

THE 3-DAY PANTRY RESET

The Philosophy

Bridging the Midwest to the Mediterranean — one pantry at a time.

A Mediterranean kitchen isn't about expensive imports or hard-to-find ingredients. It's about **anchoring what you already have** with the right staples — the ones that quietly change how everything tastes.

Midwestern home cooks don't need to completely overhaul their kitchens to get closer to the Mediterranean way of cooking and eating — they need a good edit.

Use **local excellence** — the things the Midwest does beautifully — alongside **Mediterranean pillars** that have fueled healthy, delicious cooking for centuries.

- Locally produced butter alongside your favorite extra-virgin olive oil.
- Local farmers market produce instead of importing everything
- Local artisan cheese alongside good Parmigiano

THE 3-DAY PHILOSOPHY

This reset isn't a cleanse. It isn't a diet. It's three days of intentional choices that retrain your pantry — and your instincts — to default to ingredients that taste better and serve you better.

- Day 1: Assess what you have. Keep the good. Release the rest.
- Day 2: Build the foundation. Stock the Bridge Staples.
- Day 3: Cook one simple meal using only what you've built.

"The Mediterranean pantry was built with intention. That's what we're doing here."

Turn the page. Let's look at what's in your pantry right now — and make three simple decisions.

DAY 1

The Keep, Toss & Swap List

Pull everything out. Make three piles. Be honest.

✓ KEEP	× TOSS	■ THE BRIDGE SWAP
<p>High-quality fats EVOO, locally-produced butter, high-quality ghee</p> <p>Dried & canned beans Chickpeas, black beans, white beans</p> <p>Whole grains Farro, brown rice, whole wheat pasta</p> <p>Water-packed proteins Wild tuna, sardines, artichoke hearts</p> <p>Flavor anchors Capers, Dijon, quality vinegars, San Marzano tomatoes</p>	<p>Processed seed oils Canola, vegetable, soybean blends</p> <p>Sugar-heavy dressings Corn syrup in the top 3 ingredients</p> <p>Stale dried herbs No smell when opened = no flavor in food</p> <p>Shelf-stable "cheese" Green cans, processed slices</p> <p>Fake condiments Sugary marinades, fake butter sprays</p>	<p>Shelf parmesan → Caves of Faribault or real Parmigiano-Reggiano</p> <p>Sugary condiments → Clean salsa, harissa, or good Dijon</p> <p>Vegetable oil → Mid-range EVOO for cooking, good EVOO for finishing</p> <p>Bottled Italian dressing → Red wine vinegar + EVOO + Dijon. 30 seconds.</p> <p>Stale oregano → Fresh herbs from the market or a windowsill pot</p>

Chef's note: The Toss list isn't about perfection — it's about making room. You don't have to throw everything out today. Start with one shelf.

DAY 2

The Recipe for Success

Your complete MM Quick-Start shopping guide — Chef Laura's master on-hand list.

These are the ingredients I keep on hand at all times. Not because I planned every meal — but because **when these are in the house, a good meal is always 15 minutes away.**

■ FRESH FRUITS

- Bananas organic
- Blueberries organic
- Raspberries organic
- Mango or 2 kiwi
- Apples
- Oranges
- Seedless red grapes
- Clementines or other

■ FRESH VEGETABLES

- Red leaf lettuce / spinach / chard / kale
- Cucumber
- Peppers hot and bell
- Cherry tomatoes
- Celery
- Carrots
- Crimini mushrooms 2 lbs
- Baby spinach large bag
- Zucchini for spiralizing
- Red onion
- MM-green veg for roasting zucchini, mushrooms, peppers, asparagus, onions
- Fresh herbs cilantro, basil, tarragon, chives

■ PROTEINS

- Egg whites 3 cartons
- Large eggs 1 dozen
- Chickpeas 2 cans
- Black beans 2 cans
- Artichoke hearts 2 cans, water-packed
- Tuna 1 can, water-packed
- Chicken breasts 2, poached in water or stock
- Silken tofu 1 package

■ FLAVOR MAKERS & PANTRY

- Salsa low fat, no sugar
- Rice wine vinegar
- Red wine vinegar
- White wine vinegar
- Capers water-packed
- Dijon mustard
- San Marzano tomatoes canned
- Quality EVOO cooking & finishing
- Dried oregano fresh batch

© Chef Laura Bonicelli — Add any MM-Green food you love. This list is your starting point, not your ceiling.

DAY 3

The 5-Minute Emergency Meal

No cooking. No excuses. Just the Bridge on a plate.

The best test of a well-stocked pantry isn't the elaborate Sunday meal. It's Tuesday at 6:30 PM when you're tired and the question is whether you eat something good or something regrettable.

Everything below uses only what you stocked on Day 2. No cooking required.

RECIPE 1

MM Green Salad

WHAT YOU NEED

- ½ **cup** Red leaf lettuce, torn
- ½ **cup** Cucumber, diced
- **6** Cherry tomatoes, halved
- ½ **cup** Chickpeas, rinsed & drained
- **1** Hard-boiled egg, halved
- **1 tbsp** Balsamic vinegar
- **to taste** Kosher salt & black pepper

HOW YOU BUILD IT

1. Arrange lettuce on a salad plate.
2. Add cucumber, tomatoes, chickpeas, and egg.
3. Sprinkle with salt and pepper.
4. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar. Serve.

Prep: 10 min · Cook: — · Total: 10 min · Serves 1

RECIPE 2

Tuna Salad Wraps with Apple

The apple adds sweetness and crunch. By Chef Laura Bonicelli

WHAT YOU NEED

- **1 can (6 oz)** Water-packed tuna, drained
- ½ **cup** Cherry tomatoes, diced
- **1 tbsp** Red onion, minced
- **1** Hard-boiled egg, chopped
- **1 tbsp** Capers, drained
- **1 tbsp** Apple cider vinegar
- **1** Apple, cored & sliced
- **4** Large lettuce leaves
- **to taste** Kosher salt & pepper

HOW YOU BUILD IT

1. Combine tuna, tomatoes, onion, egg, capers, and vinegar. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Arrange 2 lettuce leaves on each of two plates.
3. Divide apple slices among the lettuce leaves.
4. Divide tuna mixture over the leaves. Serve.

Prep: 10 min · Cook: — · Total: 10 min · Serves 2

KEEP GOING — YOUR THURSDAY RITUAL AWAITS

Every Thursday at 7:30 AM, your inbox gets a new Skill of the Week, a Recipe Spotlight, and the Mediterranean Edit — curated just for you.

substack.com/@laurabonicelli

Until Thursday — keep a good olive oil on the counter and don't be afraid to use it.

— **Chef Laura**