

DO THE FUNKY KITCHEN

A book about having a functional kitchen

By Laura Coppinger

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"I need something from the chicken"

I have four little boys. You've heard the phrase, "never a dull moment"? Yeah, it's something like that at my house. It's loud, it's busy and a lot of the noise and busyness takes place in the kitchen. Someone always needs something. Just about the time I finish the dishes from one meal, someone is ready to find something else to eat or drink. I have to work hard to stay on top of everything, and if I'm not organized, the whole kitchen sort of explodes. It only takes about five minutes.

One of my sons, at age 3, could never remember what the kitchen was called. He'd keep saying something about the chicken. He'd say, "Mama, I need my milk. It's in the chicken." Or "I put my shoes in the chicken." I'm fairly bright and I pride myself on being a pretty good translator of three-year old boys. This one really had me stumped, so naturally I turned to my five year old for help. He didn't know either. So finally, I had to be led by the hand into the "chicken". I finally realized that he was interchanging the letter sounds "k" and the "ch" so that the kitchen became a chicken. Little did I know that I too had left my shoes in the chicken before. I suppose that at one time or another we all feel a bit like our kitchen is just a big bunch of clucking feathers running around out of control. (bawk)

“Having an out-of-control kitchen can waste a lot of time and money.”

Let's get into the chick-uh-kitchen and get it under control once and for all. This doesn't mean that you can never have dirty dishes in your sink. I'm talking about overall management of the space that you have. Having an out-of-control kitchen can waste a lot of time and money. If you don't take care of the food in your fridge, it gets moldy and you waste it. If you don't know what you have in your pantry, you end up with too many of the same thing, which is a waste of money. (Who really needs 12 bottles of Worcestershire sauce?) If you have cabinets that are so full that you can't open the door without a safety helmet on, you waste time every time you need something from that cabinet. If your countertops are so cluttered that you don't remember what color they are, you can-

not put together a meal efficiently. And if you walk into your kitchen and see all of this chaos at once, all you want to do is turn around and fly to the nearest phone and call in for a pizza. (Or, grab a bucket of chicken <bawk>)

I hope that you can use this book as a guide to help make your kitchen a place of peace and comfort for your family. It should be a room that everyone enjoys being in. It should be attractive and homey, and yummy smells should be coming out of it. Have you ever walked into someone's lovely and functional kitchen and felt that you could just enjoy being there all-day and then some? Wouldn't you love for people to feel that way in your kitchen?

“I loved being in my Grandmother’s Kitchen...”

I loved being in my grandmother's kitchen. I would stand for hours watching her cook and bake. She did not have a grand kitchen with all the latest gadgets. Her kitchen was about as big as a walk in closet and it was HOT in there. She had nine children and fed them all from that tiny kitchen. She had control of her kitchen and she could turn out more food than anyone else I had ever seen. She had very little counter space and she did not have very many cabinets. She made everything from scratch. She did not put one dish into a dishwasher in all her 90 years of life. Sorry everyone, but I saw it myself, so I know it CAN be done. You can have a small kitchen, old appliances, small countertops and cabinet doors falling off their hinges, and still have a functional, organized kitchen. I'm afraid your excuses of "My kitchen is too small", "I don't have enough counter-space" and "I'm too busy with all my kids" just won't cut it. If Grandma can do it, so can you. (And, my grandma also had chickens.)

“There are four major areas of the kitchen that cause the most trouble...”

There are four major areas of the kitchen that tend to cause the most trouble: countertops, cabinets, the refrigerator and the pantry. If these four areas are free of clutter and nicely organized, you will have a wonderful place in which to prepare meals for your family. You will have a Funky Kitchen (aka functional kitchen).

The Counter-tops

I think it's best to start here, but that's just my opinion. I'm kind of weird about my counter-tops. I don't like anything on them, not my toaster, not un-read mail and not my son's dirty socks. I do happen to have a lot of counter space in my kitchen, for which I am thankful. But I cannot stand to have unnecessary things on it when I am trying to cook. It takes a lot of area to spread out when I roll out tortillas on one counter and have tomatoes waiting to be turned into sauce on another. So, I do not wish to have extra things that I don't need to use for my current cooking needs. Others of you may be opposite of me, and find it more annoying to have to get your toaster out every time you need it. That's okay with me. You can leave your toaster on your counter if you like it there. I just happen to be overly particular in this area.

