

Using Canned Foods

Canned foods are picked at the peak of ripeness, ensuring the best flavor and nutrient quality. The nutrients in canned items are comparable to fresh and frozen foods.



Top tips for selecting canned items

- Purchase salt-free or low sodium canned items; “reduced sodium” is not the same as “low sodium.”
- Purchase canned meats and vegetables packed in water, not packed in oil or a brine (which is a salt mixture).
- Rinse canned legumes (beans, lentils) in water to wash away cloudy liquid and to reduce the sodium level.
- When purchasing canned fruit, select fruit that is packed in 100 percent juice or water.
- Do not buy canned goods that are dented, have swollen ends, or are missing a label. (Deep dents can allow bacteria to enter. A bulge can mean the canning process was inadequate.)

Inspiration for meals that use canned items

- Mix black beans with corn and melt with a little cheese for a veggie quesadilla.
- Add a variety of canned beans to your soups, stews, and chilis.
- Top canned peaches with yogurt for a healthy snack.
- Blend canned pineapple with frozen yogurt in a blender for a healthy dessert.
- Jazz up taco night with a variety of canned beans.
- Lentil meatloaf: add cooked lentils to your meatloaf base
- Veggie burgers: Mix legumes of your choice, sautéed onions, breadcrumbs, and an egg; mash and form into patties.
- Top salads with canned mandarin oranges, pineapple, peaches, or pears (drained) to add fruit to your diet.
- Add corn or hominy to a vegetarian chili.
- Chop canned artichoke hearts and add to spinach dip or use as a pizza topping.
- Make your own marinara and pizza sauce using canned tomatoes.
- Mash black beans and use as a base for a Mexican pizza.
- Purée chickpeas with lemon juice and a little olive oil to make a simple dip or hummus.

Storing canned foods

- Store canned goods in a cool, dry place.
- Unopened canned goods with low acid will keep for 2–5 years (corn, beans, carrots).
- Unopened canned goods with a high acid will keep for 12–18 months (tomatoes, juices, fruit).

