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### Question: How long can I keep my dry goods in my pantry?

Answer: The ideal storage time of dry goods in a pantry varies by item and depends on many variables. These include the freshness of goods when purchased, how perishable the goods are, the packaging or the storage containers and conditions in the pantry itself. A pantry should ideally be a dark, cool and dry place away from any sources of heat. The first important issue is food safety and the second is food quality and maintaining optimum freshness. Shelf stable foods will lose some quality even when stored under ideal conditions. Furthermore, once food packages are opened they are exposed to light, air and humidity and these factors will affect both food safety and freshness. Once opened it is advisable to store packaged goods in reusable sealed containers. Below are some general food storage guidelines for dried goods.

Food items like baking soda, baking powder and yeast all have active ingredients and they should come with a best-before date. Baking soda and baking powder can also be checked for freshness and information on how to do this can be found on our website.

Nuts and seeds contain oil which can go rancid and these are best stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

Whole spices should be used within 3 years and ground spices within 1 – 2 years; however, for optimal flavour and quality only purchase what can be used in one year or store in sealed containers in the freezer.

Storage of rice and other grains varies greatly but whole grains have a shorter shelf life than refined grains and flours. Whole wheat varieties are best kept in the refrigerator or freezer. Dried pasta can be kept for several years.

Cereals can be kept for about 6 – 8 months if unopened and 3 months once opened in the pantry. Rolled oats should be used up within 6 – 10 months.

For specific food storage guidelines, always check with the manufacturer. For general storage guidelines for different types of food, please refer to our "How to Store Food Safely" brochure at [www.atcoblueflamekitchen.com](http://www.atcoblueflamekitchen.com).

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