

CIY: CREATE IT YOURSELF PROJECT

Intentional Style Sheet

Shop With Our "Intentional Chef" Ryan Balas

The Do's and Don't of a conscious kitchen

Shopping with Intention - An intentional kitchen starts with a trip to the supermarket

Ryan's Conscious Shopping Report #1

Intentional shopping supports your emotional state, your physical wellness, and brings mental clarity to your process while helping the environment with less packaging or gas needed to accomplish your result.

For some of us, a trip to the supermarket is a dreaded affair. The long lines, the rude people, even the idea of making choices can be daunting and paralyzing. From the moment you enter the store you are being "sold" things you do not need and are not necessarily good for you.

Before you step through those automatic doors, you should have a plan of attack. Start by asking yourself these questions:

What do I truly need?

As the week goes on, open the cupboards check the shelves of the refrigerator and think back to items you truly enjoyed and didn't regret having or eating.

Create a list of staples that you will always have on hand.

- .Favorite pastas, rice and grains
- .Canned tomatoes, beans vegetables and sauces
- .Bottled dressings, wines, oils and flavorings (try making your own)
- .Frozen meats, fish and poultry.

Create a shopping list based on 10 new recipes that you will be making in the near future .

Spend one afternoon thinking back on all those foods that you love and find those recipes to create that list. Those few moments of research and follow through will give you clarity and connection when you enter the kitchen to create and cook.

Is this store the best place for me to get the most for my money?

While the big super box stores appear to have the best deals for us, is what they are offering on sale any "good" for us? Having cake mixes, high sodium meats and canned soups, boxed lunch replacements and junk food as loss leaders to get you in the door might be the norm these days but, really think about what it does to you and your whole person.

TIME TO DO YOUR RESEARCH LOCALLY

Today with the cost of gas it may balance out to shop more locally. The corner Italian family owned deli and store may be a little more expensive but, when you taste the quality of the imported or homemade products and get the ambience and generations of family advice on how to prepare everything, what you save in gas costs and wasteful items not purchased added to the gift of a memorable meal can be life changing.

Don't think of shopping as a chore. A chef is always looking for a new source to experiment.

Think of the discovery and the knowing you are buying fresh, delicious food. Take yourself off the freeway 2 or 3 times a week and find that special spot to get the best asparagus you can find. Get to know the people who stock and select the items for you. Start to develop a relationship. When you have someone who knows you and cares about you and your business, the products and advice will become treasured vs. something you found on sale.

- . Find a special spot
- . Develop a relationship - they have great knowledge to pass on
- . Be willing to try new things that seem healthy
- . When you care, growers and owners will save you the best to purchase
- . Support local growers - fully appreciated

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP PAYS OFF

At the local Farmers' Markets, the relationships are honored and valued. If Mrs. Smith comes every Wednesday for the freshest tomatoes for her salads and sauces - and this week's business is brisk or the supplies are low, that farmer knows to save the best for her so that her trip will not be wasted and show her her business is valued and honored. At a recent function I catered, I needed a vegetable side dish that would have a strong visual impact. The farmer helped me create the perfect blend of vegetables that would go with our traditional Roast Chicken menu. After much discussion and deliberation, we blended young French carrots, green and purple cauliflowers and a gorgeous yellow squash. Steamed and coated with an herb infused butter sauce, it turned out a delight for the eyes.

What is the cost to drive to your regular store?

With gas prices reaching \$4.00 a gallon in some places, it is time to ask yourself is that trip to the grocery store worth making? Look at all the stores around where you live and where you work. See what is available on the way home. Instead of battling rush hour traffic, a twice weekly stop at a local Healthy market will replace the time spent sitting in traffic and give you more time later so you won't have to go at night or during the weekend.

Assessing your store's value is next.

Supermarket chains spend a great deal of money to place themselves in certain areas. They know, based on a great deal of research, that regardless of what you think of a chain or how you would like to eat or shop - you will shop more frequently at the store that is closest to your home. Meaning - you will settle for Store "A" this time but, on a regular trip shop where it is better for you.

Become an Intentional Shopper.

If you must shop at the local stores for convenience, ask them to stock what you need. They are there for you. Not the other way around. Don't buy the over priced, nutritionally bankrupt food item just because it is on sale. Ask for, demand, the better product and when it comes in - purchase it and thank them for stocking it. 2

Take an active role in what creates the life you live!