“Before I had kids, I did a lovely job keeping up with the dishes and never letting them stack up...”

So where shall we begin to find our countertops? How about with the paper stuff? Your mail has to go somewhere, and the kitchen might be the most convenient place for your family. If that is the case, try to have only one pile of it at any given time (and the pile cannot be taller than your toddler). At least once a week, go through it and organize it into bills to pay, junk mail to recycle, receipts to keep, cards to save, etc. Then, take care of it! If it ain't gonna add quality to your life, chuck it. I'm not very sentimental when it comes to expired store ads.

Okay, how about those dishes? Have you noticed how they multiply on countertops? I'm certainly not perfect in this area. Before I had kids, I did a lovely job keeping up with the dishes and never letting them stack up. I certainly never went to bed without making sure all the dishes were clean and put away. Now, I have a much harder time staying ahead of the ever-growing problem of crusty plates. I have finally come to realize that if I'm having a hard time keeping up with dishes, it's not because I've been lazy and ignoring my responsibilities. It's because I've been working hard, cooking more, and in general just doing a lot in the kitchen. That's probably true for you too. Just keep working at it! Here are some hints:

1. Try to keep up with washing dishes as you cook. For instance, if you are making lasagna for dinner, after you have prepared the sauce and noodles, grated the cheese, etc. you have quite a mess of dishes. Put the lasagna in the oven and while it bakes, wash the dishes you dirtied. Don't save them until after dinner. You will have too many plates and other things to wash at that point. You don't want a big pot of stuck on sauce to wash too.

“Even my two year old helps to clean out the dish-

2. Soak pots and pans right away before they look so overwhelming that you want to just throw them out and go buy new ones.

3. Any time you have a few spare minutes, go wash as many dishes as you can. You can wash a surprising amount of dishes in a small amount of time.

4. If your children are old enough, they can certainly help. Even my two year old helps to clean out the dishwasher (he's in charge of the sharp knives, of course). Right after a meal, have your children rinse their own dishes and put them into the dishwasher (if you have one).

What else is on your counter that you can put away, throw away or give away? If you have cabinet space for small appliances, put them away. The only thing I like having on my counter is a glass dish filled with fruit. It looks pretty, doesn't take up much space and invites my children to eat it. I also have a crock with my utensils right by my stove so I can grab a wooden spoon when I need it. My rule of thumb is: if it is useful to you while you're cooking, leave it out on the counter. If it's not, simplify your life by finding another place to put it. You will enjoy your kitchen so much more.

“My rule of thumb is: if it is useful to you while you're cooking, leave it out on the counter...”

The Cabinets

Okay, raise your hand if you have about 240 plastic cups from a variety of restaurants. Yeah, that's what I thought. Time to pick your 20 favorite ones and recycle the rest. Ah, doesn't that feel better? How about the drawers you have to get your hip into to close after you throw something into it? Yeah, I know, it hurts when you bang your hip on the handle, doesn't it?

Begin with the cabinets you use the most. Going one cabinet or drawer at a time, take everything out and lay them on your countertops (which of course are clean, open spaces now). Ask yourself these questions to determine what you should keep and what you should get rid of:

1. Do I use it often?
2. How many do I have?
3. How many do I need?
4. Did someone special give it to me?
5. Does it work?
6. Might I need this for cooking chicken? (oh, brother)

“If you don't use it, get rid of it...”

If you don't use it, get rid of it. If you have too many, the extras need to go. If it doesn't work, what is it still doing in there anyway? And if you don't even know what it is, I don't think you will miss it after you say goodbye. Keep only things you use or things that are special to you.

When making the decision to get rid of something, if you are uncertain about how much you use it or if you might need it in the future, here's a good idea. Put these items in a box and put them in another room to store for a few months. If you're cooking a week later and suddenly remember the reason you had the what's-a-ma-jigger in your drawer, you can go get it out of your box and use it and then put it back in your drawer. It then becomes a keeper. I've cleaned out my kitchen this way before, and I've appreciated that I didn't get rid of everything right away. Some of the things I had boxed up, I took

back into my kitchen a week or so later. But most things stayed in the box and I forgot they existed, so after a few months, they went to the garage sale pile.

