



NATURAL SOLUTIONS

Clinical Kinesiology, Acupuncture, & (w)Holistic Healthcare

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WHOLE NATURAL LIFE

simple real food
recipes & natural
living tips

How to Easily Switch to Glass Food Storage Containers

Posted on April 29, 2013 by [Meghan Slocum](#)

If you've spent much time in the real food/natural living world, you're no stranger to the potential dangers of plastic. (If you don't know what I'm talking about, Google "dangers of plastic" for plenty of reading material.) While I have not chosen to banish all plastic from my life, I do think that one big way to reduce your exposure is to opt for glass rather than plastic when it comes to food storage. As far as healthy habits go, this is a pretty easy one, but initially building your glassware stash can be overwhelming. Let me share with you what I've learned and what currently works for me.

Before proceeding, however, know that you can switch over to glass food storage containers as casually or as aggressively as you want. If you want to absolutely banish all plastic containers from your kitchen, more power to you! But, I also think that it's completely fine to tackle the process gradually or just try to opt for glass over plastic whenever it's convenient for you.

Personally I manage to use glass containers most of the time, but I also don't stress if I put some leftovers in plastic because all our glassware is dirty. I also still freeze some things in plastic just because that works best for me.

Find out what you feel comfortable with and implement it in your own life.

Canning jars/mason jars

One of the most popular options for glass food storage are [mason jars](#), also known as canning jars. Although traditionally used for canning, they are also great for general food storage. Mason jars are awesome because they are durable, easy to find, and usually pretty inexpensive. They are also very versatile because they come in a variety of sizes, from [half-gallon](#) all the way down to the tiny and super cute [four ounce](#) size.



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I have a large collection of mason jars in various sizes. They are excellent for storing all sorts of foods, from soups to beans to [kefir](#) to [kombucha](#). I recommend stocking up on a variety of different sizes to accommodate varying amounts of foods.

Mason jars come in both [wide-mouth](#) and [regular-mouth](#). I mostly have wide-mouth because I find them easier to fill and easier to clean. I put all of my jars in the dishwasher, which most of the time does a good job of cleaning them.

If you don't like messing with the two-piece lids that come with canning jars, you can buy plastic lids in either [wide-mouth](#) or [regular-mouth sizes](#). I love these and use them exclusively.

If you want to freeze foods in your mason jars, read my guide on [how to freeze food in glass jars](#); not all glass jars are freezer-safe.

Repurposed glass jars that originally held store-bought foods like spaghetti sauce, salsa, etc.

Reusing jars that originally held store-bought products can be a great way to build your glass stash for free. Although I don't buy that many things in jars anymore, I have kept several nicely-shaped and durable-looking jars over the years. So the next time you finish up something in a glass jar, consider whether it has potential food storage uses before tossing it in the recycling.

I am not sure whether old store-bought jars are freezer safe. Personally I don't use them in the freezer, but that's mostly because I've broken enough glass to avoid anything that I'm not pretty sure isn't going to result in a breakage. If you're more adventurous than me, I think you'd do well to experiment.

When keeping old store-bought jars, I recommend examining the lid for lingering odors before storing any of your own leftovers in the jar. While glass doesn't tend to retain odors, the same cannot be said of the materials used to make the jar lids. I have often encountered salsa jar lids that continued to smell like salsa no matter what I did to them—and unfortunately, this meant that they also imparted that smell and taste to any foods stored in the corresponding jar. I have found, however, that many jars will fit the standard regular-mouth lids sold for canning jars, so you can often toss the original lid without sacrificing the usefulness of the jar.

Other glass storage containers: Pyrex and Glasslock

While you can probably get by with just glass jars, I also like having a variety of other, non-jar glass food storage containers. Purchasing other food storage containers allows you



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to add a variety of different shapes to your glassware collection. I find that this is particularly helpful if you want to eat out of your glass containers, such as when you're at work or on the road. Many of our glass containers easily lend themselves to acting like a plate or bowl when we're not at home.

There are many, many different types of glass storage containers on the market. Personally I have been very pleased with my several [Pyrex containers](#) plus a couple sets of [Glasslock containers](#).

When shopping for glass containers, I recommend looking for containers that are dishwasher-safe, freezer-safe and nesting. Oven-safe is also another nice feature, if you think you'll ever want to reheat your food directly in the container.

Looking for More Green Living Posts?

Be sure to check out my posts on [how to reheat food without a microwave](#) and [how to freeze food in glass jars](#)(without breaking your jars)!