

## Neat Tips for Choosing the Right Spice Storage



Dear Ariane,

*We are remodeling our kitchen and one problem I want to fix is how to best store my spices! I can never find what I'm looking for. So this time, I want to do it right. Any tips on what I should buy for storing spices?*  
Jessica M., Montclair

You're in luck! Last year I had a client with the same concern! Too often people buy spice storage units based on how they look or just for the novelty of the item. Then they just end up as kitchen clutter! To make sure this doesn't happen to you, the first thing to do before buying anything is to make a list of your needs. How many spices & herbs do you keep on hand? What is the largest and smallest size? How many do you use frequently? sometimes? rarely? Which do you use during preparation? while

cooking at the stove? while serving?

Depending on your answers to these questions, and how much storage space you have, you may want to store your frequently used spices near your stove (but not so close the heat may damage them) or near your food preparation area. Spices you rarely use could be stored in a more out of the way location.

Since you are remodeling you might want to consider building in special drawers or shallow cabinets with shelves hidden the wall to store all your spices. If your budget doesn't allow that, you'll need to shop. Before you go to the store or start Googling, make sure you have a good idea of how you use your spices, where you want to put them to make them convenient to use AND put away, and how many you need to store in what amount of space.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself before selecting storage to organize your spices.

Where in your kitchen do you have space? Don't buy a product unless you KNOW that you have a designated space for it and it will fit. Measure the area you plan

to store spices in before you shop.

Will each spice have its own home so that you will know exactly where to put it when you are done with it? And it will be easy to find? (p.s. I highly recommend alphabetizing your spices. I know it sounds a little over the top, but you won't believe how much easier it makes finding and using your spices!)

Count the number of spices you have. Make sure the storage solution you buy will be large enough for all your needs, plus have room to grow. Consider using more than one solution. One to keep handy for everyday cooking, one for infrequent use.

Is it easy to use? Test it out in the store if you can. Is it easy to open and close? Can you access it with one hand? How many steps does it take to use it?

Will it be easy to clean? Are there lots of nooks and cranny for dirt and grime to settle into? Can you submerge it in water without destroying the contents?

Is it the right size? Will you have to constantly refill containers? if so are they really easy to open, close, and refill?

Is it easy to get the right amount out of the containers? Can you fit your measuring spoons inside? Does it have controls to keep all the contents from accidentally spilling out at once? If this is important to you, today you can even get containers that meter out the right amounts for you! Just dial the amount you want and let it go.

Do you really love the look of it and will you enjoy using it? If you don't really love it, cooking will be less enjoyable for you and you may end up ordering out more often. Cooking at home is the best way to eat healthy and save money. So why not make cooking as easy and enjoyable as you possibly can?

Will it fit with your decor and colors even if you change them? Try to get something neutral enough to fit in with any decor. Having a theme to all your kitchen accessories is a great way to make it easy to redecorate and still have everything fit in. For example, your theme could be white accessories, or chrome or stainless steel. If your items conform to a theme, they tend to look less cluttered when they are out on your counters.

Thinking through these factors will help you get the right storage the first time. But just in case, whatever you buy, make sure it's returnable. Even the best shoppers sometimes get things home and find they just doesn't work as expected.

Good luck with your remodel!

Got an Organizing Challenge? Ask the Professional Organizer! E-mail your organizing challenges to [ariane@neatliving.org](mailto:ariane@neatliving.org)

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