“Try not to get rid of things that you may use eventu-

Try not to get rid of things that you may use eventually. For instance, my friend had all of her mother's canning jars, but didn't ever use them and decided to get rid of them. Now, she has learned how to preserve produce and she's kicking herself for getting rid of the jars. It's a tough decision on some things like that. You don't want to keep every little thing, "just in case." If you're really not sure, ask someone older than you, or someone in a different stage of life than you are in right now. They might be able to advise you on specific items.

After you have boxed up all the extras and put them out of sight, it's time to put things in your cabinets and drawers neatly. You may want to put fresh liner on the shelves before you put everything back. At least wipe it all down and make it nice and clean again. Then figure out a place to put everything so that it will be handy for you. Here are some tips for organizing your dishes and utensils. These work well for me but you can do what works for you and adapt what doesn't.

1. Put mixing bowls, measuring cups and all other baking items together. Put them in a cabinet that is close to the counter where you mix and measure.
2. Put plates, glasses and bowls in a cabinet close to the dishwasher if you have one. This makes it easier to put dishes away when they are clean.
3. A nice way to store pots and pans is to hang them on hooks on a rack close to your stove. This makes them very handy to grab when you are ready to use them. It also prevents the bonking around that they get when they are in a cabinet all stacked up. They will stay looking nice for a long time if they are hung up.
4. Put infrequently used items, like Christmas dishes, in cabinets that you can't reach as readily. Save your convenient cabinets for items you need every day.

Have things in lower cabinets that you don't mind your little ones getting into when they "help" you cook.

The Refrigerator

The first issue we'll discuss in this section is the "I don't even want to know what's in that dish" problem. It's terrible to pull something out of the fridge and not even recognize what it is. (Hmm, tastes like *chicken*.) I know we don't like to admit it, but we've all had foreign things growing in our refrigerator before. Containers with food that gets shoved way to the back at Christmas-time, and then you find it again in August. Items with fuzz of various shades of green. I don't know about you, but I always have to really force myself to open up the container at that point. I know that I will then be forced to look at it and smell it, and then do something to dispose of it. I'm sure my face looks lovely during times like these. Not only is it disgusting, but I feel aggravated at myself for letting something go to waste.

“How many almost empty bottles of ketchup are in here any-

Another refrigerator issue is the "Where am I supposed to find room for this?" problem. This one is especially difficult at holiday times when you have more people in your house and special meals being eaten. Or, it can just be a weekly problem when you get home from the grocery store. That one extra gallon of milk appears to require a contortionist to make it fit into the only available option: the produce drawer. Time to call all the kids in for tall glasses of milk mustaches. Unfortunately, one of the kids will want toast with jelly to go with his glass of milk, and you have to take out everything off of the top shelf in order to retrieve it from the back right corner. And, by the time you do that, you find that there's no jelly in the jar anyway. (sigh)

How about the "How many almost empty bottles of ketchup are in here anyway?" issue? This problem happens often with things like salad dressing, mustard or other things in bottles. It's a little scary when you finally check the expiration dates on these and find that they date back to the late 1800s.

Here are some ideas that will help make you be able to open your refrigerator and say, "Wow, look at all this great food to eat!"

1. Start by pulling everything out of the fridge one shelf or drawer at a time. Clean it completely out: all expired items get tossed and unrecognizable food goes. Wipe off the shelves with a sudsy dishrag until it looks like new.
2. Condense things into containers that make everything fit nicely back into the fridge. When I start doing this, my husband teases me about just dirtying up more dishes, which I guess is what I'm doing. But I just can't stand to have a big huge container in the fridge of a little tiny something. I have to condense so that my refrigerator door will close and so that I like what I see when I open it. It's okay to combine four ketchups into one bottle (not the ones from the 1800s of course). If you have a big casserole dish with one square of lasagna left in it, put it into a small container. Put your eggs in the compartment made for them so that you can get the carton out of there. If there's just a little tea left in the pitcher, pour it into a jar.
3. While you are making your grocery list before going to the store, check the fridge to see if you already have one (or nine).
4. Work through this cleaning out process as much as possible before you go to the store each time. Then, when you get home with loads of groceries, you have a neat refrigerator to put everything in.

