

Farmgirl Shopping List

In my cooking classes, I am often asked how I come up with a menu every night. It seems I'm not the only one who has trouble deciding what to make for dinner.



The quandary becomes even more challenging when we are accosted by starving kids the minute we arrive home. That's when the clock starts ticking and the pressure is on. The meal needs to be on the table within the hour or meltdowns will ensue. Help!

Here's my 3-part solution to facing down the dinner dilemma and eliminating most of the stress.

Step #1: Make sure your fridge and pantry are properly stocked at all times, using my [Farmgirl Cooking Essentials](#) list below as a guide.

Step #2: Strategize your shopping trips with a week's menu in mind. Once you have all the core ingredients on hand, you should be able to get away with one weekly trip to your local farmers market and a quick drive-by to your fish or meat seller. Think of each dinner in terms of two vegetables, a whole grain or starch, and a protein.

Step #3: Cook a few different grains and mains when you do have the time (over a weekend, perhaps) and freeze them so that they are ready to reheat during the week.

While I can't tell you what to feed your family for dinner, following these guidelines will make your life crucially easier.

- Print out the list below and check off the items that you already have on hand.
- If I forgot one of your favorite ingredients, just add it to the list.
- Now let your appetite do the talking. Once you have decided on some dishes to make, add the fresh items you will need to the end of the list.
- Then bring it along with you on your next shopping trip so you'll never be caught without the essentials.

----- ✂ *Clip this and bring with you to the market* -----

Farmgirl Shopping List

Oils

- Extra-virgin olive oil (locally produced if available)
- Grapeseed oil
- Flavoring oils: sesame, walnut

Vinegars

- White wine or Champagne
- Red wine
- Balsamic
- Sherry
- Unseasoned rice vinegar

Broths

- [Pacific Naturals Foods Organic Vegetable Broth](#) (or other low-sodium organic broth)

Dried mushrooms

- Morels, porcinis, shiitakes (for enhancing soups and adding depth to sauces)
- [Better than Bouillon Mushroom Base](#) (my secret weapon for enhancing anything with mushrooms)

Herbs, spices, and seasonings

- Kosher salt
- Whole peppercorns (make sure you have a good [peppermill](#))
- Dried thyme, basil, oregano (leaf, not ground)
- Whole fennel, coriander, mustard and cumin seeds
- Chile powder
- Smoked paprika (*dulce*)
- Ground cinnamon
- Ground nutmeg
- Vanilla extract

Freezer

- Petite peas, corn, spinach (organic whenever possible)
- Berries (strawberries, blueberries, cranberries)
- Diced mango
- Prepared whole grain pie crusts
- Prepared puff pastry dough
- Whole raw walnuts, almonds, pine nuts

Beans and canned

- Chickpeas, cannellini beans, [butter \(gigante\)](#)
- Black beans
- Dried lentils
- San Marzano, Pomi or other tomato purée
- Hearts of palm
- Pitted olives (Kalamata, green)
- Capers
- Coconut milk (light or regular)
- Coco Lopez
- Tuna packed in water or olive oil
- Salted anchovies in olive oil

Grains

- Rice flour, all-purpose flour, whole-wheat pastry flour
- Polenta (coarse cornmeal)
- Whole-grain crusty bread or challah bread for making breadcrumbs
- Brown Basmati rice
- White rice (Arborio and Basmati)
- Quinoa (white or red)
- Whole wheat couscous
- Farro
- Oats (Quaker and Irish, not quick-cook)
- Spelt or whole grain pasta in your favorite shapes

Dry Goods

- Soy or tamari sauce, Vietnamese fish sauce (nuoc mam)
- Peanut butter
- Dijon mustard
- Sweeteners: white and brown sugar, honey, maple syrup, molasses
- Apricot and raspberry preserves
- Ground coffee
- Coconut milk
- Premium bittersweet and semisweet chocolate chips
- Baking soda and powder (if you like to bake)
- Onions, shallots, garlic
- Ginger

Refrigerator

- Organic eggs
- Unsalted butter
- Cheeses: cheddar (I like Cotswalds), smoked or creamy cheese, grated Reggiano-Parmigiano
- Sour cream
- Plain yogurt
- Organic milk
- Buttermilk
- White miso paste
- Organic firm tofu

Wines

- white, red, and *mirin* (Japanese rice wine)

Fresh Items

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