

# Kitchen Cleaning Checklist

Checklist · 72 items · 7 sections

A kitchen-specific cleaning protocol drawn from USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service guidelines, NSF International sanitation standards, FDA Food Code, This Old House, and Bon Appetit. Distinct from a general house checklist: this targets food-contact surfaces, appliance care, and the pathogen control where most foodborne illness starts.

Open the editable, AI-powered version online:

<https://genechecklist.com/checklist/kitchen-cleaning-checklist>

## DAILY (AFTER EACH MEAL / END OF DAY)

- Wipe counters with disinfecting spray (Lysol Kitchen Pro, Clorox wipes, or 1:1 vinegar+water for granite-safe areas)  
**HIGH**
- Hand wash or rinse all dishes immediately; load the dishwasher before leaving the kitchen  
**HIGH**
- Wipe the stovetop while still slightly warm (Weiman Cooktop Cleaner on glass/ceramic; Dawn Powerwash on gas grates)  
**HIGH**
- Swap out the dishrag and dish towel daily (NSF research flags both as the most contaminated items in the home)  
**HIGH**
- Sweep visible crumbs from the floor with a hand broom or Swiffer Sweeper dry cloth
- Wipe the sink basin after final use; sanitize once daily with diluted bleach (1 tsp Clorox per quart water)  
**HIGH**
- Empty the trash if more than 2/3 full or if it contains raw meat packaging, seafood, or eggshells
- Run a final spot check before bed: no crumbs, no standing water, no dishes in the sink
- Wipe high-contact points: faucet handles, fridge handle, microwave handle, light switch
- Rinse and air-dry the sink strainer; do not leave food debris overnight

## WEEKLY

- Mop the floor with cleaner matched to the surface (Bona Hardwood, Bona Stone/Tile, Method for vinyl)  
**HIGH**

- Clean the microwave interior (microwave 1 cup water + sliced lemon 3 min, then wipe with microfiber)
- Wipe the exterior of all appliances (Weiman Stainless Steel Cleaner for stainless; mild soap for painted)
- Run the dishwasher empty with white vinegar in a top-rack cup, or Affresh Dishwasher Cleaner monthly
- Wash all kitchen towels, aprons, pot holders on hot with detergent and 1/2 cup OxiClean  
**HIGH**
- Wipe down small appliances: coffee maker housing, toaster crumb tray, stand mixer, blender base
- Clean inside the trash can with Lysol Disinfecting Spray or bleach solution; dry fully before relining
- Sanitize cutting boards. For wooden boards: rub with coarse kosher salt + half a lemon; rinse, air dry vertically  
**HIGH**
- Wipe the underside of the range hood where grease drips collect
- Clean the dish drying rack; soak removable parts in hot soapy water; scrub mineral buildup with 50:50 vinegar soak
- Wipe the inside of the toaster oven; remove the crumb tray
- Disinfect refrigerator and freezer handles, plus the top of the fridge where dust and grease combine
- Empty and rinse the compost bin; replace the charcoal filter every 4-6 weeks

## MONTHLY

- Clean inside the oven (Easy Off Fume Free, or baking soda paste left 2-12 hours, then wipe; vinegar finish)  
**HIGH**
- Deep clean the refrigerator: discard expired food, wipe with baking soda+water (2 Tbsp/quart), vacuum coils  
**HIGH**
- Check fridge water filter status (most replace every 6 months; Whirlpool EveryDrop, Samsung HAF-CIN)
- Replace the HVAC return air filter if near the kitchen (grease aerosols clog filters faster in cooking zones)
- Deep clean the garbage disposal: ice cubes + rock salt, then halved lemon; cold water 30 seconds

- Sanitize sponges (microwave damp sponge 1 minute every 1-2 weeks; USDA: kills 99%+ bacteria)
- HIGH**
- Wash trash bin fully outdoors with hot soapy water; spray with Lysol; air dry
- Clean the range hood filter (most metal-mesh filters are dishwasher safe; or soak with Dawn + baking soda)
- Wipe cabinet exteriors around handles (Murphy Oil Soap on wood; microfiber + mild soap on painted)
- Check pantry for expired items, weevils in flour, and rotated stock
- Wipe inside dishwasher door gasket and lower spray arm with vinegar-soaked cloth
- Sanitize can opener blade; soak wheel in white vinegar or run a paper towel through it