“It’s okay to combine four ketchups into one bottle
(not the ones from the 1800’s of course). . .”

The Pantry

Okay, this one is my favorite. I love pantries. My mother never had one while I was growing up, so I don't know what made me love pantries. Maybe it was the Little House on the Prairie books and others like them that I read. They painted a picture for me of all of the lovely canned goods and flour bins just waiting to be used by Ma as she prepared a delicious meal for her family. In the first two homes of my married life, I did not have a pantry either. I sort of tried to pretend that I had one in my second home, but it was really just a tiny linen closet in the hallway. (Pitiful, aren't I?) And of course then I had no place to put my sheets and towels.

“I usually get carried away when I talk about my pantry...”

So, joy of joys, my current home has a wonderful, delightful pantry. I was so excited when I walked in for the first time and saw it! The former owners designed it special (just for me, probably). It has double doors that open up with shelves on the doors and directly in front of you. Then (and this is the really cool part), the shelves directly in front of you are hinged, and you pull those out and there are more shelves behind them! For me, it is the pantry of all pantries. It's hard for me not to show it off to people! Other's have looked at it and wanted to design their pantry off of mine. I'm a little silly in other people's kitchens too. I always want to see their pantry. I just think they're cool. And by the way, I'm not the only pantry fanatic. A friend of mine (who shall remain nameless) based the purchase of her new home on the greatness of the pantry.

I usually get carried away when I talk about my pantry. If you're anything like me, you totally understand my silliness. If you really could care less about pantries (which I must confess is completely understandable) you must think I am a real weirdo (which I must confess is completely understandable).

I really did not put all of this here so that I could brag about my pantry (well, maybe I sort of did). I do happen to have a great pantry now, but I didn't always. Some houses have them, some houses don't. Whatever your pantry or pantry-wanna-be looks like, it

is helpful to keep it organized and cleaned out. In order to be more efficient in planning meals and feeding your family, you need to know what food you have, and where it is. Isn't it frustrating when you have the spaghetti noodles boiled and the meat cooked, and you go to your pantry for the sauce, and you realize that you don't have any? The can you thought was spaghetti sauce is actually chicken noodle soup. Bummer. Hey, it happens to everyone at some time or another. These tips are to help you prevent them from happening very often.

“Mooommm! I can't find the green beans.
Are you sure we have some?”

1. Try to put like items together, all stacked neatly and facing the front.
 2. Let your kids help you categorize items and put them away. This helps a huge amount when they help you put the groceries away after a trip to the store. Or when you are in the middle of cooking and you send them to the pantry to get something. They already know right where everything is, so they don't have to stand hanging on the door, looking right at the seven cans of green beans hollering, "Mooommm! I can't find the green beans. Are you sure we have some?"
 3. Instead of throwing bags of rice, dried beans, flour, sugar and other dry goods into the pantry as is, pour them into large jars. This helps keep these items from spilling and getting lost somewhere in the back. It also looks very neat and nice. You can easily see how much of these items are left, because they are in glass. As you are making out your grocery list, you can peak in and see if you need to add rice to your list, based on the level in the jar. I bet if some of you look in the back of your pantry right now, you'd find six bags of almost empty bags of rice that you didn't know you had! Been there, done that.
 4. Try to stock up on frequently used pantry items. Buy them when they are on sale, so that you don't often have to pay full price for things you always need.
- If your pantry is not large enough to accommodate a large supply of food, just keep enough in it to make cooking simple for one week. Store the remainder of your stockpile in the garage or another handy place.

