

# COOKING🔥ZONES CHECKLISTS

The #1 way to make cooking more fun and less stressful is to keep your kitchen organized, and establishing clear cooking zones is the first step in organizing your kitchen. Thankfully it's really easy! Below are quick explanations of your four cooking zones along with checklists of exactly what you need in this area. If it's not on the list, then it's not necessary and can be put away in a drawer or cabinet. Don't worry if your kitchen is small and some of your cooking zones overlap. That's how it often is in professional kitchens, too! 😊

## ZONE 1 - THE COOKING ZONE

- ✓ **What it is:** Wherever you cook food, so usually your stove and oven area.
- ✓ **What's important:** Keep this area clear of clutter to reduce the risk of burning yourself or something catching fire.
- ✓ **What you need:**
  - ☐ A crock or drawer with: spatula, a flipper (or flat spatula), a slotted spoon, a wooden spoon or paddle, ladle, tongs
  - ☐ Pot holders/oven mitts hanging on a nail or hook
  - ☐ Core seasoning ingredients you use often, like salt and pepper
  - ☐ A spoon rest



## ZONE 2 - THE FOOD STORAGE ZONE

- ✓ **What it is:** Where you store food, including your fridge, freezer, cabinets, and pantry.
- ✓ **What's important:** Label things with purchase dates so you know how old they are.
- ✓ **What you need:**
  - ☐ Blue painter's tape and a black Sharpie for labeling
  - ☐ Rectangular plastic baskets from the \$1 store for organizing
  - ☐ Dry ingredients stacked, labeled, and dated
  - ☐ Spices organized and dated
  - ☐ Bottles of oils, vinegars, etc, stored in a cool, dark area. **All oils labeled and dated!!**
  - ☐ Boxed and bagged foods organized by type (pastas, grains, beans, etc)
  - ☐ Fridge organized and all science experiments thrown out
  - ☐ Everything in the freezer labeled and dated.
  - ☐ List of everything in the freezer, crossed off as you use it



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## ZONE 3 - THE FOOD PREP ZONE

- ✓ **What it is:** Where you cut, chop, mix, roll, and otherwise prepare food. So, your counter and kitchen table.
- ✓ **What's important:** This zone needs to be kept free of excess stuff, because clutter = clumsiness, confusion, and mistakes. It needs to be kept sanitized to prevent contamination.
- ✓ **What you need:**
  - ☐ Rubber spatula for scraping
  - ☐ A large spoon for scooping
  - ☐ Hot pads for setting down hot pots and pans
  - ☐ Tongs for grabbing uncooperative little bits
  - ☐ Possibly knives, in a butcher block, drawer, or on a magnetic strip
  - ☐ Also nearby: paper towels, washcloth, hand towel, and disinfectant spray



## ZONE 4 - THE WASHING ZONE

- ✓ **What it is:** Where you wash and dry dishes, so your sink, dishwasher, and dish drainer.
- ✓ **What's important:** Do not drop dishes and walk away—wash them immediately.  
DO NOT LEAVE KNIVES IN THE SINK OR DISH DRAINER.
- ✓ **What you need:**
  - ☐ Sponges, brushes, and scrubbers
  - ☐ Hand towel and dish towel
  - ☐ Dish soap
  - ☐ Disinfectant spray
  - ☐ Dish drainer, if you've got one

