

Come To Order[®]

...simplifying lives one space at a time

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An Organized Kitchen Can Lead To Tax Advantages

By Kathy Jenkins, CPO[®], CFMC[®]

Thanksgiving is just a few weeks away, and if you're the lucky one who gets the honor of hosting your family and friends for that big and bountiful feast, now is a great time to start cleaning out your cabinets and taking inventory of your kitchen. Even if you're not the host this year, you might be surprised at how beneficial it can be to organize your kitchen, from both a cooking and a tax savings standpoint.

To get started, go ahead and open up those cabinet doors and see what's inside. In the front, you'll probably find the items you use every day, or at least every week. Those are keepers, so set them aside. Now dig deeper! What's hiding all the way back there? Did you forget you even had that blender?

Be honest! It's time to find a new home for good, usable kitchen items you no longer need. Maybe it's an ice cream maker that you don't even know how to use, a stock pot that you saved from your old cookware set, or an extra coffee maker that you thought might come in handy someday. Or perhaps you have a stack of plates or bowls that are just taking up space. Don't forget the utensil drawer! How many big spoons, paring knives, or sets of measuring spoons do you need, anyway?

Here's a safe rule of thumb: If it's been in your kitchen for more than a year and you haven't used it, it's time to part with it. Carefully place those items in a big box, and find a worthy charity that accepts donations. Goodwill, The Salvation Army, or a local women's shelter would all be admirable choices. Not only will you feel good about helping these organizations help others, but you can also get a significant tax deduction if you calculate the value and ask for a receipt.

For example, according to Goodwill's "[Donation Valuation Guide](#)," that coffee maker you've been storing for someday could be valued at up to \$15. So, with 3 pots or pans, 15 kitchen gadgets, a stack of 8 plates, 4 coffee mugs, and 5 baking pans, you could average about a \$50 value. And that's just from a one-time effort in your kitchen! Add up all of the donations you've made throughout the year by purging various rooms in your house, and you'll have a nice little deduction for your charitable kindness.

One last note about donations: make sure the items you are giving away are in good condition. Most charities has a donation acceptance policy, but as a general rule, if the item isn't in good enough condition to give to a friend or relative, then don't donate it. Instead, consider recycling.

Now, back to your kitchen. Don't forget to sort through pantry items, too. Double check your supplies of flour, sugar, cocoa and other baking staples, including spices. While spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, basil, and oregano don't spoil, they can definitely lose their potency and flavor, so if you haven't bought new in the last year, it's a good idea to replace them. You want all of your holiday goodies to taste their best!

Now that you've purged, it's time to organize and put items away. Store items in their appropriate "zone." If you cook with it, find a home next to the stove. Group plates, bowls, glasses and utensils as near to the dishwasher as possible. As you organize, take inventory and make a shopping list for things

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you need to replace, or for helpful organizing tools that will help you use your space more effectively (racks, shelves, baskets, trays, etc.).

If you decide your kitchen needs a major overall before the holidays, be sure to check out our advice in "[Cooking Up Solutions for your Kitchen Clutter](#)." We also have more tips for stress-free holiday planning in "[A Stress-Free Holiday Season is Possible!](#)" For example, start planning in October. (Yes, that was last month!) If you're one who tends to procrastinate and wait until the last minute, you'll definitely need our checklist guide to [Planning a Party in 7 Days](#).

Come To Order wishes you and your family a houseful of blessings and a very Happy Thanksgiving!

About the Author

As a Certified Professional Organizer and Certified Family Manager coach, Kathy Jenkins can help you run a more organized, efficient, and happy household and raise happy, healthy, responsible, and well-mannered children! Visit <http://www.cometoorderva.com> to learn more about her professional organizing services and one-on-one family manager coaching sessions. You can also follow her tips, advice, and recommendations by liking Come To Order on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/cometoorder>

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