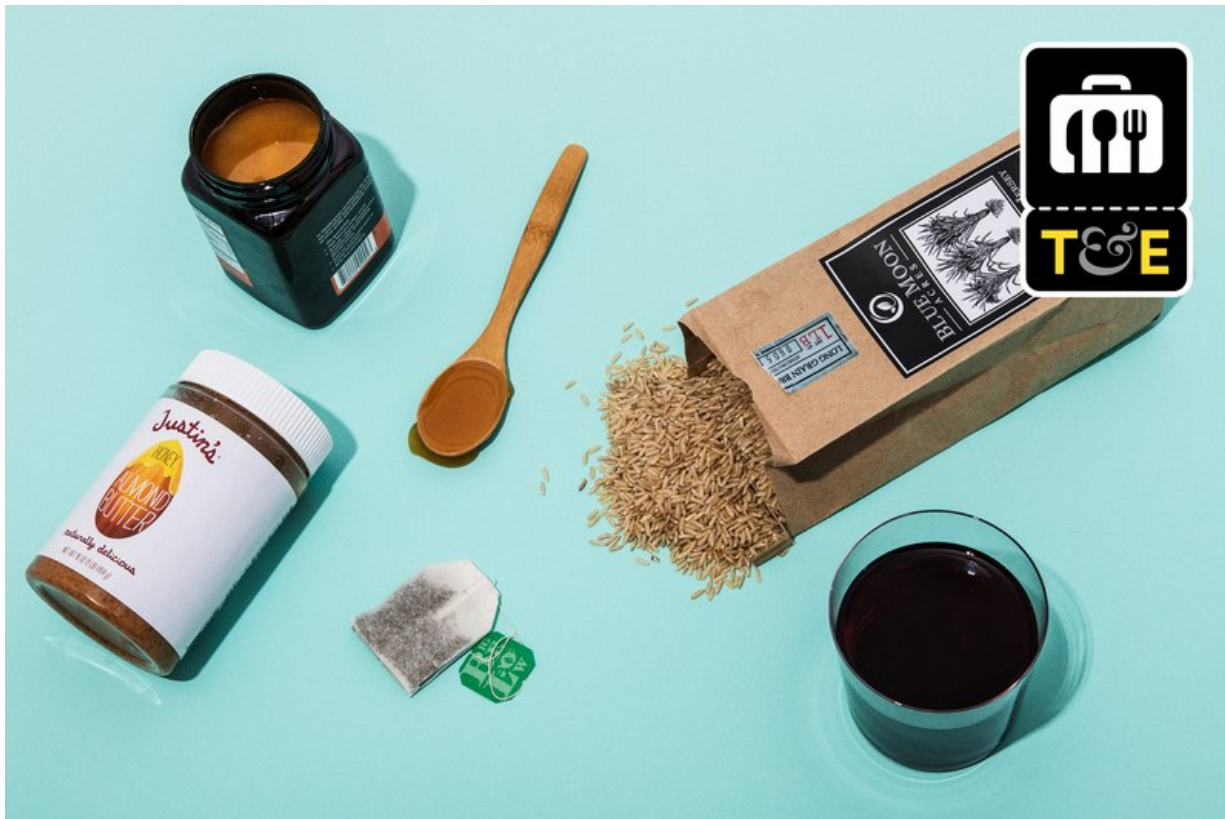


Michael Solomonov Has the Pantry of a Suburban Soccer Mom

B P R I Y A
K R I S H N A

5 days ago



Matt Martin

This year’s James Beard Outstanding Chef mostly stocks up on smoothie ingredients and basics that are a far cry from the encyclopedia of spices you’ll find on offer at his restaurants.

“My home kitchen is underwhelming,” says Michael Solomonov, with a sigh. This is coming from a guy who’s fresh off of winning the top honor of Outstanding Chef at this year’s James Beard Awards; who’s responsible for putting Israeli food on the national map with his monumentally amazing Philly spots, Zahav and Dizengoff (where you’ll find the World’s Greatest Hummus). But he’ll be the first to tell you that his personal grocery lists consist mostly of mass-market snacks.

