

# The Can-Do Kitchen



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Do canned fruits and vegetables have the similar amounts of nutrients as fresh or frozen?**

Canned foods can be a great alternative when fresh fruits and vegetables are not available. Studies have shown that canned foods have similar amounts of nutrients as their fresh or frozen counterparts. Canned foods are picked at the peak of ripeness which ensures the best flavor and nutrient quality. In addition, canning helps to make fiber in certain vegetables, like beans, more soluble, therefore, more useful to the human body.

### **Do canned fruits and vegetables lose their nutritional value the longer they are stored?**

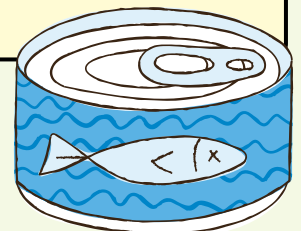
No! The canning process locks in the same amount of most vitamins and other nutrients in the food as the day they were canned as it is a year from the canning date. In contrast, fresh and frozen produce lose nutritional value the longer they are stored.

### **How does the canning process impact the flavor of the food?**

Canned fruits and vegetables are a nutritious alternative to fresh since canning keeps food fresh and flavorful. You can rely on cans for consistency and taste because the food that is put in is just as good as the day it went in!

### **What are the top tips for selecting canned foods?**

Look for no-salt added or low sodium canned foods. Purchase canned meats and vegetables packed in water, not in oil or brine. If not available, draining and rinsing for 30 seconds reduces the sodium content by up to 40%. When buying canned fruit, select fruit that has no added-sugar and is packed in 100% juice or water. Try to avoid those in syrup. Draining and rinsing for 30 seconds will reduce the amount of excess sugar.



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## **Should fresh fruits and vegetables be the first choice when given an option?**

Most adults are not meeting their dietary requirements for fruits and vegetables. Increasing intake, whether they are fresh, canned or frozen, is strongly encouraged. Experts agree that eating more fruits and vegetables is an essential part of a healthy diet. In fact, one study found that children and adults who consume canned fruits and vegetables have an overall better diet quality and consume more fruits and vegetables. Canned fruits and vegetables are an excellent option when fresh fruits and vegetables are not available.

## **Canned foods are a good source of which nutrients?**

A variety of canned foods are a good source of minerals (including potassium and calcium) and vitamins. While amounts of certain vitamins, like vitamin C and B, are decreased during the canning process, other nutrients like lycopene and dietary fiber, are made more available for use by the body.

## **Are canned foods safe to eat?**

Yes! The high heat during the canning process prevents the growth of microbes that may be present in the foods and, therefore, reduces the incidence of foodborne illnesses.

## **How should canned foods be stored?**

Store canned goods in a cool, dry place. Do not keep beside the stove, under the sink, or any place exposed to high or low temperature.

## **How long can canned foods be stored?**

In general, canned foods are good for at least one year from the purchase date. The "best by" or "use by" dates have to do with food quality and peak taste of a product but not its safety.

## **Are foods in dented cans safe to eat?**

Foods in cans that have small dents, no deeper than a finger, are safe to eat if the dent is in the side of the can and not in the seam. Dents along the seam may damage the seal and allow bacteria to enter so should be discarded. Inspect cans for bulging. "When in doubt, throw it out!"

## **What are the benefits of using canned foods?**

Canned foods are not only flavorful and nutritious but are affordable, convenient to use, and save time in the kitchen. Canned foods have a long shelf life and are available year-round. In addition, they help to reduce food waste and are environmentally friendly since the cans are recyclable.