

# real solutions

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*Real Solutions is a periodic newsletter produced by Susan Stewart designed to provide practical organization tips to simplify your life.*

## Pantry Pandemonium

**Cindy is at Sam's Club shopping with her two youngest children.** She loves Sam's Club because they have everything she needs (and then some!) She makes her way through the store grabbing a 10 pack here and a 24 pack there. Of course the kids have some say in what she gets as well (Goldfish come in a 50 pack!) Soon she passes a display of fall baking items. "I love fall", she thinks to herself. "Wouldn't it be fun to make a little something with the kids"? Unsure what exactly she is going to make, she throws some basic baking ingredients into the cart. As she continues her shopping, Cindy fills her basket to overflowing with lots of "good deals" and other things she couldn't bear to pass up.

After arriving at home, she unloads the van and tries to put away the items she just bought. It's then that she realizes the pantry is already packed! The 12 pack of paper towels has nowhere to go and neither do many of the other items she just purchased. With nowhere else to place them, she stacks things on top of the refrigerator and on the kitchen counters. Between that and the piles of paper on the counters, it is a wonder she can find enough room to bake.

With a small stretch of counter cleared, she tells the kids they are going to bake fall cookies. Four year old Megan and two year old Zachary are anxious to help. Cindy gets them set up at the kitchen island in hopes that they can help pour in the ingredients. Everything starts out well until she cannot find the Crisco. Oddly enough, she finds 5 bottles of sprinkles similar to the ones she just purchased at Sam's Club, but not the Crisco. While she is digging through the pantry the kids begin to fight and lose interest. Irritated that she can't find what she needs, she starts snapping at the kids to be quiet. Eventually she sends them off to play while she angrily finishes the cookies alone.



**During nap time, Tracy is flipping through her Family Fun magazine.** There are so many cute ideas in there! She looks over the recipes and decides which one would be the most realistic for them to make. Scarecrow cookies it is! Tracy quickly goes to the pantry to see what items she already has on hand and writes down the things she needs to get. She places the list in her purse so she won't forget it later when she is ready to leave.

On the way home from picking Brook up from school, Tracy and the kids make a quick stop to get the ingredients needed for the cookies. Lots of things are on sale but Tracy is well aware that she has plenty of those items already in the house. Besides, where in the world would

she store all of that stuff anyway?

A quick unloading of the groceries and they are ready for action. Let the baking begin! Brook's job is to get all of the ingredients out of the pantry. Everything is labeled and all of the baking things are grouped together so it is not too difficult. While she is doing that, Tracy is able to measure and let four year old Brandon and two year old Alex dump in the ingredients. Everyone has something to do in the process. The cookies don't look quite like they did in the magazine, but the kids had fun and gobbled them up nonetheless.

*\*Editor's note: Not only does having an organized pantry help with shopping and baking, but it can save you valuable time in the morning when putting together the kids' lunches as well.*

Go to the next page for  
Tips on Organizing your Pantry.

# real solutions for real life

[Baskets](#), baskets, baskets. Baskets are great for grouping like items together and giving an aesthetically pleasing look to your pantry.

Make it easy. If you use containers that are hard to open or have too many steps to access, it is likely that things won't get put back where they belong.

Have continuity in the [containers](#) you choose.

If you have adjustable shelves in your pantry, adjust them. Adding shelves is also a pretty simple procedure. Take measurements and go to Home Depot or Lowe's and have them cut a laminated piece of wood to the size you need. They cut the wood there for free or a minimal price.

Helper [shelves](#) make better use of shelves that don't adjust.

Consider the unique needs of your family when deciding on placement. If you want your kids to get their own cereal in the morning, make sure it is on a shelf they can reach. If you don't want them to have access to the candy basket, put it on a top shelf.

Expandable shelves [like these](#) work well for canned goods. Avail-

Have an incredibly tiny kitchen or pantry? Stretch your space with a pantry door [ladder](#).

Store soda cans in a beverage can [holder](#). They help you easily see when supplies are low.

Top shelves in pantries can be a great place to store infrequently used bulky appliances that don't fit very well in cabinets.

Plastic bag [holders](#) are useful for storing all those grocery bags you don't know what to do with. They are available in a variety of [sizes](#) and [styles](#).

Use a snack basket or [drawer](#). It will make putting together lunches a snap.

Is going to Sam's Club or Costco really worth it? Unless you have a large family, purchasing items in bulk may not be worth the clutter of storing it.

Label, label, label. It is the key to finding anything! If you do not own a label [maker](#), get one.

