

Pantry Essentials

September 2024

I put a call out for my Facebook Friends to nominate 'What five things are essential in your pantry', leaving pantry undefined. These were the answers.

Cooking mediums – Olive oil was the number one here with 20 entries. There was one entry for ghee and one for coconut oil and one for an unspecified oil.

Starches – Rice was the leader here with 18 entries, one of which specified basmati, one which specified brown rice, and one of which specified short-grain rice. There were seven for oats/muesli (one specifying Unled Toby's oats), just six entries for pastas (unspecified), three for bread (wholemeal, wholegrain, home made sourdough), one for polenta, one for buckwheat soba noodles. I will note here also one entry for tofu.

Beverages – Coffee was listed most, nine times one of which specified coffee beans, I imagine some of the others also meant bean/grounds (heaven forbid that anyone should have meant instant). Tea came next with four – one of which was for chai. One was for Coke Zero.

Spicewise – Pepper 10 nominations. Salt had eleven three of which specified kosher, Maldon, Murray River. Cardamom and Garam masala had one entry each. There were two entries for spices in general. There was one entry for curry powder, cumin, paprika, cardamom and garam masala. I'm going to add garlic with six entries and ginger with two here and also one for red curry paste. Herbswise there were two entries for bay leaves and a couple for mixed herbs.

Tinned tomatoes had 12 entries and there were three for tomato sauce and paste. There were six mentions of tinned tuna, one of which specified it had to be in chilli.

Chilli had eight entries and there was one each for chilli oil, chilli jam, Lao gan ma (chilli sauce) and one for sriracha sauce.

There were four for sugar - one for brown sugar, one for demerara, one for jaggery (palm sugar) and one for coconut sugar. White sugar was nowhere in anyone's list.

In the dairy bracket there was one entry for long-life milk, one for Bonsoy (the only milk substitute), two for cheese, and two for yoghurt (one specifying Greek) and two for butter.

There were three entries for eggs, one for home produced.

Nuts got three votes, one specifying cashew.

There were two bids for lentils.

In the sauces bloc soy sauce got two mentions, one of which was for shoyu soy. Vinegar and tamari each also got two votes. These sauces had one mention each: mayo (a sauce for the purposes of this exercise), S & P, ketchup, gravox, oyster, Gold Mountain Sauce (used in Thai and Vietnamese cuisines based on fermented soy beans).

Looking at spreads, Vegemite had two mentions and peanut butter had one.

Three of you said chocolate, with one specifying 85% dark chocolate, and another specifying chocolate chips.

Fruitwise there were two bids for apples, two for lemons. Vegwise there was two for tomatoes, two for onions, one for potato, and one for sweet potato.

Biscuits had two entries – Ritz Crackers and just plain old crackers.

There was one bid for each of kidney beans, chickpeas, muscovite, agave syrup, xylitol, leatherwood honey, pappadums, anchovies, flour and yeast.

Some thoughts: I wouldn't have predicted rice would have so many entries and pasta so few; ditto higher numbers for tinned tomatoes and tinned tuna. I was also surprised that chilli was up there with 12 entries across four forms of it. If there are any trends to suggest it seems to me that there is a clustering around Mediterranean cuisine (despite the poor showing pasta gave) and South and South East Asian cuisines and a diminution of Anglo-Australian except at breakfast (oats and muesli).

And Django sends heaps of tail wagging for three of you who said dog foods.