

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: How to feel Good about Downsizing



One of the easiest ways to let go of things in our lives is when we know that they are going to a better place, that the recipients need these items more than we do, and that nothing will be wasted and everything will be appreciated.

We normally think of all the closets in our house when we are downsizing. However we sometimes forget the easiest closet of all to clean out...the kitchen pantry.

Most of our kitchen pantries are full of items we don't need or use...and those items tend to just sit there until they expire.

According to the government, high-acid canned goods, like tomatoes and citrus fruits, will keep for up to 1½ years. Low-acid canned goods, including vegetables, meat, and fish, will last for up to 5 years. Dried goods tend to last a lot longer as long as the packaging is kept intact and items are stored in a low humidity environment.

So instead of cluttering up our shelves with food items we haven't yet and won't use, why not donate them to a local food bank.

Remember that while all food items are appreciated the most needed ones are as follows:

- ♥ Meals in a can (stew, chili, soup)
- ♥ Tuna and canned meat
- ♥ Peanut butter
- ♥ Canned foods (with pop-top lids)
- ♥ Low-sugar cereals
- ♥ 100% fruit juices in single serving boxes
- ♥ Canned fruit packed in juice
- ♥ Canned vegetables (low salt)

Additionally the following kid-friendly foods are in great demand:

- ♥ 100% fruit rolls/snacks/cups
- ♥ Raisins
- ♥ Graham crackers
- ♥ Unsweetened applesauce
- ♥ Cheese and crackers
- ♥ Pretzels
- ♥ Granola bars (without peanuts)

Also around the holidays it always helps to provide items that are holiday specific. Corn, green beans, carrots, squash or pumpkin, gravy, etc.

Items you should definitely toss include:

- ♥ Dented cans, cans that are bulging and leaking or that spurt liquid when opened. (Although the toxin that causes botulism is extremely rare in commercial canned goods, damaged cans have a higher chance of being contaminated.)
- ♥ Bags and boxes with rips or tears
- ♥ Spices older than one year
- ♥ Items that are expired

So the next time you think about downsizing, remember to think about the kitchen first!



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