Spice Cabinet Management

Household plan (agreed 2026-09-06) to stop cooking with stale ground spices. Several jars are years old and past usefulness - flagged while checking the rib rub. **Deferred** - plenty of other projects first; will happen in pieces, not all at once.

Already doing right

- **Annual pre-cookie-season swap** of baking powder + baking soda (every year before Christmas cookies).
- **Smell-test herbs and spices before use.** 2026-09-06: smoked paprika and cardamom both smelled great, so the rib rub is safe for now. The system just formalizes what the nose already does.

The system

- **Sharpie the month/year** on each jar at purchase.
- **Rotate** - oldest first out.
- **Buy small** unless a spice gets used up before aging out.

Cabinet layout (planned)

- **Baking** on the left, **cooking** on the right, **combo/shelf-stable** in the middle.
- **Frequently used** toward the front, **less used** toward the back.
- Expect a rough couple of weeks re-learning the layout after the reorg - accepted tradeoff for overall improvement.

Buy whole, grind as needed (rare / slow use)

- **Cardamom** - pre-ground goes flat fast, and it's a rare-use item: worst of both worlds.

- **Nutmeg** - a microplane works, no grinder needed.
- **Cumin, coriander, cloves, allspice** - whole keeps for years.
- **Peppercorns** (black + white) - if grinding at cook time.

Buy small, pre-ground is fine (volume / fast use)

- **Smoked paprika** - backbone of the rib rub; single most fragile on the shelf. Pinch-test before any rub: if it's lost its smoky lift it's dead, and you can't taste it on ribs after smoking.
- Chili powder, garlic powder, onion powder, dried herbs.

Rule of thumb: buy whole anything used rarely or slowly (whole lasts years anyway); buy small pre-ground anything used in volume.

Status / next (deferred - will do in pieces)

- Inventory the current cabinet (stamp dates on all jars)
- Cull jars past their date
- Decide whole-vs-ground swaps with Rowan (cardamom, etc.)
- Reorganize: baking-left / cooking-right / combo-middle / freq-front / rare-back
- Set the rotation order

Revision #1
Created 2026-09-26 18:54:10 UTC by Rowan Flora
Updated 2026-09-26 18:54:10 UTC by Rowan Flora