Working in your Funky Kitchen

Now let's see. Your countertops are clear, your cabinets are all cleaned out, the fridge only has eatable food in it and the pantry is lovely. It's tempting to keep everyone out so that it will stay that way forever! But what's the point of having a functional kitchen if not to function in it? It does feel like a full time job to keep up with it all. Don't worry about keeping it perfect all the time. That is not what this book is about. Perfect kitchens are for magazines (the ones that are *not* sitting on your kitchen countertop anymore). Perfect kitchens aren't used very much. You work hard in your kitchen to feed your family. Therefore, dishes get dirty, food gets spilled, and toys and mail get brought in to where you are working. This book was written to give you tools for organizing your kitchen in order for you to function the best you possibly can. When you work in a functional kitchen your stress level is lower. When I have dishes and mail piles all over my counters and I'm trying to put together lunch for my kids (who are hungry, grouchy, little bears sometimes) I tend to feel out of control and stressed in my kitchen. When I have things cleared away and functional, I can fix a meal much more easily. And that is what this is all about. Here are some tips to help you maintain a Funky Kitchen:

1. Spend a few minutes each day going through things that begin to accumulate on your countertops. Put things where they go right away, so that the piles don't get out of control.
2. As you are putting clean dishes away, don't just throw things into drawers and cabinets. Put them neatly where they go. Otherwise you'll soon have to get the hard hat back out.
3. Every two or three days, evaluate the inside of your fridge. Eat leftovers for lunch so that they don't keep getting shoved to the back and get wasted. Rearrange things in there so you see what you have and know what you need to eat up.
4. Work at keeping your pantry organized. It's tempting to start throwing things in there again when you get home from the store and you're tired. Take the extra two minutes to put things away neatly. It will save time later.
5. Don't give up. Keep working on maintaining a kitchen that is highly functional. Don't expect yourself to be perfect. You aren't and you can't be. Just do your best. You're doing great!

Essentials of a Funky Kitchen

What gadgets and gismos should you have in your kitchen in order for you to be the most functional? I suppose we might all have different ideas about what is essential. A friend of mine couldn't live without her food processor, but I only use mine about twice a month. I couldn't get along without my grain mill, but you may not need one of these if you don't grind your own flour. And how about those great Kitchen Aid Mixers? I've never had one, but those who do have them love them and use them all the time. Everyone cooks a little differently and has some things that are quite essential to them. (Did I ever mention that my mom had a large collection of blue ceramic chickens?)

“Did I ever mention that my mom had a large collection of blue ceramic chickens?”

My essentials list reflects the way I cook. In creating the list for you, I want to pass along a few things I've learned in the past year or two about kitchen and food safety.

Do not let this information overwhelm you! I know that as I was learning these things, I felt terribly overwhelmed with all the things I would need to change in my kitchen. It seemed like a large financial burden, as well as a big change in the way I cooked. It took time to switch Teflon for stainless steel and plastic for glass. You don't have to do it all at once. **You don't have to do it at all if you don't want to!** I mentioned these things so that you will have a bit of the information that I am thankful to have obtained, and also so that you will understand why my kitchen essentials list is full of stainless steel and glass. Did I mention that I love glass? (um, not when it breaks) I think glass is so pretty. I love the look of pretty food as seen in a nice glass jar. I think you will too.

Different research says different things about the use of aluminum, "non stick pans" and plastic. I encourage you to research this more if you feel inclined to do so.

1. I have learned that aluminum is not safe. When we cook with aluminum, the food absorbs harmful toxins. Therefore, I do not use aluminum pans or aluminum foil if I can avoid them.

2. I have switched from "non stick" coated pans to stainless steel. When heated to high temperatures, these pans releases harmful gasses into the food and to the air. Stainless steel, cast iron and stoneware are my new safe choice for cooking.

3. Many plastics also release harmful gasses. You may have noticed a plastic taste in some of your food or drinks. Some plastics are safer than others. If you look at the bottom in the recycling triangle, it will give you a number. The safer plastics have the number 2, 4 or 5 on them. All others are not as safe. I now use glass if at all possible to drink out of and serve and store food in. Instead of putting my leftovers in plastic containers, I now use glass bowls or jars. I have found that I really love using jars - I can see exactly what is in the jar and how much is in it.

4. Styrofoam is another no-no at our house. Not only does it release harmful gasses when hot food is on it, but it is not good for the environment as it takes many years to decompose.

Along with safety of cooking food, I also feel like my food tastes better when cooked in cast iron, stoneware or stainless steel. Pizza crust that comes off of a pizza stone is great! Eggs scrambled in cast iron are like Grandma's. And, I don't ever feel frustrated anymore when pieces of "non stick coating" scrape off of the bottom of my skillet, as this does not happen with stainless steel.

