

Jeanne Journal

Foundations

Building your pantry from the ground up

My Essentials:

Oils:

Olive oil (Virgin, Extra-virgin - EVOO, Drizzling)

Grapeseed

Vegetable

It is important to understand a few things about these fundamentals.

Virgin olive oil is best for cooking because it is the most heat stable. **EVOO** is best for dressings or for use with low heat. A drizzling oil is used for anointing a finished plate and is literally drizzled on to add a more full and rich flavor.

Vegetable oil has a neutral flavor & is best for baking & high heat cooking, for instance deep-frying. Considered a neutral oil, **grapeseed** oil's high smoke point makes it an alternative for high heat cooking, without adding any flavor.

Vinegars:

White & red wine vinegar

Basic Balsamic

Aged syrupy balsamic

Like oils, vinegars each have their own personality. **Red and white wine vinegars** add an acidic counterpoint to dressings and marinades. They balance fats and can be used to tenderize. Everyday **Balsamic** vinegar is thicker and fruitier (sweeter) than regular vinegar. Aging it like fine wine mellows and softens its flavor, making it sweeter and less astringent than wine vinegars yet not as rich as the most mature balsamics are. The most condensed and syrupy of all, **aged balsamics** can be used to finish anything from grilled meats and vegetables to fresh fruits and berries.

Jeanne Journal

Aromatics

Onions – Yellow and red

Shallots

Garlic – as fresh as possible

When cooked, **onions** add a sweet, earthiness to many dishes whereas using them raw adds a spicy kick. **Shallots** are the gourmet cousin of the onion family bringing softer flavors to the table. **Garlic**, which is fundamental in world cuisine, has a distinct and identifiable flavor. There's no substitute for it!

Condiments:

Dijon mustard

Tomato paste

Mayonnaise

Tahini

Chicken and Vegetable Stock

Dijon mustard may be one of my favorite ingredients: it adds color, complex flavor and acts as an emulsifier. Unlike some other Dijons, I find Gray Poupon is more balanced, it adds round notes to recipes. **Tomato paste** is a richly flavored concentrated tomato juice, acting as a flavor enhancer for any savory dish.

Mayonnaise is a thick creamy dressing used as the base for many sauces and spreads. **Tahini** a puree of ground sesame seeds, used widely to flavor many Middle Eastern dishes.

Stock is a concentrated liquid made from cooking vegetables and or chicken on the bone and other seasoning ingredients in water. Store bought stocks are readily available and are satisfactory substitutes for homemade.

Jeanne Journal

Spices & Seasonings:

Kosher salt

Flaky Finishing sea salt

Fresh ground black pepper

Fennel seed

Cinnamon

Coriander

Smoked Paprika

Cumin

Aleppo Pepper

Herbs de Provence

Kosher salt has a less intense and more pure salty taste than regular table salt. The crunch of flaky **finishing salt** adds a delicate pop of flavor. Freshly ground **black pepper**, a.k.a. Salt's best friend, enhances our ability to taste foods more fully. It is more dimensional than pre-ground pepper since the moment the peppercorn is cracked open; it begins to lose its aroma and pungency. Sweet and aromatic, **fennel seed** is often likened to anise. **Cinnamon** can be used in both sweet and savory dishes and has a warm, pungent scent. From the seed of the plant that gives us cilantro, **coriander** has a light, lemony flavor and blends well with many other spices. With a smoky aroma and rich complex flavor profile, **smoked paprika**, also known as Spanish Paprika, is a natural addition to dry rubs, marinades or to simply use as a flavoring agent for your favorite dishes. **Cumin**, an important spice for many world cuisines, is an earthy peppery spice that adds warm and somewhat nutty tones to a variety of dishes. **Aleppo pepper** is a Turkish crushed chili with an ancho-like flavor with a little more heat and tartness. **Herbes de Provence**, a versatile seasoning for grilled meats, fish, vegetables and eggs, it combines a variety of sweet French dried herbs (savory, rosemary, marjoram, thyme, sage, tarragon and flowery lavender and fennel seeds).

Jeanne Journal

And finally from the fridge and freezer:

Fresh herbs—flat leaf parsley, cilantro, thyme, chives, dill

Lemons

Vegetables - fennel, carrots, celery, baby spinach

Dairy- eggs, butter and grana padano

Phyllo dough

Puff pastry

Edamame & baby peas

Using **fresh herbs** in cooking imparts a bright fresh flavor. Soft delicate herbs like parsley, mint, basil, and cilantro, should be added at the last minute to cooked dishes, or sprinkled on top of salads or added to a finished dish. Hard herbs like rosemary, thyme and sage, can be cooked longer because of the essential oils. The citrusy flavor of **lemon** juice adds a vibrancy to all that you cook. But let's not forget about the zest! Just remember to zest before juicing! This thin outer layer—think the yellow part, not the white pith- grated on a microplane adds a bright freshness to practically everything. Added to the aromatic onions, **carrots and celery** complete the mire poix trilogy. Refreshing and vibrant raw, mellow and sweet when caramelized, **fennel** adds an almost magical component to so many dishes. Baby spinach sautéed in seconds and is fabulous raw; it is a flavorful and colorful side dish, salad, or addition to soup. **Eggs** are incredibly versatile. A staple in baking, the base of many sauces, hard-boiled to be eaten alone or in salad, and, of course, basic breakfast fare- poached, fried or as a frittata. Slathered on toast or baked goods, used in baking & sautéing or added to sauces for richness and gloss... as the saying goes, **butter** really does make it better! The Italian **Grana Padano** is an unpasteurized cheese made from cow's milk. It has a sweet, savory and nutty flavor with a fruity aroma. I use it in place of parmesan as it is moister and shaves beautifully. **Phyllo** is paper-thin sheets of dough that are brushed with butter, layered and filled with sweet or savory fillings to create flaky pastries and hors d' oeuvres. **Puff pastry** is time consuming to make, lucky for us there are great alternatives sold in the freezer case of most grocery & specialty stores. Sheets of puff pastry can be turned into sweet and savory tarts, pastries and appetizers. A great source of protein, quick cooking **edamame** (soybeans) make a great nibble and add a colorful punch to many dishes. Frozen **baby peas** are like spring on a plate. Like edamame, they can be eaten alone as a side dish or combined with other vegetables or pasta, adding color and a pop of flavor.

Jeanne Journal

My Go-To: Cheeses

Manchego, from Spain is made from unpasteurized sheep's milk, aged 3 months this Spanish cheese has a supple and moist consistency, with a fruity & grassy tang. **La Tur** is from northern Italy, it's made with a blend of pasteurized cow, goat and sheep's milk. It's soft-ripened and creamy. **Murcia Al Vino**, a.k.a. Drunken Goat, a red wine cured semi-firm pasteurized goat from Spain. The rind takes on a violet hue while the cheese remains white sweet and smooth. **Grana Padano** – see above. **French Feta** is creamier than its counter parts, and it's made with sheep's milk. As American as apple pie - **Cheddar** - mild, sharp or extra sharp is an all time favorite. The differences have to do with aging, from 2 months to 2 years. Sharper versions have a mellow tartness and creamy mouthfeel. Click on each cheese to get full view.