

What's in your pantry?

As I was making my grocery list for the week, I was wondering whether we had any baking powder.

I went to look in the pantry.

I started hunting, and the next thing I knew I had emptied the pantry onto the kitchen floor.



As I was working, I discovered that we had large quantities of straws, oatmeal, water chestnuts, unopened boxes of crackers, tea, and more than 10 varieties of pasta.

Now, we do eat a lot of noodles here, but I had no idea we owned noodles in a greater variety than your average Italian restaurant. I can't begin to explain why we have so many straws.



And we don't eat much oatmeal, but apparently I think we should.



As I started organizing the food, I realized how much of it had expired.

That, in and of itself, is not particularly surprising. But in my mind we just went through the whole pantry before we adopted Leo. Before you can adopt—at least in the state of Maryland—you have to have a health inspector come to your house. And on the vast checklist of items is making sure you have no unexpired food. (If you ever find yourself in this position, by the way, please do not stress about the health inspection. It was a breeze. We even got a free flashlight.)

At the time, however, John and I didn't know it would be a 15-minute inspection. We meticulously cleaned the entire house. I remember being thrilled that the frozen broccoli was all good, but the container of chocolate ice cream had to go in the trash.

Of course, we adopted Leo in 2009, so a few years have passed.

What surprised me this time, however, was finding items that had apparently expired well before the health inspector's visit. That means that either we overlooked them, or I bought them at the store without checking the expiration dates.



I'm not sure what makes me feel worse, throwing food away that I paid for, or knowing that when I paid for it, it had already expired.

So today I threw out food, recycled boxes, and put the remaining food carefully away.

I was patting myself on the back all afternoon for taking on such an arduous project. I could tell John was pleased with this rare occurrence.



Then at dinner, while we were digging our way through our spaghetti, we finished the Parmesan cheese.

No problem, I thought. I went to the pantry to get the jar I had discovered during our pantry cleaning. John was clearly impressed.

As he opened the jar, though, I realized I couldn't remember checking the date on it. And I wasn't sure when I had last shopped at the store that sells that brand.

"Um, what is the date on that one?" I asked.

He looked.

"October 2012," he said.

Oh well. Now I have another item to add to the shopping list.

And it's not baking powder.