Now that I have let you in on all my weird quirks, you can now see the list of things that I have and use in my kitchen. I have written the list twice for you. The first is a quick glance list; the second is the same list with explanations for what I use these things for.

Essentials of a Funky Kitchen (quick glance)

Items for Mixing

Stainless steel bowls in a variety of sizes
Glass mixing bowl, large and small
Glass measuring cups
Stainless Steel measuring cups
Measuring spoons

Baking Pans

Metal Pans:

Muffin Pans, both regular and mini muffin
Cookie Sheets

Stoneware:

Cookie Sheet
Loaf Pans
Pizza Stone
Rectangle Baking Stone (for cakes and casseroles)
Square Baking Stone (for brownies and casseroles)

Glassware:

Pyrex 9x13 dishes (2)
Pyrex 9x9 dish
Pyrex Pie plates (2)
Corning Ware Casserole dishes, large and small

Utensils

Pampered Chef Crinkle Cutter (I use this all the time for cutting up carrot sticks and other veggies)
Can opener
Pizza cutter
Sharp paring knives
Pampered Chef scoops large (great for making muffins and cupcakes) and small (perfect size for cookies)
Wooden Spoons
Stainless Steel spoons
Stainless Steel Ladle
Whisk
Metal Spatulas
Rubber Spatulas
Pastry blender
Pie server
Wooden rolling pin
Ice cream scoop
Tongs
Cheese grater
Kitchen sheers
Wide mouth funnel
Apple cutter

Cookware

Stainless Steel set of pots and pans: Dutch oven, Saucepans and skillet, all with glass lids
Large Stock Pot
Cast Iron Skillet
Cast Iron Griddle (I actually don't have one of these, I just really want one!)

Appliances

Large Crock Pot
Electric Skillet
Hand held mixer
Blender
Food Processor
Toaster
Popcorn Popper
Waffle Iron

Every Day Dishes

Dinner Plates
Breakfast Plates
Dessert Plates
Cereal Sized bowls
Glasses, variety of sizes
Mugs
Sturdy Silverware

Serving Dishes

Serving Bowls, not fancy
Serving Bowls, glass and fancy for a special meal
Large Platters
Separated platter, for veggie trays and the like
Serving utensils (large fork, spoons, slotted spoon)

Items for Storage

Jars of different sizes
Plastic lids for jars
Large Plastic Containers for dry goods (flour, sugar)

Miscellaneous

Wooden Cutting board
Glass pitchers
Stainless steel colander
Dishrags and towels
Potholders

Wraps and Bags

Plastic Wrap (Natural Value Brand or Saran is a safer brand)
Parchment Paper
Foil (I only use this when I have to, and only then if it won't be touching any food)
Plastic bags of different sizes (Natural Value Brand, also, Ziploc is a safer brand)
Muffin Papers

Cleaning

Shaklee Basic H (this cleaner does it all, from cleaning pesticides off of fruit, to cleaning your sinks. It is completely earth and body friendly)
Old rags
Scrubbies

Essentials of a Funky Kitchen (and what I use them for)

Items for Mixing

Stainless steel bowls in a variety of sizes – for mixing up muffins, cakes and cookies and for whipping cream

Glass mixing bowl, large and small – for making breads, pancakes, waffles

Glass measuring cups – for measuring liquids

Stainless Steel measuring cups – for measuring dry ingredients

Measuring spoons – for measuring spices and seasonings

Baking Pans

Metal Pans:

Muffin Pans, both regular and mini muffin – for muffins and cupcakes

Cookie Sheets – for cookies or toast

Stoneware:

Cookie Sheet – for cookies, toast or biscuits

Loaf Pans – for bread

Pizza Stone – for great pizza crust

Rectangle Baking Stone - for cakes and casseroles

Square Baking Stone - for brownies and casseroles

Glassware:

Pyrex 9x13 dishes (2) – for casseroles, meats or brownies and cake

Pyrex 9x9 dish – for small casseroles, brownies, cake or cornbread

Pyrex Pie plates (2) – for pies and quiche

Corning Ware Casserole dishes, large and small, with glass lids – for

Casseroles or baked potatoes

Utensils

Pampered Chef Crinkle Cutter - for cutting up carrot sticks and other veggies)

