

Changing Your Plate Part IV: Plan Ahead

Last week Janice Kearley shared her family's approach to a plant based lunch— totally DIY, prepped ahead, simple, and colorful. Later we featured the family's favorite wrap and bread recipes you won't want to miss. Moving on this week, we are looking at what prepped ahead means to Janice and how she does it.

We all know that getting ahead on our family cooking is helpful but having a system to follow is what makes it sustainable. Hopefully you can glean some take-away tips from Janice that will work in your home.

Shopping/Stocking

Let's start out with the topic of shopping and keeping that pantry stocked with essentials. When I asked Janice about her shopping she told me straight up, "*I don't buy a lot of packaged things.*" From our conversation I gathered that if Janice can make it herself, she will. So what items does she purchase and always keep on hand?

Janice's store bought staples:

Nuts (raw)

Raisins/ Dates

Honey

Maple Syrup

Apple Cider Vinegar

Brown Rice Vinegar

Avocado or Grapeseed Oil

Coconut Oil

Sesame Oil

Just Mayo

Powdered Spirulina (for smoothies)

Nutritional Yeast

Coconut Aminos

Muir Glen roasted tomatoes with green chilis

Beans: Kidney, Black, Chickpea and Pinto

Lentils

Daiya Cheese

Items Janice prefers to make herself:

Almond Milk

Bars

Coconut Butter (recipe from home made vegan pantry)

The majority of Janice's shopping is done at Costco and Sprouts. To keep up the ingredients she keeps on hand and minimize her purchases, she has developed a great system. Janice keeps two customized lists on the fridge at all times. One is an item specific list for Costco, divided into sections so that items are checked off as needed. The other list for Sprouts/ HEB has the days of the week on the left for menu planning and sections on the right for Produce, Bulk, Canned/Boxed Jars, Baking/Spices, Frozen/ Beverage, Miscellaneous. Janice only enters what she plans to use that week on the list so there is no waste or over purchasing. Here's an example:

Menu Plan	Grocery List
Monday:	Produce
Tuesday:	
Wednesday:	Natural/Bulk
Thursday:	Canned/Boxed/Breads/Jars
Friday:	Baking/Spices
Saturday:	Frozen/Beverages
Sunday:	Miscellaneous

Cooking Ahead

The next piece of planning that keeps Janice's kitchen running

smooth and hassle free is her system of batch cooking beans and lentils.



On the same refrigerator door with the grocery lists lives a little white board where Janice keeps up on what she needs to cook next. Items for batch cooking include chickpeas, pintos, kidneys, lentils, and black beans.

The Kearleys have purchased a true deep freeze in order to better preserve the food Janice is cooking ahead and a large supply of 2 cup Pyrex dishes that hold just the right portions for their meals for three.



Janice's final tip for all families is, *"If you have the space to grow some of your own food, especially if you have children, do it."* The Kearley family does have a small but abundant plot in their back yard that has been a rewarding family project.

In closing, Janice shared three of the many cookbooks that have inspired her repertoire in the kitchen:

Greens 24/7, Jessica Nadel (Be sure to check out the Kale Chip-Cool Ranch recipe.)

Oh She Glows, Angel Liddon
Everyday Detox, Megan Gilmore

I sure have learned a lot from the Kearley family and I hope you have too! Please join us next week as we move on to the evening meal, in this Changing Your Plate series. You are going to love the story of the Lachere family of seven!