Solomonov describes his pantry as “nut butters, crackers, whey protein, and a big Vita-Prep for making my smoothies.” I ask him if he’s forgotten to mention all those Middle Eastern spices he wields so deftly at his restaurants. “Maybe there is a little za’atar,” he responds. “But only if I stole it from the restaurant.” Otherwise, it’s juice, rice, almond butter, and animal crackers all the way. His pantry seems not unlike that of a suburban soccer mom.

But even with these ostensibly banal basics, he's as thoughtful a home cook as he is a chef, turning cranberry juice into a braising liquid, or a simple package of brown rice into a buttery chicken pilaf. The almond butter, though, is reserved exclusively for spreading on animal crackers (a trick he learned from his kids). As Solomonov insists on reminding me: "I am not a very glamorous person."

Buttery Rice Without the Butter

"This rice is sensational. Without adding anything else, it tastes like toasted pine nuts in butter. I'll boil it with water, a little olive oil, some salt, and maybe a little chicken, and I can just eat it right out of the pot. The flavor is creamy, nutty, and robust, and because it's brown rice and not white rice, you don't feel like a piece of shit when you're eating six bowls of it on the couch."

[Blue Moon Acres Organic Long Grain Brown Rice](#)

Tart Braising Liquid

"Pure cranberry juice is a magical thing. I'm talking about the kind that's not mixed with anything—just simple, healthy, unadulterated cranberry concentrate. That's what Just Cranberry Juice is. You can braise chicken thighs or chorizo in it to add brightness and acidity. You can use it to enrich a stock with pleasantly sour notes. This juice also has those same sorts of tannins that you can find in [wine](#), so for people like me, who don't drink, it's really satisfying. I'll mix it with lime zest, ice, and seltzer to have at the end of every day. It just makes you feel like you are cleansing your body when you drink it."

[R.W. Knudsen Just Cranberry Juice](#)

Everyday Tea

"I like drinking tons of tea at night, and I don't want anything fancy. I don't believe in being finicky with your tea. This mint tea does exactly what I need it to. It's aromatic, it tastes great even if you let it steep for too long, and you can reuse the tea bag. It's the best layman's tea out there."

[Bigelow Mint Medley Herbal Tea](#)

Peanut Butter Upgrade

"I love anything with almonds in it, but most almond butters I have encountered are just a little too oily. The texture is off. The Justin's brand is creamy and delicious and smooth. It's sweet enough to taste like dessert, but not cloyingly sweet. I love to dip those Whole Foods vanilla animal crackers into this spread—that's my perfect snack."

[Justin's Honey Almond Butter](#)

Savory Honey

This honey tastes really different than most types out there—it's savory with this mildly fermented taste, and nuanced in a way that other forms are not. I know these are not adjectives you usually associate with honey, but trust me: It's delicious. You can spread it on toast with butter, you can put it in smoothies, you can brush chicken thighs with it, and it'll add a level of sophistication and complexity that you can't get with any other type of honey. It just makes things taste a little more interesting. Also, Manuka honey has a billion health benefits beyond regular honey: It helps your skin, aids with digestion, boosts energy, you name it."

[Wedderspoon Manuka Honey](#)

Watch Now:

How to Cook a Perfect Steak

Chef Pantries

Shopping

Cooking

Food

Chefs

Travel And Eats

M O R E S T O R I E S L I K E T H I S O N E



The Meat-Eater's Guide to Dating a Vegetarian



Food

How Craft Beer Took On Anheuser-Busch's St. Louis Monopoly

GET THE

Magazine

Subscribe now and get a FREE weekender bag and the GQ Style Guide.

Subscribe 

FOLLOW US ON

Instagram

Follow @GQ for photos of celebrities, what to wear to work, and more.

Follow Us 



[Subscription Services](#)

[Careers](#)

[Condé Nast Store](#)

[Reprints / Permissions](#)

[GQ Media Kit](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Masthead](#)



CONDÉ NAST

CNMM Collection



© 2017 Condé Nast. All rights reserved.



Use of this site constitutes acceptance of our [User Agreement](#) (effective 1/4/2014) and [Privacy Policy](#) (effective 1/4/2014). GQ may earn a portion of sales from products that are purchased through our site as part of our Affiliate Partnerships with retailers. The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with prior written permission of Condé Nast.