You are Intentionally choosing what is going to become part of your being. It is going to feed every part of you. It has been proven that the simple process of shopping (or window shopping) releases chemicals in our body that is pleasing and satisfying to the brain. Take your time and really pick out those fruits and vegetables. Ask questions. Ask if you can have a taste. *Think "feeling good" while you are doing it, it affects the energy of the food being prepared.*

How much time do you want to spend cooking?

Consider some of the prepared foods offered today. One of my favorite customers that frequented my deli would buy the "sides" to her meals. Have a roast going in the slow cooker and pick up a fresh prepared salad and vegetable for the sides. Not having to buy all the separate ingredients and then deal with leftovers is a godsend when considering your health. Check the stores sugar content in ready-made items. *Vegetables and fruits should always be at their peak when eaten.* To have it sit in your fridge until you get to it and then sit again, as a leftover is a waste of your precious time and money.

Plan fresh food around your time.

When planning with time restraints, think back to earlier comfort food dishes. When you put a roast in the oven, the vegetables went in at the same time. Carrots, celery, onions and garlic surrounded the roast in a seasoned broth. Design your meals more that way - one pot dishes, use fresh ingredients. Learn about cooking foods together, it saves time and creates great flavors.

Use the tool professionals use. Purchase a meat thermometer.

If you shy away from cooking meats, do what we do, use a thermometer to be sure of what you are serving. All that worry and stress could be avoided. You will enjoy meat and poultry purchases more. Knowing your safe cooking temperatures and educating yourself on the safe handling of all foods will allow you to truly enjoy the benefits of cooking foods together again and save you time and money.

Where can I pick up the best deal for the money?

Buying in bulk is only worth it if you freeze quantities or share the quantity with family members or friends. Create a buying trip for more than one. Then consider Co-Ops, Wholesale stores (Costco, BJ's, etc) and Warehouse operations open to the public. Buying in bulk will then save you time and money. You can individualize the items for eating or cooking before you put it in the freezer. Those few minutes after unpacking the bags will pay off in the long run with less wastage.

Tips to buying meat. Do your own prepared meat.

Avoid the pre-seasoned meats you see today unless you know exactly what is in it. Many of our pre-seasoned meat products are very high in sodium and injected with things we just don't need in our bodies. Not intentional.

- . Look for a good meat spice - no MSG
- . Invest in a vacuum sealing machine for freshness - IT ALSO SAVES MONEY
- . Buy larger quantities of meat and prepare them differently before storing
- . Label them so you remember - use a permanent marker

I found an amazing Cajun spice blend and bought a large quantity of Tri-Tip. I broke it down and before vacuum sealing the pieces; I coated/seasoned each piece. The result was perfection each time I defrosted and grilled the meat for a meal. There will be less food wastage and you will have items in your freezer that you will look forward to cooking. Be sure to label them.

Where can I get the best deal on all the non-food items?

Supermarkets count on you needing toothpaste and light bulbs while you are out shopping. The mark up is very high and almost all of those items never go on sale. And, if they do, it rarely is going to be when you need it. If you make one trip a month or quarter to a drugstore, box store or hardware store and stock up on what you need - you will benefit later. *Prices rarely go down on anything.* So, if you see your favorite floss on sale - buy three, light bulbs - buy two packs, toilet paper - buy what you can store.

IT'S TIME TO GO GREEN - FOR ALL THE TAKING THERE HAS TO BE GIVING

When buying "think green" and energy efficient.

Think about the packaging involved. Buying rice, oats or cereals in bulk isles now found in major supermarkets. Packing your own quantities will keep waste out of the landfills and you will save time by not having to restock as often. "IS" Magazine will be writing more articles on educating its readers over time.

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CREATE YOUR OWN CLEANERS - SEE OUR Pdf on GOING GREEN

We can shop together.

My Aunt shops when she needs to get certain things and keeps track of sales in her neighborhood. When she absolutely knows something is a great deal, she hits the phones and contacts the family. This gives you a reason to get together, visit and save money at the same time. Church groups, knitting groups, etc. can do this to help each other out.

Pool coupons together - numbers have clout

Track sales and create a group for an Intentional Shopping trip - you could actually change how the stores cater to your community. Check out what your local food bank needs, and buy a little extra on sale to support others. Your trip will have a lasting effect. Imagine a store helping you know when a sale starts and combining it with coupons? The overall impact on everyone involved will have a very far reach. Our local Food Bank liked having a name brand whole oat cereal on hand for families with children. Saving my coupons and finding that normally 3.00 box of cereal 40% off, meant that my money was able to provide almost twice the amount of cereal for their shelves.

If you have time and not enough money, try co-op gardens