

Anti-Inflammatory Pantry Swaps

BEGINNER CHECKLIST

A simple beginner-friendly guide to spotting common pro-inflammatory pantry ingredients and replacing them with better everyday options.



How to Use This Checklist

1) Scan the Label

Look for oils, sugars, refined grains, and long ingredient lists.

2) Choose a Swap

Pick the easier replacement you will actually use this week.

3) Use it Up First

No guilt. Swap items as you run out instead of tossing everything.

Common Label Red Flags

These ingredients do not make a food “bad,” but they are smart clues for beginners who want to upgrade their pantry.

- ☐ Seed oils as a main fat: soybean, corn, cottonseed, or generic vegetable oil
- ☐ Artificial colors, artificial flavors, or long preservative lists
- ☐ Hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils
- ☐ Sugary sauces, dressings, cereals, yogurts, and drinks
- ☐ High-fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, or multiple added sugars
- ☐ Ultra-processed snacks that are low in fiber and high in added sugar
- ☐ Refined flour listed as the first ingredient



Tip: Aim for progress, not perfection - upgrade foods you use the most often first.

Pantry Swap Checklist

Check off any swap that feels realistic for your kitchen this month.

Fats, Oils & Cooking Basics

Common Pantry Pick	Better Everyday Swap	Quick Tweak
☐ Vegetable, soybean, corn, or canola oil	Extra virgin olive oil or avocado oil	Use olive oil for dressings and avocado oil for higher-heat cooking.
☐ Margarine or shortening	Olive oil, ghee, or grass-fed butter	Use small amounts and pair with vegetables, beans, or whole grains.
☐ Bottled seasoning blends with sugar or additives	Herbs, spices, garlic, lemon, vinegar	Build flavor with pantry staples instead of hidden sugars.

Carbs, Grains & Breakfast

Common Pantry Pick	Better Everyday Swap	Quick Tweak
☐ Sugary Cereal	Plain oats, chia pudding, or low-sugar granola	Add berries, cinnamon, nuts, or seeds for flavor and fiber.
☐ White bread, crackers, or refined pasta	100% whole grain, sprouted grain, or legume-based options	Look for fiber and simple ingredient lists.
☐ Instant flavored oatmeal packs	Plain oats with fruit, nuts, and cinnamon	Flavor it yourself to control added sugar.
☐ White rice as the default side	Brown rice, quinoa, farro, or cauliflower rice	Mix half white rice with half higher-fiber grain to ease in.

Snacks & Sweets

Common Pantry Pick	Better Everyday Swap	Quick Tweak
☐ Candy, cookies, or pastries as daily snacks	Dark chocolate, fruit with nut butter, or dates with walnuts	Keep sweet snacks intentional, satisfying, and portion-friendly.
☐ Chips made with refined oils	Popcorn, nuts, roasted chickpeas, or seed crackers	Choose crunch with fiber, protein, or better fats.
☐ Sugary yogurt cups	Plain Greek yogurt with berries and cinnamon	Add yur own sweetness instead of buying dessert-style yogurt.

Condiments, Drinks & Protein Swaps

Small upgrades here can make everyday meals feel easier and more nourishing.

Condiments & Sauces

Common Pantry Pick	Better Everyday Swap	Quick Tweak
☐ Sugary bottled salad dressing	Olive oil + vinegar or lemon + herbs	Make a quick dressing in a jar and keep in it the fridge.
☐ Ketchup, barbeque sauce, or sweet chile sauce	No-added-sugar versions or smaller portions	Use stronger flavors like mustard, salsa, hot sauce, or spices.
☐ Creamy sauces with additives	Tahini, hummus, avocado, or Greek yogurt sauces	Blend with lemon, garlic, and water for a fast drizzle.

Drinks

Common Pantry Pick	Better Everyday Swap	Quick Tweak
☐ Soda, sweet tea, or energy drinks	Sparkling water, infused water, or unsweet tea	Add citrus, mint, cucumber, or berries for flavor.
☐ Fruit juice as a daily drink	Whole fruit + water	Whole fruit gives you fiber along with sweetness.
☐ Sweet coffee drinks	Coffee with milk, cinnamon, or a small amount of sweetener	Reduce sweetness slowly instead of quitting overnight.

Protein & Pantry Staples

Common Pantry Pick	Better Everyday Swap	Quick Tweak
☐ Processed lunch meats	Canned salmon, sardines, tuna, beans, eggs, or roasted chicken	Keep easy protein ready so meals do not depend on deli meat.
☐ Breaded frozen meals	Frozen vegetables + simple protein + quick sauce	Build a bowl instead of relying on ultra-processed meals.
☐ Refined boxed baking mixes	Oat flour, almond flour, applesauce, or lower-sugar mixes	Upgrade one baking staple at a time.