

Kitchen Korner

Build A Pantry In The Freezer With Frozen Foods

(NAPS)—For a growing number of consumers, the freezer is becoming an indispensable part of the food pantry, providing high-quality, nutritious ingredients for breakfast, lunch and dinner, as well as for snacks and special occasion entertaining.

Michele Urvater, spokesperson for the American Frozen Food Institute and author of the *Monday-to-Friday* cookbook series, recommends planning meals, then customizing the contents of the freezer according to specific needs, dietary restrictions and family preferences. She also offers these tips for stocking the freezer:

- Try one new item from your supermarket freezer every other week to introduce variety and excitement into your meal and snack planning.
- Stock a couple of frozen appetizers if you sometimes have unexpected company.
- Only stock products you need for two to three weeks of meals and snacks.
- Stock newer items behind older ones. Date packages with a marker so you know when you bought them.
- Wash your freezer occasionally with warm, soapy water and keep an open box of baking soda in there.

To build a “freezer pantry,” Urvater recommends focusing on specific needs:

- Breakfast—Frozen waffles, bagels, pancakes and cheese blintzes.
- Lunch—Prepared frozen entrées and side dishes.
- Dinner—Frozen pizza, fully prepared entrees, components such as seafood, poultry, meat, vegetables, side dishes and fruits for dessert.
- Drinks—Frozen concentrates of fruit juices and lemonade.
- Trimmings—Seasonings, desserts and dessert fixings, hors d’oeuvres.



Food for thaw: Frozen varieties add diversity and nutrition to the family menu.

Here’s a heart-healthy recipe made with frozen components:

Shrimp Stir-Fry

Makes 4 servings

- 1 package (10 oz.) frozen green peas**
- 1 tablespoon Asian sesame or vegetable oil**
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic (can use frozen whole garlic cloves)**
- 1 package (10 oz.) frozen cooked “salad” shrimp**
- 1 tablespoon ketchup**
- 1 teaspoon honey**
- 2 teaspoons “low sodium” soy sauce**
- ¼ cup chopped cashews or peanuts, optional**
- 4 wedges fresh lemon or lime**

Cook peas according to package directions.

Heat the oil in a large, non-stick skillet until hot. Add the garlic and cook, stirring for 10 seconds. Add the cooked shrimp and stir continuously for about 1 minute or until heated through.

Add the peas, ketchup, honey and soy sauce and stir to combine. Add the cashews or peanuts and serve. Garnish each portion with a wedge of lemon or lime.