



The Seasoned *Kitchen Starter Checklist*

Three things to get right before your next cook.

The spices that actually matter, then staples worth stocking.

And the prep habits that make cooking from scratch doable on a Weeknight.

1. Build Your Seasoning Base

Most kitchens have too many spices nobody touches and are missing the handful that carry the whole dish

- The six spices behind most soul food and diaspora
- Cooking- and what each one does
- The aromatics to always keep on hand
- Why you season in layers instead of all at the end
- How to tell when your spices have gone flat.

2. Stock the Pantry Right

The shelf staples and proteins that turn into a real dinner without a last-minute grocery run.

- What to keep stocked so dinner is always possible
- Which cuts reward slow cooking -and which don't
- Smart swaps when you can't find a traditional ingredient
- Where quality matters and where generic is just fine

3. Prep Ahead So It Actually Happens

This is where most people quit. These habits are what make cooking from scratch sustainable.

- What to prep on Sunday so weeknights take 30 minutes
- What freezes beautifully - and what really doesn't
- How to portion and label so nothing gets lost
- Reheating without drying it out