



Efficiency Cooking General Guidelines

Dear Pilgrim on the Fertile Path,

I am so excited to share my efficiency cooking method with you!

Besides these general guidelines, that you only have to read once to understand the process, I provide you every month with:

- Detailed instructions of one real-life efficiency cooking example in text & image.
- A summary sheet to inspire new meal combinations once you have incorporated the process and do not need the detailed instructions anymore.

Goals

There are several goals why I practice, recommend and teach Efficiency Cooking:

1. The main goal of Efficiency Cooking is to **fill your fridge with regenerative, FERTILE meals to nourish you throughout the week**. We want to know exactly what goes into the food, where the ingredients come from and make sure the meals are well-balanced.
2. Cooking in itself is an act of **self-love** that can be deeply nourishing and I definitely encourage you to get into the habit of giving yourself that gift.
3. Still, I do not want you (nor myself) to spend ALL of our time in the kitchen, since this would easily create new imbalances and what started as self-love could quickly turn into self-abuse. So another goal is to **cook as much as necessary in as little time as possible**.
4. Cooking from scratch allows you to **support concrete people or ways of farming** by choosing whom you buy your ingredients from.
5. We also want to **limit food waste** as much as possible, integrating any potential leftovers we might have. Personally, I practically never have to throw away anything.
6. Cooking from scratch and filling your own food containers also dramatically **reduces plastic packaging waste** from ready-to-eat food you might otherwise buy.
7. And last but not least it is very **friendly on your budget**.



Equipment

In order to be able to implement Efficiency Cooking, you need some basic equipment:

- Fridge big enough to hold food for 3-4 days for the amount of people of the household
 - Freezer: For 1-2 persons 3 drawers are ideal, for bigger households I recommend a stand-alone freezer with 5 drawers. If you only have a small freezer department, do not worry though, it is still possible to efficiency cook.
 - Oven: not an absolute must, but it can help to further increase efficiency, by allowing you to cook things BELOW the stove simultaneously to cooking things ON the stove.
 - Big pot for broth, soup, pasta sauce or stews from stainless steel
 - Big pan (ideally from enameled cast iron, such as Le Creuset or Skeppshult)
 - Several big bowls
 - Sharp knives
 - Storage containers. Those should fulfill the following criteria:
 - Food safety: ideally glass instead of plastic that can leak into your food
 - Closing firmly: lids should not be able to open easily, to avoid leaking of food
 - Space-saving format: easily stackable in the fridge, freezer, cupboard or bag
 - Size: Should fit food enough for one meal
- I use glass containers from Ikea, which come in different sizes. For soup I use Weck pots or glass jars from Ikea (those also go into the freezer)

Shopping

Efficiency Cooking starts with Efficiency Shopping!!

1. Buy fresh foods currently in season, ideally via “short-circuit distribution systems”

Ordering local, seasonal & organic foods online and picking them up can save you a lot of time, since you do not have to go to the shop when everybody does.

You find a list of recommended addresses to buy fresh, fertile food in short-circuit distribution on my website here: <https://www.caminodelafertilidad.com/fertile-food-sources/>



To start, simply order a “panier bio” of a size corresponding to the number of persons you need to feed. Over time, you will get a feeling for quantities that you need per meal and person in your unique family. In general, these are approximate quantities of foods per person and meal:

- Vegetables: 200-300g / Fruit: 50-150g
- Grains/Legumes: 50-80g dry weight
- Meat/Fish: 100-125g
- Cheese/Charcuterie: 20-40g
- Nuts/Seeds: 10-30g

2. Have a stock of basic foods always available to you

Food items to always have on stock to make cooking more efficient or for emergency situations

- 2-3 types of whole grains, i.e. quinoa, oats, barley, buckwheat, rice...
- 2 types of legumes, i.e. chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils... those can be dry or in jars.
- 2-3 types of nuts and seeds, i.e. pumpkin seeds, sesame seeds, Brazil nuts, almonds, flax seeds, tigernuts, cashews...
- 2-3 types of nuts / seeds butter: tahin, almond, pumpkin seed, coconut, cashew ...
- Frozen meat: ground meat, chicken legs or breast, bones, stew meat, soup meat, steak...
- Frozen fish: wild salmon, Pintafish seasonal package or products from Food4Good...
- Frozen vegetables: organic spinach, green beans, green peas...
- Fish in jars: sardines, mackerel, wild salmon... in water or olive oil
- Vegetables in jars: Dried tomatoes, olives, passata, tomato concentrate, sauerkraut
- Spices, i.e. unrefined sea salt, pepper, curry, turmeric, paprika, cumin, soy sauce...
- Herbs, i.e. Herbs of Provence, bay leaves, thyme, rosemary, oregano...
- Cooking fats and oils: Ghee, coconut fat, olive oil



Method

There are (at least) two ways how to approach efficiency cooking:

- 1. The Masculine Way: You decide what you want and you make it happen**
You plan meals first, and then do the shopping: You think about what dishes you like, recipes you would like to try out, and create your shopping list accordingly.
- 2. The Feminine Way: You let yourself be guided by what nature offers and make something good out of it**
You do the shopping, and then plan the meals: You shop what is in season, what appeals to you, and from there you see what you can make with it.

Personally, I favor & follow the Feminine Way, because I want to buy as much as possible local, seasonal and directly from farmers. I also appreciate the freedom and creativity this method allows and fosters – both important features of the Fertile Path. Thus, it is the method I am teaching you as part of this Virtual Camino.

Efficiency Cooking – The Feminine Way

1. Shop according to season & appetite or simply go for a local & organic vegetable basket.
2. List all the foods that you have available. The goal is to create balanced meals, based on vegetables/fruits, clean proteins, good fats and optionally starch, in every meal.
Categorize your foods in this way:

Vegetables	Protein/Fat	Starch/Fruit	Extra Fat
Green cabbage	Ground beef (freezer)	Potatoes	Avocado
Carrots	Ground lamb (freezer)	Purple Potatoes	Almonds
Green celery	Fish (freezer)	Oats	Lard
Leeks	Sardines (jar)	Barley	Ghee
Brussels Sprouts	Eggs	Lentils	Coconut Milk
Lambs Lettuce	Paté	Einkorn Bread	Olive oil
Mushrooms	Lentils		Butter
Pumpkin	Chicken broth		
Pears	Collagen		
	Milk Kefir		



3. Mix & Match! You do not HAVE to use everything... it just helps to know what you have

Vegetables/Fruits	Protein/Fat	Starch/Fruit	Extra Fat
Green cabbage	Ground beef (freezer)	Potatoes	Avocado
Carrots	Ground lamb (freezer)	Purple Potatoes	Almonds
Green celery	Fish (freezer)	Oats	Lard
Leeks	Sardines (jar)	Barley	Ghee
Brussels Sprouts	Eggs	Lentils	Coconut Milk
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Mushrooms	Lentils		Butter
Pumpkin	Chicken broth		
Pears	Collagen		
	Milk Kefir		

- Plot meals in meal plan. Think about which meals are easier to freeze in order to determine when to put them. Personally, I skip that step. I just have all my meals in the fridge and eat them when I am hungry. However, this method IS useful if you are several people in the household and want to keep an overview and avoid some things getting bad or being left with only one type of meal for the last 2 days...
- Keep in the fridge the meals for the first 1-4 days (note: at the bottom of a well-tempered fridge, they usually even stay well a whole week!) Freeze meals for day 4-7, or have a second cooking moment on day 3/4.
- Regularly check your fridge. If there is food which you know will expire soon, or that you do not use in the end (either raw or ready-cooked meals), either think of how you could incorporate it into a meal, OR freeze it.