



## Don't Forget the Cans



Canned fruits and vegetables are not only quick, convenient and inexpensive, but also nutritious. Fruits and vegetables for canning are picked at the peak of maturity and are processed within hours of being picked. This helps to keep a fresh flavor and retain most of the vitamins and minerals.

### Nutrition

Researchers have looked at the nutritional value of canned foods and have found that there is very little nutrient loss. A study at the University of Illinois found that some canned foods were even more nutritious than fresh. Canned salmon, for example, has more calcium than fresh salmon because the small bones are softened enough to be eaten.

The biggest differences between canned and fresh foods result from the salt and sugar that are sometimes added to canned foods. Up to 40% of the sodium from the added salt can be removed by draining and rinsing the vegetable under cold running water. There are more low sodium or sodium free canned foods available.

To avoid added sugar look for fruit packed in water or juice or drain well, fruits packed in syrup.

Using canned fruits and vegetables can really help you to include in your meals each day the 2 to 2-1/2 cups of vegetables and 1-1/2 to 2 cups of fruits recommended by MyPyramid.

### Taste

A study of 12 common recipes prepared in two versions one using canned foods and one using fresh foods was conducted at the University of Massachusetts. The dishes were rated on taste, appearance, aroma, texture and nutrition, the canned versions did very well and were usually liked as much as those prepared with fresh foods.

### Safety and Convenience

Keep canned food on hand in case of an emergency or if you are unable to get to the grocery store. Canned food will stay safe and tasty for at least a year. Store canned foods in a cool, dry place. Be sure to check cans before you use them. To avoid food poisoning never use cans that are rusted, leaking, deeply dented or bulging.

After canned food has been opened it should be stored covered in a food safe

container in the refrigerator and used within 2 to 3 days.

## Quick and Easy

Since canned food has already been cooked during processing, it's ready to eat. It can be heated quickly on top of the range or in the conventional or microwave oven.

Here are some ideas of ways to use canned foods:

- Keep canned fruits and single-serving juices in the refrigerator ready to eat.
- Add rinsed and drained canned beans and vegetables to salads, soups or casseroles.
- Canned tuna is a fast nutritious meal as a salad or part of a casserole.
- For a quick salad combine several drained canned vegetables and toss with your favorite salad dressing.

## Three-Bean Salad



- 1 16-ounce can cut wax beans, or lima beans, drained
- 1 8-ounce can cut green beans, drained
- 1 8-ounce can red kidney beans, drained
- ½ cup chopped onion
- ½ cup chopped green sweet pepper
- ½ cup vinegar
- ¼ cup salad oil
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard

Combine beans, onion, and sweet pepper in a bowl.

For dressing combine vinegar, oil, sugar, and mustard, mix well. Pour over vegetables; stir. Cover and chill for at least 4 hours, stirring frequently.

Serves 6.

Nutrition information per serving: 72 calories, 2 g fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 200mg sodium. 11 g carbohydrate, 3 g fiber.

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