



# Alton Sustainable Eating

Healthy Food, Healthy Planet



## What does a plant-powered kitchen look like?

By Dee Panes, ACAN's consultant on Sustainable Eating

If you were to google plant-based recipes on the internet you would get about 601,000,000 results - search terms. Can you imagine being a beginner. So here are some tips:

### 1. The Pantry

The following staples will set you up to start with:

- a) Legumes (dried or canned)
- b) Wholegrains (oats, brown rice, quinoa)
- c) Flours (chickpea (oats and you can make this with oats in a blender if you like), wholemeal flours.
- d) Nuts and seeds (including nut butters)
- e) Canned tomato products
- f) Spices
- g) Herbs
- h) Condiments (vinegars, mustards, soy sauces, miso (Japanese fermented paste))
- i) Oils (if you wish to use them such as extra virgin olive oil (EVOI))
- j) Dried fruits

### 2. The Fridge Freezer

❄️ Fridge: Tofu (all types), tempeh, fruits, veggies, nuts, herbs, seeds, miso, tahini, condiments, homemade dressings, leftovers.

❄️ Freezer: Frozen fruit (absolutely brilliant and ALDI here in the UK do excellent frozen fruit for a great price!), frozen veggies, pre-portioned leftovers, bulk bags of nuts, seeds, flours.

**Did you know that keeping nuts and seeds in the fridge offers several advantages:**

- 📌 **Extended Shelf Life:** Nuts and seeds contain oils that can become rancid over time when exposed to air, light, and heat. Storing them in the refrigerator slows down the oxidation process, helping to preserve their freshness and flavour for a longer period.
- 📌 **Prevention of Pest Infestation:** Nuts and seeds are prone to infestation by pests such as pantry moths and beetles, especially in warmer climates. Storing them in the refrigerator can help prevent pest infestations and preserve the quality of the nuts and seeds.
- 📌 **Maintains Nutrient Content:** Some nuts and seeds contain delicate fats and oils that can degrade at room temperature, leading to a loss of nutritional value.

Refrigeration helps to maintain the nutrient content of nuts and seeds by slowing down the degradation of these sensitive compounds.

- 📌 Prevents Spoilage: In warmer environments, nuts and seeds may be more susceptible to spoilage due to the growth of mould and bacteria. Storing them in the refrigerator helps to inhibit the growth of microorganisms, reducing the risk of spoilage and ensuring their safety for consumption.
- 📌 Retains Texture: Refrigeration can help preserve the texture of certain nuts and seeds, particularly those with higher oil content, such as walnuts and flaxseeds. Storing them in a cool environment can help prevent them from becoming soft or mushy. Flaxseeds before they are ground up are fine in your cupboard but when they are ground up (which is the best way to consume them for their nutritional content), it is best to keep them refrigerated).

### **Starting with what you have in your pantry is a superb place to start and here is why:**

- 🗑️ Reduces Food Waste: Transitioning to a plant-based diet doesn't mean you have to throw out all your existing food. By using up what you already have in your pantry and cupboards, you can prevent food waste and make the transition more sustainable.
- 👤 Familiarity and Comfort: Starting with familiar foods that you already enjoy can make the transition to a plant-based diet feel less daunting. It allows you to build meals around ingredients you're already familiar with and enjoy, making the transition process more enjoyable and sustainable in the long run.
- 💰 Saves Money: Buying entirely new groceries to accommodate a plant-based diet can be expensive. By using up what you already have, you can save money on groceries and gradually replace items with plant-based alternatives over time.
- 🍰 Encourages Creativity: Working with what you have can encourage creativity in the kitchen. You may discover new ways to use familiar ingredients or experiment with plant-based substitutions in your favourite recipes.
- 📅 Makes Meal Planning Easier: Starting with what you have on hand can simplify meal planning, as you can incorporate plant-based ingredients into dishes you already know how to prepare. This can help you ease into the transition without feeling overwhelmed by completely new recipes and cooking techniques.
- 👏 Builds Confidence: Successfully using up existing pantry items in plant-based meals can boost your confidence in your ability to follow a plant-based diet. It demonstrates that you can create satisfying and delicious meals without relying heavily on animal products.

Overall, starting with what you have in your pantry and cupboards provides a practical and accessible approach to transitioning to a plant-based diet. It allows you to gradually incorporate more plant-based foods into your meals while minimising waste, saving money, and building confidence in your ability to adopt a more plant-focused lifestyle.