoning or find ones like these above. Mrs. Dash has a variety of flavors.</p>	<p>Stock a variety of dried herbs & spices to use when fresh herbs aren't available. Blends like Mrs. Dash, McCormick & Bragg's come in a variety of flavors.</p>	<p>Italian seasoning blend is great in homemade salad dressing; also tastes great on chicken or fish and in creamed spinach; or use in Italian dishes.</p>	<p>Cinnamon can be used in coffee, in protein shakes, on oats, on sweet potatoes and in dessert recipes. Many potential health benefits.</p>	<p>Great on deviled or boiled eggs; or use as an ingredient or as a rub for a smoky barbeque flavor without the sugar.</p>
Sea Salt	Sugar Alternatives	Flour Alternatives	Thickening Agents	Cocoa Powder
				
<p>Celtic and Himalayan sea salts contain valuable nutrients. Redmond's Real Salt is a good option too.</p>	<p>Stevia, monk fruit and allulose are good options. Rx Sugar is a brand of allulose that comes in powder, liquid and flavored versions; buy online or locally; may improve BG & gut microbiota.</p>	<p>Almond, coconut and other "flours" are available. You don't need to keep these on hand, but may be useful for baking some lower carb items, if desired. Ok in moderation.</p>	<p>Here is a quick guide to 5 options for thickening soups and other foods without using flour. Xanthan gum is one option that is low-carb and gluten-free.</p>	<p>Cocoa powder has many potential health benefits; read more here. Use in low carb treats, protein shakes, coffee and more. Many brands are available on Amazon.</p>








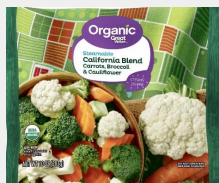







STOCK UP: REFRIGERATOR GUIDE

Here are some top picks for stocking the fridge. These are lower carb, minimally processed, nutrient-dense foods and ingredients. Keeping items like these on hand can help you throw healthy meals together quickly.

Milk Alternatives (Almond/Coconut)	Heavy Cream or Half-n-Half	Coffee Creamer	Greek Yogurt (Plain or Flavored)	Sour Cream
				
Unsweetened almond, coconut or cashew milk can be used in smoothies and other lower carb recipes.	Use in coffee or as an ingredient. Make whipped cream to use on fruit as a dessert. Organic preferred.	Use heavy cream, half-n-half or any creamer <u>without</u> <u>sucralose</u> or other harmful additives.	Stir unflavored into soup or use in smoothies. Sweeten for dessert or choose a flavored one (pg 2).	Organic preferred if available. Use in recipes; add a dollop to cooked eggs or Mexican dishes.
Eggs	Breakfast Meat(s)	Deli Meat	Cheese	Cottage Cheese
				
Great source of protein; versatile ingredient. Get organic if possible. Liquid Egg whites can be used with whole eggs to increase protein + reduce calories & fat.	Center-cut bacon, Canadian bacon , prosciutto, chicken sausage or turkey sausage - versatile ingredients. Focus on lower-fat versions most often.	Buy the highest quality deli meat you can get. Boar's Head is really good. Use it to snack on, to make low-carb wraps, and add to salads.	Buy a block, shredded or sliced in various flavors; shred yourself for zero "fillers". Organic versions available at most stores. String cheese is an easy snack.	If you like cottage cheese, it's one of the highest protein, low-fat cheeses. Use as an ingredient or try with nuts and/or berries. Use in low-carb casseroles too!
Butter	Guacamole	Minced Garlic	Kimchi	Pickles
				
Get some REAL butter. Grass-fed has more nutrients if you can afford it. Cook with it; add to veggies for flavor. Store brands can be used too. Avoid margarine . Try ghee too; it's butter with milk solids removed.	Find Wholly Guacamole and similar brands of guacamole in the refrigerated section. Use in low-carb wraps, with Mexican dishes, with eggs, and more. Healthy fat + flavor!	Minced garlic is a handy ingredient and a time-saver. Store in the fridge after opening. Garlic has many health benefits so include in as many recipes as you like!	Great for gut health! Kimchi is available in a variety of flavors. Have a small serving with eggs or with any meal. Sauerkraut too. Read more here . Try making your own too! Recipe to try here .	Get ones without added sugars or food dye in the refrigerated section. The juice may contain probiotics; add it to tuna salad. Brands to try: CLEVELAND KITCHEN & GRILLOS

STOCK UP: FREEZER GUIDE




Here are some top picks for stocking your freezer. These are lower carb, minimally processed, nutrient-dense foods and ingredients. Keeping items like these on hand can help you throw healthy meals together quickly!