### QUARTERLY / SEASONAL

- Deep clean cabinet interior: remove everything, vacuum crumbs, wipe shelves, reline if using shelf liner
- Replace the Arm & Hammer baking soda box in the fridge and freezer
- Pull the refrigerator out from the wall; vacuum back coils; sweep behind; mop the exposed floor
- Clean the dishwasher filter (twist the cylindrical filter at the bottom, rinse under hot water, scrub with toothbrush)
- Refill water softener salt (Morton Clean & Protect, Diamond Crystal Solar Naturals)
- Reorganize pantry: front-load older items, date open flour/grains, discard past freshness
- Inspect for pest signs under sink, along baseboards, behind trash can (droppings, gnaw marks, pantry moth webbing)
- HIGH**
- Wipe top of refrigerator and tops of upper cabinets where airborne grease settles
- Inspect and re-tape any peeling weatherstripping on refrigerator and freezer doors

### ANNUALLY

- Deep clean oven using self-clean or steam-clean cycle; remove racks first; soak separately in hot soapy water
- HIGH**
- Check oven temperature accuracy with a Taylor Classic Oven Thermometer; recalibrate if more than 25° off
- Replace worn dish brushes, sponges, sink scrubbers (OXO, Scrub Daddy typically last 4-6 months)

- Deep clean the refrigerator drain pan underneath the unit; wash with soap and water; dry before reinstalling
- Recaulk sink rim and counter-to-backsplash joints if silicone is cracked/mildewed (GE Kitchen & Bath Silicone II)
- Service the garbage disposal; replace (InSinkErator Badger or Evolution) if it grinds slow, leaks, or smells
- Replace stove burners and drip pans if discolored beyond cleaning (universal drip pans at hardware stores)
- Test smoke and CO detectors in or near the kitchen; replace batteries annually

HIGH

### FOOD SAFETY RESET

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- Discard expired condiments (ketchup 6 mo, mustard 12 mo, mayo 2 mo after opening per FDA)
- Check meat and dairy expiration weekly; move approaching-date items to the front and plan meals around them
- Date-label all leftovers; discard after 4 days per USDA Food Safety guidance regardless of smell/appearance
- Sanitize cutting boards after raw meat/poultry/seafood (1 Tbsp Clorox per gallon water; stand 1 min before rinse)
- Wash hands 20 seconds with soap before any food prep and after handling raw protein (CDC guidance)
- Replace or sanitize dish sponges every 2 weeks; discard if they smell sour or look discolored
- Keep a refrigerator thermometer; fridge at or below 40°F; freezer at or below 0°F per FDA Food Code
- Separate raw meat from ready-to-eat foods; store raw poultry on the bottom shelf in a tray to catch drips

HIGH

### SPECIAL AREAS AND SURFACE-SPECIFIC CARE

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- Tackle grease buildup on backsplash with Krud Kutter Original or Goo Gone Kitchen Degreaser on microfiber

- Clean stainless steel appliances with Bar Keepers Friend or Weiman wipes; always wipe with the grain
- Care for granite and quartz: avoid acidic cleaners (vinegar, lemon) which etch sealed stone; use Method Daily Granite or mild dish soap
- HIGH**
- Oil wooden cutting boards monthly with food-grade mineral oil (Howard Cutting Board Oil) or beeswax conditioner
- Maintain cast iron: hot water + chainmail scrubber, dry on burner, wipe with flaxseed or grapeseed oil; reseason at 450°F if rust appears
- Descale coffee maker every 1-3 months (50:50 vinegar+water cycle, then 2 plain water cycles; Keurig/Nespresso: brand descaler)
- Polish copper cookware and farmhouse sinks with Wright's Copper Cream or paste of salt + flour + white vinegar
- Clean butcher block counters weekly with hot soapy water + soft cloth; oil monthly with mineral oil (never olive/vegetable: go rancid)
- Wipe induction cooktops only when fully cool (Cerama Bryte Cooktop Cleaner with scraper for burned residue)
- Non-stick cookware: hand wash only, no steel wool, replace when coating flakes or scratches deeply
- HIGH**
- Maintain knife edges: hone weekly with a steel rod; sharpen every 6-12 months with a Wusthof or Chef's Choice sharpener
- Clean espresso machine group head and steam wand after every use; backflush with Cafiza weekly if supported