Can opener – for opening cans and jars

Pizza cutter – for cutting pizza or quesadillas

Sharp paring knives – for cutting veggies, meats or breads

Pampered Chef scoops, large - for making muffins and cupcakes

Pampered Chef scoops, small - for shaping cookies or melon balls

Wooden Spoons – for stirring everything

Stainless Steel spoons – for serving casseroles

Stainless Steel Ladle – for serving soup

Whisk – for whipping eggs or puddings

Metal Spatulas – for retrieving cookies from cookie sheet or serving cakes or brownies

Rubber Spatulas – for scraping batter out of bowls

Pastry blender – for blending butter into flour

Pie server – for serving pie or quiche

Wooden rolling pin – for rolling out tortillas, pizza crust, biscuits or cookie dough

Ice cream scoop- for scooping out ice cream (wonder how it got it's name?)

Tongs – for grabbing corn on the cob easily; for serving salad

Cheese grater – for grating Parmesan, mozzarella or cheddar cheese, or for grating carrots

Kitchen sheers – for cutting open packages or for cutting meat

Wide mouth funnel – for pouring food or liquid into jars

Apple cutter – for slicing apples or pears uniformly and easily

Cookware

Stainless Steel set of pots and pans: Dutch oven, Saucepans and skillet, all with glass lids – for cooking most meals

Large Stock Pot – for making soup, cooking chickens, making large batches of spaghetti sauce

Cast Iron Skillet – for cooking meat, eggs, fried potatoes

Cast Iron Griddle (I actually don't have one of these, I just want one really badly!) – for making pancakes, grilled cheese sandwiches or burgers

Appliances

Large Crock Pot – for cooking roast, chicken and many other meals

Electric Skillet – for frying chicken, making French fries, pancakes, burgers, or many other meals

Hand held mixer – for mixing cakes or for whipping cream

Blender - for making smoothies and shakes, for making tomato sauce

Food Processor – for shredding or puréeing veggies, for mixing ingredients

Toaster – for making toast or reheating waffles

Popcorn Popper – (I feel silly saying, "for popping popcorn", so I won't say it)

Waffle Iron – (uh, for waffles)

Food Mill – to grind grain into flour or corn into meal

Every Day Dishes

Dinner Plates

Breakfast Plates

Dessert Plates

Cereal Sized bowls

Glasses, variety of sizes

Mugs

Sturdy Silverware

Serving Dishes

Serving Bowls, not fancy

Serving Bowls, glass and fancy for a special meal

Large Platters

Separated platter, for veggie trays and the like

Serving utensils (large fork, spoons, slotted spoon)

Items for Storage

Jars of different sizes – for storing leftovers, or for storing items in pantry

Plastic lids for jars – keeps things fresh in jars; don't rust like metal lids

Large Plastic Containers for dry goods (flour, sugar)

Miscellaneous

Wooden Cutting board

Glass pitchers

Stainless steel colander – for straining pasta and washing veggies and fruit

Dishrags and towels

Potholders

Wraps and Bags

Plastic Wrap (Natural Value Brand or Saran is a safer brand)

Parchment Paper – to keep cookies or other foods from sticking to pan

Foil (I only use this when I have to, and only then if it won't be touching any food) – to cover dishes for cooking

Plastic bags of different sizes (Natural Value Brand, also, Ziploc is a safer brand)

Muffin Papers – for making muffins or cupcakes

Cleaning

Shaklee Basic H (this cleaner does it all, from cleaning pesticides off of fruit, to cleaning your sinks. It is completely earth and body friendly)

Old rags

Scrubbies – to get the stuck on food off the pan

I hope you feel inspired to get into your kitchen and make it functional once and for all! Don't chicken out! You will love having a nice, organized, clean and lovely kitchen. You may have to repeat the steps in this book every few months or so to keep your kitchen as funky as you like it to be. I have to do it too! Enjoy your new and improved Funky Kitchen!

P.S. I hear there's a great book at HeavenlyHomemakers.com full of great ideas to use in your Funky Kitchen, called "What To Do With the Chicken in Your Kitchen". Now that ought