Salmon	Fish	Shrimp	Chicken Breasts	Beef Patties
				
<p>Salmon is great on a Caesar salad or serve with a low-carb side. Get wild-caught if you can. Bake or cook on the stovetop.</p>	<p>Thaw, cook and serve with a side dish or try the recipe with black beans and salsa. Health benefits of cod listed here.</p>	<p>A lean protein; thaws quickly; add to soups; great with Cajun meals; grill; stir fry; thaw and enjoy w/ cocktail sauce.</p>	<p>Individual portions of chicken may be quickly thawed and used on salads, in stir fry, in casseroles or served with a side.</p>	<p>Keep a sleeve of pre-portioned patties on hand. Easy to thaw and heat. Avoid the bun for low-carb; top w/ onions, cheese, etc.</p>
Ground Meat	Spinach/Greens	Mixed Vegetables	Riced Cauliflower	Riced Broccoli
				
<p>Keep a couple pounds of ground beef, turkey or venison on hand to thaw and use in various recipes. Get organic if possible.</p>	<p>Thaw a portion and add to omelets; use to make creamed spinach; use in casseroles; heat and serve as a side with butter and Parmesan.</p>	<p>Steam and serve as a side with butter or olive oil plus salt/seasonings. Avoid cooking in the bag (toxins in plastic). Portion into a bowl and heat instead.</p>	<p>A versatile ingredient, use as you would use rice for less carbs and calories. Store in the freezer; thaw in a microwave-safe dish & press water out w/ paper towels.</p>	<p>Similar to riced cauliflower. Get inspired by looking at 19 ways to use this ingredient. Used in “Cheesy Bread” in the STARTER RECIPE SET.</p>
Meatballs	Veggie Spirals	Cauliflower Thins	Turkey Sausage	Berries
				
<p>Several companies make quality meatballs; pair with spaghetti squash, zucchini noodles or Miracle Noodles: Beetnik, Greenwise Applegate Farms</p>	<p>A great option when you don't have time to cook one fresh. Use as a base; add meatballs or grilled chicken. More recipe ideas here.</p>	<p>A newer product, useful for low-carb plans. Find them fresh or with frozen foods. Use as a bread alternative. Toast it to use as a base and top with protein.</p>	<p>Also available in chicken and pork sausage. High quality ingredients; cooks quickly. www.jonesdairyfarm.com</p>	<p>May be added to smoothies for a pop of flavor and boost in antioxidants; easy to warm a small serving in the microwave to pour over Greek yogurt for a treat.</p>

PROCESSED FOODS: HONORABLE MENTIONS

Below are a few processed food items that deserve mentioning. These companies are trying to do the right thing. Some items could be pricey though. Note **brand names** and use the **store locator links** to find locally, and to learn more about the company and other products they offer. Always be on the lookout for new products like these!

Problems with many processed food items include: the use of **soybean** or other inferior oils; **sugar** in various forms; **incorrect sugar substitutes**; an overall lack of health-promoting nutrients; **preservatives** and other unfavorable **chemicals** and **food dyes**; **excessive calories**; and **addictive properties** that can make portion control difficult. **Read labels - particularly the ingredients - to compare and find products that minimize these problems.**

Chicken Nuggets	Chicken Nuggets	Chicken Tenders	Low Carb Tortillas	Cauliflower Pizza Crust
				
These are gluten-free , but do have 14 g carbs/6 nuggets. Applegate Farms has an array of products. Store locator here .	A pricier option, but uses high quality chicken. Available at Whole Foods, Publix and specialty stores. Bell and Evans is a top-notch brand for chicken in all forms.	These come in 3 flavors and are also gluten-free. CauliPower is a great company; products and info here . Be careful, these still have carbs.	Use for low-carb sandwich wraps or pair w/Mexican foods. Ok if you tolerate wheat. Choose Extreme Wellness or La Banderita Carb Counter ones.	Rustic brand is available at Walmart. Be careful, most cauliflower crusts have more carbs than you'd think. Top with plenty of protein & serve w/ a side salad.
Chicken Burger	Refrigerated Meals	Freezer Meals	Breakfast Sandwich	Hot Dogs
				
Bell and Evans is outstanding. Many products available, like chicken nuggets , meatballs , hotdogs . Product locator here .	Kevin's meals serve 2-3 people. Cook in just 5 minutes; add extra veggies or a side. Many flavors. Store locator here .	Real Good brand has many items that are lower in carbs and all have high quality ingredients. Keep on hand for a quick meal.	Made with a cauliflower "bun"; also available with bacon. Has a small amount of soybean oil in it. Good to use in a pinch!	These are uncured, grass-fed beef dogs. A variety of other Applegate Farms hot dog products can be found here .
Crackers	Crackers	Bread	Grains	Snack Bars
				
Nut Thins come in several flavors; they are gluten-free. See Eat This, Not That list and Prevention's 12 best crackers .	Crunchmaster brand uses quality ingredients. Avoid ones with unhealthy oils and other unfavorable ingredients.	Bread Buying Guide from The Picky Eater. Good info. Sprouted grain bread is best. Rye and sourdough can work. Depends on daily carb goal.	If you are following low-carb, most of these aren't for you. But this article discusses best options: 14 Healthy Whole-Grain Foods	Most options are high in carbs and sugars; look for minimal ingredients. Use as a treat. Refer to HEALTHY SNACKS for other snack options.